



northern
beaches
council

MINUTES

ENVIRONMENT

STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP

held on:

THURSDAY 21 MAY 2020

**Minutes of the Environment
Strategic Reference Group
held on Thursday 21 May 2020
Commencing at 6:00pm**

ATTENDANCE (by remote audio visual link):

Committee Members

Cr Natalie Warren (Chair)	
Cr Alex McTaggart	
Cr Pat Daley	
Cr Stuart Sprott	
Roberta Conroy	Bayview Church Point Residents Association
Alan Jones	
Nigel Howard	
Viktorija McDonnell	Curl Curl Lagoon Committee
Marita Macrae	Pittwater Natural Heritage Association
Jacqueline Marlow	Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment
Billy Bragg	
Scott Markich	

Council Officer Contacts

Todd Dickinson	Director Environment and Sustainability
Yianni Mentis	Executive Manager Environment and Climate Change
Natasha Schultz	Executive Manager Waste Management and Cleansing
Ximena Von Oven	Governance Officer

1.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

As a sign of respect, Northern Beaches Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands on which we gather and pays respect to Elders past and present.

2.0 APOLOGIES

APOLOGY

R Conroy / V McDonnell

Apologies were received from Anthony Petrolo, Sophie Scott and David Tribe.

3.0 DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary conflicts of interest.

4.0 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENT STRATEGIC REFERENCE GROUP MEETING HELD 20 FEBRUARY 2020

R Conroy / V McDonnell

That the Minutes of the Environment Strategic Reference Group meeting held 20 February 2020, copies of which were previously circulated to all Members, are hereby confirmed as a true and correct record of the proceedings of that meeting.

5.0 UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

Nil

6.0 AGENDA ITEMS

6.1 WASTE MATTERS

OVERVIEW OF DISCUSSION

N Shultz provided a presentation on this item. The following points were discussed:

Council's waste management system

- An overview of the domestic waste service from the kerb side collection of each bin to processing and end markets or landfill
- Council's domestic waste service was designed to service the needs of the majority of residents, be affordable and provide flexibility and a user pays option for those households with greater needs. It is designed to maximise resource recovery and minimise contamination. Its design, including bin size and configuration, fits with the processing and technology solutions that it provides the feedstock (waste and recycling).
- Much planning goes into the design of the service to take advantage of advancements in technology, safety in design, environmental improvement and other efficiencies. The

specifications for our new collection fleet were included in the tender and ultimately approved by Council. Our collection fleet is low to the ground providing safe easy access, large windows provide great visibility supported by six recording cameras, rear braking sensors, onboard information systems that can alert the driver of difficult access, infirm services and record services via bins fitted with e tags and report back to council. The trucks are fitted with Euro 5 engines that have the capacity to use fuel made from end of life plastics. This is the first fully enclosed domestic waste fleet – preventing spillage and windblown litter.

- Council's public place waste collection fleet (litter bins) is fully enclosed. This service is delivered by in house staff. 1000 bins collected. Seven day collection service with additional shifts during Summer and the peak Christmas period..
- Comparing tonnes and trends 2017/18 FY to 2019/20 FY by year and by month. Reviewing the two tables it was noted that:
 - Generally, there is a progressive decline in tonnes when comparing the last three years, with the exception of vegetation.
 - Changes to services may impact the volume of material. Examples include the recent change to the Clean-up service; the impact of gradual decline and loss of the daily newspaper and the transition away from printed media impact on paper tonnes.
 - Prolonged wet summers, storm events impact on the volumes of vegetation delivered.
- OSCAR – Salesforce- Cloud based system designed to improve the customer experience by providing a whole view of the customer and delivering improved contract management capability.
 - Manages customer requests in real time / direct interface and communication with contractors
 - Allows Council to track lodged cases and confirm who the task was assigned.
 - Provides benefits for customer service, performance reporting and contract management
 - Interactive Dashboard provides several features to check history of customer cases, rate of response, status tracking, direct interface with the contractor

QUESTION: Has this new technology been implemented in conjunction with the new property records system to assist with the improvement and efficiency of services? If so, how can we measure this?

ANSWER: Yes, the new technology has improved and assisted Council in regards to how we manage the waste contract. Council is able to measure performance and is seeing improvements.

- Drivers can be alerted in every street about any difficulty that might arise
- Capacity to liaise with drivers in real time.
- If Council receives a complaint about the level of service, footage can be retrieved from the collection vehicle and assessed. This will assist Council in gathering all the facts and confirm what has happened.
- Customer service efficiency has improved.
- COVID 19 – Operational impact on Council and KEE. The focus for Council is to keep everyone engaged in the delivery of safe waste

services during this period and ensure the waste services continue for the residents. One step taken to ensure the continued safe delivery of waste services is to commence early to enable staggered start times to maintain social distancing and minimise contact for waste collection and litterbin service teams. Increased Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for frontline staff; increased sanitation procedures and working from home: separation of key staff are components of Council's business continuity plan.

- Kimbriki implemented similar measures as, such as social distancing onsite, closure of the Eco-House and Garden, closure of the Buy Back Centre and reduction in resource activities, removal of cash as a payment option, removal of paper from various processes (tickets, receipts, checklists etc.), suspension of non-core capital works, closure of the administration office to the public and working from home arrangements for office staff.
- Table of percentages regarding how much vegetation, landfill, recyclables, construction and demolition material is taken to Kimbriki for recycling was presented to the group.

QUESTION: If a tracking chip placed in one of the bins was to disappear, how would the driver which house the bin belongs to?

ANSWER: The RFID tag is recorded against a bin and property. If a bin disappears, we can run an exception report to identify anomalies, such as bins being serviced at different properties. This report will note missing bins being collected from a different property. The driver does not have access to this information and would not know, unless advised.

QUESTION: If a bin disappears, how it can be located?

ANSWER: The customer can contact Council and notify that the bin is missing. Council can ask for an exception report from the contractor. This report can advise where the bin is. For example, if the bin was collected from another house/location.

QUESTION: Who pays for the monitoring of the chips? Is that contractors or Council?

ANSWER: It is within the terms of the Contract, ultimately Council pays for the monitoring of the chips.

QUESTION: If you have wet garbage at your house, do you have it in a plastic bag for disposal?

ANSWER: No, you don't have to put the garbage in a plastic bag; you can wrap it in paper or just throw it in the bin.

QUESTION: Will the dropping in price of oil affect the price to the value of recycling?

ANSWER: Yes it may.

SRG members noted that the new waste collection trucks implemented by Council are great however there are older trucks which are used for the public place pick up these trucks have a hole at the end of the hover and leaks petrol. This should be investigated.

SRG members raised concerns regarding circular economy and recycling. The community tends to focus on the materials recycled from waste but not on the energy and emissions from

additional transport and the recycling operations, when often this can be more damaging than the wastes.

QUESTION: Currently, degraded wastes are going to the Somersby Pyrolysis Pilot Plant and the new vehicles are equipped with engines that could use the fuel produced from such plants. Is the Somersby fuel used in the vehicles?

ANSWER: No, not yet because Somersby is only a pilot plant. Our fleet are fitted with Euro 5 engines – they have the capacity to use fuel derived from end of life plastic.

SRG members noted that major investments have been made in the pyrolysis plant to resolve the expensive processing in large volumes of recycling difficult combustible wastes through pyrolysis which can be converted to chemical feedstock's (monomers – styrene, ethane, alcohols etc.) to effectively could make brand new plastics such as fuels and waxes. This process could be shared amongst various Councils in an attempt to share in the investment scale, the waste disposal opportunity and revenues returned from the sale of the chemicals/fuels. The plant could be located at Kurnell to find easy markets for the chemical feedstock's generated.

Trends in the Waste Industry

- Realising the circular economy: The Waste hierarchy provides an order of preference for managing waste management – most preferable – avoid and reduce waste and least preferable – waste disposal. The principles of the waste hierarchy underpin the circular economy. Circular economy is an economy that has no beginning or no end. It aims to eliminate the creation of waste and to keep products, equipment and infrastructure in use for longer improving the productivity. Without this mindset waste management will inevitably follow a linear path to a low cost option where resources are typically wasted rather than recovered / repaired / reused and recycled.
- Council's street sweepings have been diverted from landfill and are now delivered to Downer EDI where this material is processed into asphalt. 97% recovery is achieved from this process, saving over 1,000m³ landfill capacity, providing savings to Council in disposal costs and supports the principle of a circular economy.
- Designing waste out of products can help reduce waste generation. This can be introduced by the government and industry through targets and standards for product design.
- Extended producer responsibility schemes and product stewardships have been in place for some time and there has been some limited successes with voluntary participation, however, it is now time to prioritise products to ensure that we achieve greater success in this area. Packaging would make a good place to start.
- At a local level we can educate, change the policy procurement processes and educate the community.
- Considering the cost and benefits of restricting certain products with limited recovery options such as SUPS expanded polystyrene.
- Creating End Markets - Cheap imports and the decline in manufacturing has impacted end markets progressively over the past 40 years. High utility costs the rezoning and redevelopment on industrial lands further marginalises industry and makes the cost of doing business in NSW high.
- Developing a robust policy and standard in collaboration with all stakeholders is important to ensure that everyone is aligned. Governments at all levels have a responsibility to produce sustainability and create opportunity; ideally nationally consistent specifications

and standards should be developed to encourage the use of recycled, recovered and remanufactured goods

- Planning for the Future - Building infrastructure – key consideration for Sydney metro area.
 - KEEs social precinct comprises artist in residence repair workshop and bikes for life.
 - KEE proposes to relocate the buy-back centre outside the liveable area and tender this service to a social enterprise. NFP to operate similar to the bower's operations.
 - RFT for reuse shop currently being drafted and will be released following the releases of restrictions arising from COVID-19.
 - Planning for the future community recycling centre.
 - CRC planned for future development.
- Phasing out Single Plastics - Australia consumes 3.4 million tonnes of plastic every year. NSW consumed 1.1 million tonnes of plastic in 2017/18 mainly packaging and households items. Through conscious consumption we can eliminate the single use plastics. Council has adopted the following policies: Single Use Plastic Policy and the Event Waste Management Policy. Council advocates for and is a leader in change our behaviour. Example of Council's child care centres using re-washable reusable bags.
- Events Waste Management Policy - Prohibits the use of single use plastics such as plastic water bottles, balloons, single use giveaways etc at events held on public lands.

QUESTION: Is Council planning to install smart bins solar powered compacting waste bins in Shelly beach? The bins have eight times more capacity than regular bins and when they are full a notification is sent to Council for collection.

ANSWER: Council has installed compacting bins at Shelly Beach and is currently researching the prospect additional locations.

QUESTION: In regard to the Single Waste Plastic Policy, is there a substitute for plastic that is truly compostable and can comply with not using single use plastics?

ANSWER: There are a lot of companies and products making this claim, this is green wash. We are contracted to a process that composts our waste from the red lid bin. If it is present in the compost after 6 weeks of processing, it is a contaminant. I am not aware of any product making this claim that is compostable.

QUESTION: Is there any data available on the reduction in container pickups by Council due to the introduction of bottle cashback centres?

ANSWER: Yes, the impact has been explained and defined in the presentation (refer to the Tonnes and Trends graphic).

QUESTION: A new landfill has come online at Orchard Hills run by Bingo. Building waste predominantly with recycling.

ANSWER: Yes, Council is aware

QUESTION: Will wine bottles be included in the Return and Earn program in future?

ANSWER: Return and Earn was designed as a litter management program and they are contemplating expanding the materials accepted. I am not sure if wine bottles will be included in future.

QUESTION: Has there been a litter reduction?

ANSWER: Council will perform a litter audit in the near future and can compare the data once complete.

QUESTION: Can Council develop a policy on the use of balloons at kids parties held in parks, in particular ocean side parks.

ANSWER: There is party guide that we developed and distribute called “Swap this for that” with further details available on Council’s website:
<https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/services/rubbish-and-recycling/single-use-plastic-reduction/swap-this-for-that>. There is a range of suggestions to encourage the community to move away from the use of single use plastic

QUESTION: Have you heard any information from the clean-up Australia people? Has there been any effect in the sort of rubbish the people are collecting?

ANSWER: Council staff would need to check this.

QUESTION: Can an update be provided with regards to the waste compactor for Scotland Island Notice of Motion presented to Council by Cr Spratt?

ANSWER: Notice of Motion will be discussed at a future Councillor Briefing.

- SRG members raised their concerns in regards to the use of bubble wrap for online purchases and the impact it has on the environment.
- Members also highlighted the use of sand in the building industry and where is it coming from? There needs to be an understanding from the government and at a consumer level of where the sand for building construction comes from.

Waste Education

- Comes in many forms seminars, tours, audits, 72 face to face workshops e.g bees wax, pickling, selling and online, repairing small appliances and furniture etc.
- The Waste calendar is distributed annually to over 100,000 households and is the main source of information regarding our waste services.
- Due to COVID-19, from May 14 2020 we have rethought our waste education program and workshops have been developed as webinars. Webinars give an opportunity for all to participate and will assist those who physically cannot attend.
- Online platform – tailored lunch time chat sessions with presenters.
- Waste Reduction Workshops:
<https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/services/rubbish-and-recycling/waste-reduction/waste-reduction-events>
- Swap for good – Single Use Plastic Reduction for business. Council has engaged with:
 - 1408 businesses
 - 83 schools
 - 5 shopping centres
 - 40 retailers
 - 730 market stalls.

- In the six months following the launch of the campaign, over 100 businesses have registered and in line with their actions plans; have saved over 950m³ of plastic, 254 plastic bags, 1,7 m coffee cups and 10,0000 plastic water bottles.
- Quick Wins include:
 - 300 businesses attended the Sustainable Solutions Expo.
 - Plastic Free Canteen webinar.
 - Westfield – to install drinking fountain hose swap.
 - Stockland Balgowlah agrees to launch Swap for Good program.
 - Swap and Go systems at 30 cafes.
 - 1 café saved over \$7000 per annum by converting 20% of customers to a mug library.
 - Sydney Fast Ferries (NRAM) ferry recycling proposal.
 - Highly adaptable program with application for any business supported by information education resources supplier lists and events.
 - Interest from other councils who adopted the programs.
- Swap for good strategy though COVID-19 -Safety first – follow advice from NSW Health and NSW food, working with cafes to promote a contactless pour , BYO straws, cutlery and bags, sustainable packaging and webinars and online support for local businesses.
- Services for Offshore Communities -Council is conducting a review of waste and recycling services for off shore communities. The first step is community consultation the timing and delivery the consultation process of this step has been delayed. The review will aim to address:
 - The general sentiment including the level of satisfaction of offshore communities with their current waste services.
 - Effectiveness and efficiency of the current service delivery.
 - Community values around waste removal services (e.g. keeping waste out of water, environment concerns, ease of access).
 - The views of key internal and external stakeholders regarding offshore waste removal.
 - The advice of waste removal industry experts.
 - Solutions for improving offshore waste removal services.
 - The level of commitment/resistance to change (internally and externally).
 - Engagement with community will be done in a holistic way.
- Network of recycling centres - work alongside with charitable organisation to build on circular economy solutions via:
 - An accessible network of recycling centres.
 - Increasing the collection and reuse/resale capacity, diverting textiles from landfill.
 - Working with all levels of government.

- Look at options that connect people with pickup and delivery.
- Partnership with social enterprises.
- Meeting with key stakeholders in the industry to talk about how we can support / work with charities as part of a circular economy initiative.

Developing our waste strategy

- The NSW government has prepared a Draft 20 year Waste Strategy underpinned by 4 key areas - How we can help for sustainable markets for recycled materials. How we can avoid and design out waste to keep materials circulating in the economy. How can we ensure that infrastructure for managing waste is provided for in a timely, safe and efficient way.
- Current and Future Policy –timeline discussed

Developing a waste strategy for the Northern Beaches

- The last two years have been the most challenging with regard to the waste services provided by Council. Council recognises the challenges and the opportunities to improve the waste services provided to the community.
- Developing the strategy is a collaborative exercise and this will be needed to create a shared vision for a circular economy underpinned by responsible consumption.
- Council aims to have the Waste Strategy implemented by June 2021.

Link for avoiding waste and adopting more sustainable practice video

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=397853011078540>

6.2 STAFF UPDATE

OVERVIEW OF DISCUSSION

Y Mentis provided an update on the Climate Action Plan. The following points were discussed:

Climate Change Workshop

- A Climate Change Workshop was held on the 6 May 2020.
- The Climate Action Plan (the Plan), structure and SRG member comments were reviewed?
- The Plan will be finalised in due course and will be presented to the Environment SRG before it is endorsed.

Zero Waste to Ocean Charter

- A Zero Waste to Ocean Charter workshop was conducted in February 2020.
- Information has been collated and a Charter has been drafted. The Charter will be updated and presented to the Environment SRG.

7.0 GENERAL BUSINESS

7.1 WEEDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

SRG members raised the following questions:

QUESTION: Does NBC has a Weeds Management Policy? Can you please provide an update with regards to the progress or the Weeds Management Policy and when would that be presented for consultation?

ANSWER: Yes, Council staff are working on a Weeds Management Policy and a plan is being prepared. A submission for funding has been lodged with the State Government. Council staff will report back to Marita with regards to this question.

ACTION

A report on the Weed Management Policy be reported back to the Environment Strategic Reference Group.

7.2 ELANORA ROAD

QUESTION: Elanora road is been resurfaced and there are fliers talking about the use of plastic bottles. Is Council aware of this?

ANSWER: Yes, this is a trial of bitumen used in road construction that incorporates processed plastic bottles

SRG members thanked Council staff for their excellent presentation.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

ITEM NO.	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	DUE DATE
General Business	That the Weed Management Policy be reported back to the Environment Strategic Reference Group	Council staff	Future Meeting

The meeting concluded at 8:15pm

This is the final page of the Minutes comprising 11 pages numbered 1 to 11 of the Environment Strategic Reference Group meeting held on Thursday 21 May 2020 and confirmed on Thursday 20 August 2020