

## 11.0 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY DIVISION REPORTS

ITEM 11.1	PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY
REPORTING MANAGER	ACTING EXECUTIVE MANAGER ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE
TRIM FILE REF	2019/398086
ATTACHMENTS	1 <a href="#">📄</a> Protect Create Live Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040 (Included In Attachments Booklet)

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### SUMMARY

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#### PURPOSE

To seek Council endorsement to publicly exhibit the draft Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040.

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has developed the draft Protect. Create. Live – Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040 (the Strategy) in order to deliver the *Protection of the Environment* and *Environmental Sustainability* outcomes adopted in Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP). This Strategy is the first consolidated environmental framework for Northern Beaches Council.

The Strategy contains three major directions – Protect, Create and Live. *Protect* focuses on protecting and enhancing our natural environment. *Create* ensures the environment we create, including our buildings, infrastructure and neighbourhoods, is designed, constructed and maintained with a low environmental footprint and is integrated into nature through green and blue networks. *Live* aims to foster a community that is living sustainably in our natural and built environment and a community that is working towards using resources efficiently and reducing carbon emissions. This direction also aims to build resilience in our community to ensure we are prepared for the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.

Under the major directions are nine themes. Eight of the themes are for the entire Northern Beaches, being bushland, catchments and waterways, coast, biodiversity, sustainable built environment, green neighbourhoods, sustainable living, adaptation and resilience. The remaining theme includes Council operations and Community collaboration, engagement and education.

Goals and commitments have been developed for each of the nine themes as well as long term strategies for how we will deliver them. The commitments are ambitious to reflect the desire in the CSP for Council to show environmental leadership. We will demonstrate leadership as an organisation by making commitments for Council operations that stretch further than those for the community.

We are aware that these commitments will be challenging to achieve. Our carbon emissions targets were developed to (roughly) align with the 2015 Paris Agreement targets of limiting global temperature increase to 2°C by the end of the century and striving to limit the increase to 1.5°C. However, in its *Global Warming of 1.5°C* publication the IPCC states that this may not be enough and that urgent and widespread systemic change is needed. In response to this, the Strategy includes an aspiration for our community and Council to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030. While we believe it will be difficult for Council to achieve this without significant and systematic change from all levels of government, it is important to acknowledge our desire to do what is necessary.

The draft Strategy was presented to the Environment Strategic Reference Group on 13 August 2019 who recommended it be presented to Council for public exhibition. Councillors have also been briefed on the draft Strategy.

The Strategy will be delivered through a series of action plans. These will be short term (two to four years) and will align with and guide Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plans. They will include specific projects and actions that Council will undertake to deliver the high level strategies in this document.

Implementation of this Strategy across the diverse operations of Council will consider the quadruple bottom line principles of sustainability to deliver equally on environmental, social and economic outcomes. We will deliver this Strategy within our existing resources, in line with the Long Term Financial Plan. We will seek opportunities to leverage external funds where we can.

Council will evaluate the progress against the goals, commitments and aspirations with a detailed assessment, report and review, to be completed every four years, along with Council's standard annual reporting programs. This will allow us to adapt the commitments, goals and aspirations in light of fast paced changes in the market, knowledge, technology, as well as federal and state policies.

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#### **RECOMMENDATION OF DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

That:

- A. Council place the draft Protect. Create. Live – Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040 on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days.
  - B. The outcomes of the public exhibition be reported to Council.
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REPORT

BACKGROUND

Council adopted Shape 2028 – The Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan (CSP) in 2018 following extensive community consultation. The *Protection of the Environment* and *Environmental Sustainability* Community Outcomes within the CSP clearly demonstrated the importance of environment and sustainability to the community. In response to this vision, Council has developed the draft *Protect. Create. Live – Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy* (the Strategy) to deliver on these outcomes. The Strategy is our plan for a healthy and diverse natural environment that is protected, supported and celebrated. The natural environment is key to our Northern Beaches bush and beach identity and a healthy environment is vital to our everyday lives and contributes to our lifestyle and quality of life. This is also the first consolidated environmental framework for the Northern Beaches.

A key factor in the development of the Strategy was that the environment and our effects on the environment don't stop at our local government boundaries. As such, we also have a responsibility to consider the 2015 Paris Agreement, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Federal and State Government commitments, the North District Plan and the 2018 Resilient Sydney Strategy in what we do locally. This line of sight is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Strategic Line of Sight

The environment of the Northern Beaches faces a range of challenges, many of which are global challenges, with threats we must actively manage locally. Like the rest of Sydney, the Northern Beaches is growing. By current trends, an extra 39,000 people will call the Northern Beaches home over the next 20 years. We know that development can put significant pressure on our environment including impacts that come from increasing consumption and an expanding urban footprint. We need to make sure that we manage any growth in the right locations and it is supported by sustainable infrastructure. Our climate is also changing, our cities are growing and technology is transforming the way we live, work and play. Climate change is expected to impact both our natural environment and the liveability of the Northern Beaches and requires local and global action to address it.

Council alone cannot achieve the goals, commitments and aspirations in this Strategy as many actions needed to achieve them fall beyond the direct control of local government. Council can play a key role in our community to reduce barriers, influence peoples' attitudes and transform behaviours to facilitate change. Council will use a series of guiding principles to maximise our impact and drive the change needed to achieve our goals. Guiding principles include advocacy, education, leading by example, engagement and collaboration.

## The Strategy

The Strategy contains three major directions – Protect, Create and Live as shown in Figure 2. *Protect* focuses on protecting and enhancing our natural environment. *Create* ensures the environment we create, including our buildings, infrastructure and neighbourhoods, is designed, constructed and maintained with a low environmental footprint and is integrated into nature through green and blue networks. *Live* aims to foster a community that is living sustainably in our natural and built environment and a community that is working towards using resources efficiently and reducing carbon emissions. This direction also aims to build resilience in our community to ensure we are prepared for the impacts of climate change and natural hazards.



Figure 2: Major directions of the Draft Strategy

Supporting the major directions are nine themes. Eight of the themes are for the entire Northern Beaches, being bushland, catchments and waterways, coast, biodiversity, sustainable built environment, green neighbourhoods, sustainable living, adaptation and resilience. The remaining theme has been developed for Council operations and Community collaboration, engagement and education. Goals, aspirations, commitments and strategies for how we will deliver these have been defined for each theme.

Direction	Themes
 <p>Protect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bushland</li> <li>• Waterways and Catchments</li> <li>• Coast</li> <li>• Biodiversity</li> </ul>
 <p>Create</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Built Environment</li> <li>• Green Neighbourhoods</li> </ul>
 <p>Live</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Living</li> <li>• Adaptation and Resilience</li> </ul>
 <p>Northern Beaches Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Operations and Collaboration, Engagement and Education</li> </ul>

Figure 3: Principal themes in the Strategy

## Goals

The goals within *Protect* are centred around protecting and enhancing the bushland, waterways and catchments, the coast and the biodiversity that is supported by these ecosystems. The natural environment on the Northern Beaches is highly valued and treasured by our community and supports an extensive range of habitats, plants and animals.

The goals in *Create* provide the opportunity to create a sustainable built environment. Our built structures remain in our environment for a long time and influence how we move around, our comfort, the amount of resources we use and the liveability our neighbourhoods. The goals in this direction focus on ensuring buildings, infrastructure and neighbourhoods are designed and built with a low environmental footprint, are integrated with nature and connect the community through green and blue networks.

The goals in the *Live* direction focus on living sustainably to protect our environment. Every day we make choices on the way we live in the environment that result in us consuming water and energy and producing waste. The goals are to deliver a community that is working towards using resources efficiently and reducing carbon emissions and building resilience in our community to ensure we are prepared for and can adapt to climate change and natural hazards.

Council's goals for its operations is to work towards being a zero carbon and water wise organisation. We will deliver community engagement and education, and will collaborate with the community and other stakeholders to enable change.

## Commitments and aspirations

Commitments, to focus our efforts to achieve our goals and measure our progress are included for each theme. We are aware that these commitments will be challenging to deliver but that they are achievable. In addition, the Strategy also lists aspirations for most themes. These define where we would ideally like to be while acknowledging that it may not be possible due to current barriers that are outside of Council's area of influence.

## Implementation and evaluation

The Strategy will be delivered through a series of action plans. These will be short term (two to four years) and will align with and guide Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plans. They will include specific projects and actions that Council will undertake to deliver the high level strategies in this document.

Implementation of this Strategy across the diverse operations of Council will consider the quadruple bottom line principles of sustainability to deliver equally on environmental, social and economic outcomes. We intend to deliver this Strategy within our existing resources, in line with the Long Term Financial Plan. We will seek opportunities to leverage external funds where we can.

Council will evaluate the progress against the goals, commitments and aspirations with a detailed assessment, report and review to be completed every four years, in addition to the normal annual reporting programs. This will allow us to adapt the commitments, goals and aspirations in light of fast paced changes in the market, knowledge and technology, as well as federal and state policies.

In discussions with the Environment SRG during the preparation of the Strategy members repeatedly expressed concern about the ability of Council to progress against some of the goals given continued population growth. This is reflected in one of the recommendations set out below.

## CONSULTATION

Extensive consultation occurred during the development of the Strategy. This consultation consisted of internal stakeholder workshops, discussions and workshops with the Environment Strategic Reference Group over the past 12 months, a local environment group workshop and community focus groups.

The draft Strategy was presented to the Environment Strategic Reference Group on Tuesday 13 August who recommended:

*That the draft Environment and Climate Change Strategy be presented to Council and be placed in public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.*

*That the Environment SRG acknowledges that population growth will make it difficult to achieve many of the targets in the Environment and Climate Change Strategy*

## TIMING

The draft Strategy will be publicly exhibited for at least 28 days. Following the community engagement period it is anticipated that a final version of the Strategy will be reported to Council for consideration and adoption.

## LINK TO COUNCIL STRATEGY

This report relates to the following outcomes and goals of the Community Strategic Plan:

Shape 2028 Community Outcomes	Summary of alignment between Draft Strategy and Shape 2028	Link to Draft Environment & Climate Change Strategy Themes
Protection of the Environment	<p>The Draft Strategy has been developed to deliver the following goals of the Protection of the Environment Strategic Community Outcome:</p> <p><i>Goal 1: Our bushland, coast and waterways are protected to ensure safe and sustainable use for present and future generations</i></p> <p><i>Goal 2 – Our environment and community are resilient to natural hazards and climate change.</i></p> <p><i>Goal 3 – Our community is well-supported in protecting the environment.</i></p>	<p>Bushland</p> <p>Waterways and Catchments</p> <p>Coast</p> <p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Resilience and Adaptation</p>
Environmental Sustainability	<p>The Draft Strategy has been developed to deliver the following goals of the Environmental Sustainability Outcome:</p> <p><i>Goal 4 – Our Council is recognised as a community leader in environmental sustainability.</i></p> <p><i>Goal 5 – Our built environment is developed in line with best practice sustainability principles.</i></p> <p><i>Goal 6 – Our community will continue to work towards sustainable use of resources.</i></p>	<p>Sustainable Built Environment</p> <p>Green Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Sustainable Living</p> <p>Northern Beaches Council Operations</p>

## FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The exhibition process and materials has been included within existing operational budgets. Implementation of this Strategy across the diverse operations of Council will consider the quadruple bottom line principles of sustainability to deliver equally on environmental, social,

economic and good governance outcomes. We intend to deliver this Strategy within our existing resources, in line with the Long Term Financial Plan. We will seek opportunities to leverage external funds where we can.

### **SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Strategy includes directions for how we will protect and improve the liveability of the Northern Beaches. In particular it includes strategies to foster a more connected and resilient community.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Strategy provides Council and the Community with the strategic direction to protect and improve our environment, now and for future generations.

### **GOVERNANCE AND RISK CONSIDERATIONS**

The Strategy provides clear direction for Council to deliver the Protection of the Environment and Environmental Sustainability Community Outcomes. Council will evaluate the progress against the goals, commitments and aspirations with a detailed assessment, report and review to every four years.