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**Draft CLIMATE STRATEGY and ACTION PLAN**

The Mosman Parks & Bushland Association deeply appreciates the action that Council is taking on Climate Change and we would like to congratulate Council on the hard work that has gone into this "Plan".

We have attended the Council workshops on mitigation and adaptation and the forum, and one of our committee members is a member of Council's Climate Action Community Consultative Committee.

As a preliminary to our submission, we would like to acknowledge the efforts of Denise Wilton (Mayor of Mosman 2005-2008), to raise the level of community awareness of climate change. Denise encouraged the community to reduce emissions and made practical suggestions for doing so.

In our submission we shall concentrate on, but not be limited to the Action Area, Biodiversity and Trees. Climate change is fundamental, and the action areas are interconnected.

Appreciated aspects of the Strategy and Action Plan:

- That this is a "living document" that will grow and probably change over time.
- The 2- pronged approach – Council operations and community action, making the Mosman community central to the strategy.
- The creation of achievable and measurable targets
- The upcoming future Climate Resilience and Adaptation Plan
- Recognition of the importance of local action
- Results in each action area to be recorded annually and reported through the Pulse Reporting system and Mosplan
- Separation of Actions into high, medium and low priority

Council is to be congratulated on setting the targets to limit its own emissions and its support for other areas of mitigation. We have considerable confidence in Council's ability to meet its targets by 2030.

By far the more difficult part of the plan will be to bring the community along with it. Coaxing the community to meet the net zero emissions target by 2040 will be the more challenging aspect of the plan.

## A SUGGESTION AS TO THE LAYOUT

### Action Areas

**Engaging and Educating the Community** is the last of the Action Areas that begin with Energy Use, Biodiversity and Trees and .....

MPBA would like to suggest that the Engaging and Educating the Community section should come first as a stand-alone as it pervades all the other Action Areas. The Action Areas would then follow.

### ENGAGING AND EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY

- Semantic difficulty with the word “Educating”. Despite this being precisely what Council is attempting to achieve, the word sounds condescending. We would like to suggest that “providing information to the community” would avoid that problem.
- It is very pleasing that Council will resource this objective of engaging and educating the community.
- Reaching community members will be difficult. All avenues will have to be used and more explored. The list of Current Actions is excellent and needs promotion – more than reliance on the Council website.
- Information on the Council www is excellent and an excellent way of communicating, but people are busy – how many read it?
- Newsletters, brochures and flyers - particularly useful when they coincide with new and upcoming initiatives that Council wishes to promote.
- Social media is a must. Will Council be able to use the various email and social media groups such as Nextdoor Mosman and Mosman Living?
- Webinars and events including parent/student events at schools.
- Further suggestions –
  - brochures and advice in rates notices, particularly anything about subsidies, savings, and ways to reduce energy use.
  - We note that Council will promote Zero Emissions Sydney North webinars. Council could also approach other community groups. **Mosman Parks & Bushland, for instance, would be willing to help with publicity for events and initiatives, if they are appropriate to our aims, through our email communications and website etc.**

As the plan is currently written, the Action Areas contains excellent strategies and priorities for Council action, but they do not contain many actions for residents or many of Council’s ideas for encouraging those actions.

We would like to suggest an addition at the end of each Action Area - actions that residents could take and Council’s ideas for informing and encouraging them to do so. This could help ensure that each action area receives the necessary attention.

It may be the intention to include some of the suggestions MPBA will make for the Action Areas in the Climate Resilience and Adaptation Plan, but we will make them here nevertheless as some of them will be appropriate to Mitigation.

### 3.

#### **ACTION AREA 1 ENERGY**

The objectives are welcomed – driving efficiency, conservation and reduction and driving the use of renewable energy.

The Current Actions in this section are mainly concerned with Council's specific plans to reduce its own emissions and are impressive. The Solar My Schools program is achieving community involvement and therefore awareness.

*A question regarding the reduction of emissions targets for both Council and the community. The targets are met in part by the purchase of offsets and carbon credits. Will this be an ongoing strategy or will we eventually achieve genuine zero emissions?*

#### **Engaging the community on Energy**

The methods of engaging the community are largely contained in the Engaging and Educating the Community, but more guidance and information could be provided.

On solar panels –things to consider and where to go for advice.

On choosing a provider – things to consider and links to information.

Ways in which Council can help reduce energy use.

Cost effectiveness

*(News just in from the Northern Beaches Council is that energy for its large buildings and streetlights will be supplied by Infigen's renewable energy farm at Bodangora. The council expects this to reduce its carbon footprint by 80% bringing emissions neutrality much closer.)*

#### **ACTION AREA 2 BIODIVERSITY AND TREES**

Biodiversity and trees are core values and objectives of the Mosman Parks & Bushland, for their own sake, for their aesthetic value and for the mental and physical well-being of the community.

The Climate Strategy and Action Plan's Objectives of using biodiversity and trees as part of the armoury to mitigate against climate change are good. (However, we suggest that we and others in the community may need a better understanding of the operation of biochar).

#### **Current Actions**

Council's bushland management is appreciated and commended.

Not noted in the Current Actions is Council's success in obtaining grants for tree and habitat planting with the help of volunteers. This is a good outcome for the environment and for community education.

Two suggestion for new street and park tree planting focusing on Heat Island areas:

1. Open air car parks would benefit from properly maintained shade trees.
2. There has been a tendency to avoid planting sizeable trees in heritage precincts.

We suggest that heritage and trees are not incompatible.

Fire management: It is probably unnecessary to comment on the amount of research currently occurring in this area. Asset Protection Burns and ecological burns need to apply up-to-date thinking.

## **Future Actions**

Many of the High Priority Actions seem to be underway already. We support their continuation.

Bee/pollinator friendly planting/native vegetation:

Suggestion: We understand that some councils are encouraging residents to have native beehives. The Kuringai project places hives in residents' gardens. The hives remain the property of the council and they are split professionally once every two years to create a multiplying effect.

Low priority:

Moss trees may be invasive. Australia has a dreadful record of importing species that then become weeds. This should be investigated very carefully indeed!

Sea grass protection, marinas, and intertidal ecology expansion: MPBA supported the creation of a Sydney Marine Park and we were disappointed when it was knocked back. We would support increased protection for coastal ecology.

## **Engaging the community on Biodiversity and Trees**

Protection of the tree canopy on private land is already in the High Priority list of actions.

Protection of the tree canopy on public land from vandalism. We appreciate Council's efforts to discover and deal with vandals. Tree banners seem to be effective. Perhaps a notice in rates notices about the fines for tree vandalism would be effective?

Community awareness of the benefits of trees and grass in their gardens could be increased.

Large trees and grass reduce temperature. This is particularly beneficial during a heatwave when the use of air conditioners and the electricity to run them can be reduced. The trees will benefit not just a single household, but the heat island effect of the neighbourhood.

Council should discourage the use of plastic grass by private households. It is hot and its disposal creates a waste problem.

Council could encourage the use of grass instead of paving. Every little bit will help.

Choice of trees. In some parts of Mosman residents could consider planting deciduous trees on their northern aspect. The trees would allow sun in winter to reduce electricity use, and shade in summer - also to reduce electricity use.

Apartment blocks and trees. Trees and greenery are so necessary for the mental wellbeing of apartment dwellers. A problem is often the lack of space and lack of depth of soil to support large trees. This should be addressed at a planning level.

### **ACTION AREA 3 WATER**

Using less water and capturing other sources of water will be necessary if we are to deal with droughts.

Seriously long droughts may well affect our vegetation.

When we use water, it has to be pumped from somewhere. Residents having hot showers are also using electricity and paying for it.

Council is right to be mindful of this issue and to try to reduce dependency.

#### **Current Actions**

In this section Council actions, current and future are aligned with advice and information for residents.

Particularly pleasing to MPBA is the protection and enhancement of Council's natural water courses and adjacent sites.

Stormwater reuse is an important measure. Could the number of reuse tanks be increased over time? The Drill Hall and Botanic Park reuse tanks are a start.

#### **Engaging the community on Water**

We note the efforts to inform the community about Sydney Water programs.

There is no mention of rainwater tanks. Advice on rainwater tanks and their installation would be helpful.

### **ACTION AREA 4 WASTE**

(We would like to acknowledge and thank Cllr Sherlock's for his interest and leadership on the issue of waste.)

In this Action Area, Council is clear in its own objectives and doing well. We are particularly interested in the circular economy actions that Council is undertaking. Bringing awareness of Council programs to residents is where the challenge lies, but the community is aware of the waste challenge, particularly after such programs as The War on Waste, so amusingly presented by the ABC.

What the community may not be so aware of is the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> produced by the waste in landfill. Council, through an information program could help the community connect the dots.

We would like to suggest better promotion of the subsidy for compost bins and further promotion of worm farms.

A program we have become aware of is the **Food Organics/Garden Organics (FOGO)**. So far Woollahra, Randwick and I believe, Wollongong have FOGO programs. Mosman residents are likely to embrace this program as it would reduce the quantity of waste going to landfill and it would be usefully used.

6.

**Engaging the Community on Waste**

Provide information on the production of CO2 from landfill.  
Promote subsidy for compost bins and the use of worm farms  
Introduce a FOGO system

**ACTION AREA 5 TRANSPORT**

Objectives and Actions supported.

Council could attempt to advocate for increased bus services where the local population would support their provision.

**ACTION AREA 6 BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Objectives and Actions supported, but we suspect they do not go nearly far enough. A report to Waverley, Woollahra and Randwick Councils "Future Proofing Residential Development to Climate Change" makes some extremely scary predictions about liveability in dwellings in a climate affected future. Regulations of building design and construction will need to be changed urgently and the community will need to be informed.

**FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE**

We note that the Climate Strategy and Action Plan is a work in progress and that estimates of funding are likely to change as the plan is developed.

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The development of this action plan and strategy is of great importance to the current community and to a future community and has implications that go well beyond Mosman.

Mosman Parks & Bushland is grateful for Council for its work on the Plan and we look forward to its further development. We are also looking forward to the complementary Climate Resilience and Adaptation Plan.

Thank you.



Kate Eccles  
President  
28.2.2021