



Community & Environment Committee

Agenda: *Community & Environment Committee*

Date: *Monday 23 February 2009*

Time: *6.00pm*

Outline of Meeting Protocol & Procedure:

- The Chairperson will call the Meeting to order and ask the Committee/Staff to present apologies or late correspondence.
- The Chairperson will commence the Order of Business as shown in the Index to the Agenda.
- At the beginning of each item the Chairperson will ask whether a member(s) of the public wish to address the Committee.
- If person(s) wish to address the Committee, they are allowed four (4) minutes in which to do so. Please direct comments to the issues at hand.
- If there are persons representing both sides of a matter (eg applicant/objector), the person(s) against the recommendation speak first.
- At the conclusion of the allotted four (4) minutes, the speaker resumes his/her seat and takes no further part in the debate unless specifically called to do so by the Chairperson.
- If there is more than one (1) person wishing to address the Committee from the same side of the debate, the Chairperson will request that where possible a spokesperson be nominated to represent the parties.
- The Chairperson has the discretion whether to continue to accept speakers from the floor.
- After considering any submissions the Committee will debate the matter (if necessary), and arrive at a recommendation (R items which proceed to Full Council) or a resolution (D items for which the Committee has delegated authority).

Delegated Authority (“D” Items):

- Community Services and Programmes.
- Health.
- Liquor Licences.
- Fire Protection Orders.
- Residential Parking Schemes (surveillance and administration).
- Traffic Management (Traffic Committee Recommendations).
- Waverley/Woollahra Process Plant.
- To require such investigations, reports or actions as considered necessary in respect of matters contained within the Business Agendas (and as may be limited by specific Council resolution).
- Confirmation of the Minutes of its Meeting.
- Any other matter falling within the responsibility of the Community and Environment Committee and not restricted by the Local Government Act or required to be a Recommendation to Full Council as listed below.
- Library Services
- Licensing.
- Regulatory.
- Waste Minimisation

Recommendation only to the Full Council (“R” Items):

- Such matters as are specified in Section 377 of the Local Government Act and within the ambit of the Committee considerations.
- Matters which involve broad strategic or policy initiatives within responsibilities of the Committee.
- Matters requiring the expenditure of moneys and in respect of which no Council vote has been made.
- Matters delegated to the Council by the Traffic Authority of NSW.
- Matters not within the specified functions of the Committee, or which are not the subject of a Business Agenda (current or past).
- Matters reserved by individual Councillors, in accordance with any Council policy on "safeguards".
- Parks and Reserve Plans of Management (Strategies, Policies and Objectives)
- Residential Parking Schemes - Provision and Policies

Committee Membership:

7 Councillors

Quorum:

The quorum for a Committee meeting is 4 Councillors.

WOOLLAHRA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Notice of Meeting

19 February 2009

To: His Worship The Mayor, Councillor Andrew Petrie ex-officio
Councillors Peter Cavanagh (Chair)
Anthony Boskovitz
Susan Jarnason
Greg Medcraft
Ian Plater
Isabelle Shapiro
Susan Wynne (Deputy)

Dear Councillors

Community & Environment Committee Meeting – 23 February 2009

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, I request your attendance at a Meeting of the Council's **Community and Environment Committee** to be held in the **Council Chambers, 536 New South Head Road, Double Bay, on Monday 23 February 2009 at 6.00pm.**

Gary James
General Manager

Additional Information Relating to Committee Matters

Site Inspection

Other Matters

Meeting Agenda

Item	Subject	Pages
1	Leave of Absence and Apologies	
2	Late Correspondence	
3	Declarations of Interest	

Items to be Decided by this Committee using its Delegated Authority

D1	Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 9 February 2009	1
D2	Earth Hour 2009 – 813.G	2

Items to be Submitted to the Council for Decision with Recommendations from this Committee

R1	Proposed Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Policy and Strategy – 588.G	8
R2	Climbing the Little green Steps – 1142.G	18

Item No: D1 Delegated to Committee
Subject: **Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 9 February 2009**
Author: Les Windle, Manager - Governance
File No: See Council Minutes
Reason for Report: The Minutes of the Meeting of Monday 9 February 2009 were previously circulated. In accordance with the guidelines for Committees' operations it is now necessary that those Minutes be formally taken as read and confirmed.

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Community and Environment Committee Meeting of 9 February 2009 be taken as read and confirmed.

Les Windle
Manager – Governance

Item No: D2 Delegated to Committee
Subject: **Earth Hour 2009**
Author: Chris Munro– Sustainability Projects Coordinator
File No: 813.G
Reason for Report: To seek Council endorsement for participation in Earth Hour 2009.

Recommendation:

- A. That Woollahra Council signs up to participate in Earth Hour 2009, ensuring that interior lights at Council buildings are turned off on Saturday 28 March 2008 from 8.30pm to 9.30pm.
- B. That Council promotes Earth Hour to Council staff and the broader community through a variety of communication channels.

Background

On Saturday 31 March 2007, 2.2 million people and 2,100 Sydney businesses turned off their lights for one hour. This collective action reduced Sydney's energy consumption by 10.2% for one hour. This is the equivalent effect of taking 48,000 cars off the road for one hour.

In 2008 the event had become a global sustainability movement with up to 50 million people across 35 countries participating. Global landmarks such as the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, Rome's Colosseum and the Coca Cola billboard in Times Square, all stood in darkness, delivering a powerful message about the need for action on climate change.

Earth Hour this year is on the **28 March** and is a global call to action to every individual, every business and every community to get involved in working towards a sustainable future.

Woollahra Council has participated in Earth Hour 2007 and then again in Earth Hour 2008. Council endorsed the recommendations of past reports recommending Council participation in this event. A copy of the 2007 Mayoral Minute and 2008 Community & Environment Report are attached as Annexure 1 & 2.

Proposal

It is proposed that Council sign up to participate in Earth Hour 2009 by turning off lighting in our buildings on 28 March 2009 from 8.30pm to 9.30pm (some exterior security lights will be left on at the Council Chambers for safety reasons). As a part of Council involvement in Earth Hour, it is proposed that the event be endorsed and promoted to Council staff and the broader community through a variety of communication channels.

One Council initiative is to encourage restaurants in Woollahra to promote and participate in Earth Hour 2009. It is proposed that information about the event be advertised on the Mayoral page of the Wentworth Courier.

Restaurants will be encouraged sign up for Earth Hour, turning off all non essential lighting from 8.30pm to 9.30pm and allow diners to engage in discussions about climate change over candle light.

Council will offer a range of incentives to selected business who wish to work in partnership with Woollahra Council. These include, free beeswax candles for the first business to register, free give aways for all other participating businesses and advertising in Council media.

Information about collaborating with Council and incentives will be distributed to all restaurants and provided to Earth Hour organisers, who can in turn promote this initiative as a case study to other Councils. Currently over 93 Councils in Australia support the event.

Earth Hour 2009 will also be promoted in Woollahra Council's 'Our Environment' newsletter, a quarterly newsletter distributed to community and school groups, internal and external stakeholders.

Consultation

The Manager Property and Projects and the Manager Communications were consulted for the preparation of this report. Both have advised that we are able to carry out the recommended actions included in this report.

Earth Hour's National Manager and Woollahra Council's Communication Manager were also consulted for the business initiative. Both have provided information for reporting and promotion.

Identification of Income & Expenditure

There are no additional expenditure requirements for Woollahra Council's participation in Earth Hour 2008.

The business initiative will rely on available resources used at other promotional events. There will be an additional cost for purchasing beeswax candles. This will be small and taken from the Special Environment Levy Fund, Environmental Education.

Conclusion

Australia and the globe are experiencing rapid climate change. Since the middle of the 20th century, Australian temperatures have, on average, risen by about 1°C with an increase in the frequency of heatwaves and a decrease in the numbers of frosts and cold days. Council acknowledges that Climate change is a major threat facing our planet and has been actively involved in programs to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions and that of our community since 1997. Participation in Earth Hour 2009 will further demonstrate to the community Council's strong commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and taking action on climate change.

Chris Munro
Sustainable Projects Coordinator

Warwick Hatton
Director – Technical Services

ANNEXURE

1. Copy of the Mayoral Minute to Council on the 29 January 2007.
2. Copy of the Community & Environment Report to Council 24 February 2008.

Item No: R1 Recommendation to Council
Subject: **Proposed Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Policy and Strategy**
Author: Mark Ramsay – Manager Depot and Waste Services
File No: 588.G
Reason for Report: To recommend measures to reduce waste generation and disposal to landfill, and to encourage waste resource recovery

Recommendation:

- A. That Council place the attached draft Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Policy and Strategy, with background information, on public exhibition for 28 days with a submission period of 42 days including the exhibition period.
- B. That a report be provided at the conclusion of the exhibition period, with recommendations for a final Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery Policy and Strategy.

Background:

We all create waste as part of our everyday lives. Australians are the second highest waste generators in the world. The increasing environmental and cost implications are significant if we continue to generate waste at current levels.

These environmental and cost implications have resulted in SSROC currently setting up a Waste Strategy Project Team which will be responsible for looking at all options available to Councils to make “The transition from Waste Management to Resource Stewardship”.

The project team will be responsible for looking at all future waste management options open to Councils including:

- Do nothing
- New facilities
- Composition of waste stream
- Improving collection methods

Woollahra has already implemented waste minimisation strategies and education campaigns that have resulted in us being at the forefront of the drive to reduce waste to landfill.

Recent audit results show that our residents are currently disposing of an average of 7.7kgs of domestic residual waste, 9.3kgs of green organics and 5.9kgs of recycling per household per week. This is compared to other SSROC Councils who are disposing on average of 9.4kgs of domestic residual waste, 5.4kgs of green organics and 5.5kgs of recycling per household per week. An audit carried out in 2005 showed that the average household in SSROC disposed of 8.6kgs of domestic residual waste per week.

Whilst these results are encouraging and Council is fully supportive of the long term direction SSROC is undertaking, there is much more that Woollahra can and should do at a local level in the short term to further reduce environmental impacts and operating costs.

Woollahra Local Waste Management Plan 1999

In 1999 Council adopted the Woollahra Local Waste Management Plan (LWMP) with the following objectives:

- 1 *By June 2001 diversion will increase from over 30% by weight of total domestic wastes to around 60% through waste reduction at – source, recycling and diversion of greenwastes.*
- 2 *If point 1 is achieved then a 40% reduction in disposal rates is achieved. The aim of the Regional Waste Boards is to achieve 60% by the year 2000*
- 3 *By 2006 a further increase in diversion is expected to a total of 63% due to new infrastructure built in the Southern Sydney Region for the treatment of putrescible waste.*

This Plan was required under the then current structure of Regional Waste Boards. Council failed to achieve the aims of the LWMP in that, by August 2005, we were diverting only 50.1% of our waste from landfill. The goal as set in point 3 of a 63% reduction with the building of new infrastructure was not achievable as there has been no new infrastructure built within the Southern Sydney Region.

Waste Issues

Generation of solid residential waste and disposal to landfill continue to be issues which it is considered Council needs to address with an appropriate policy position and supporting strategy, for the following reasons:

1. **Problems associated with landfill**
 - a. Greenhouse gases – generation of methane and carbon dioxide gas which contribute to global warming. One tonne of waste equates to one tonne of greenhouse gases generated. On average we collect 60 tonnes of domestic waste per week excluding clean-up. This is generating approximately 60 tonnes of greenhouse gas, plus the emissions from truck movements to transport the waste.
 - b. Leachate – toxic cocktail of heavy metals, acids, organics and other nasty liquids that filter through landfill and pollute our groundwater and waterways, and degrade soil.
 - c. Avoidable costs to ratepayers of disposing of recyclable items in landfill, at elevated tipping fees set by Government.
 - d. Unnecessary space taken up by recyclable items in landfill, reducing capacity of available landfill sites.
 - e. Lack of suitable sites for landfill when existing sites reach maximum capacity. Sites located in more distant regional areas mean longer travel distances, more emissions and increased costs of plant and labour.
2. **Depletion of natural resources** – Wood, minerals, fossil fuels and water often go into the manufacture of products and packaging and are also found in the actual products themselves. These resources are lost when items treated as waste are buried in landfill.
3. **Pollution of land, air and water** - The life cycle of a product can have a significant impact on the environment. Mining, transportation, and waste disposal contribute to polluting and degrading the condition of our environment.
4. **Cost** – The State Government's Landfill Waste Levy is continually rising with the intent of encouraging local governments to reduce waste. These increases are passed on to ratepayers through the Domestic Waste Levy, but can be reduced by minimising waste generation.

In order to encourage the community to reduce the amount of waste we are sending to landfill, it is considered that Council should develop a Policy Statement on Waste Reduction and a pro-active Waste Reduction and Resources Strategy, to succeed the Local Waste Management Plan. This Policy and Strategy would become part of the Council's Community Strategic Plan

It is considered that Council's role should be to encourage waste minimisation and to assist residents to avoid and reduce waste generation, and to reuse and recycle in every way practicable. Our existing paper and container recycling service has done this to some degree, however, it is only one component of sustainable waste management. We need to consider other actions that avoid and minimise waste in the first instance as well as develop an understanding of materials at the point of disposal as useful resources rather than waste items destined for landfill.

Waste Levy

The State Government has acted to discourage waste disposal by imposing a Waste Levy on top of gate fees set by landfill operators and in 2005 made a decision to increase the Waste Levy for every tonne tipped at landfill by \$7 per year for the next five years. By 2010, this will raise the Waste Levy to \$53.70 per tonne.

These funds are indirectly returned to Council by way of the "Performance Improvement Payments" scheme now operated by the Department of Environment and Climate Change (DECC), which returned \$89,000 to Council in the 07/08 financial year. These payments can be used by Council at its discretion, but the DECC encourages Councils to use them in their waste minimization strategies. This year's payment was used to offset the cost of purchasing kitchen tidy bins and running education campaigns for the implementation of the new organics collection service.

DECC calculates a pool of funds annually based on the total domestic waste disposed to landfill from all councils in the regulated area in the preceding year. That total tonnage to landfill was multiplied by \$3 per tonne in the base year 2006-07, and rises annually in \$3 increments, to \$15 per tonne in 2010-11. The Performance Improvement Payments pool is shared between the eligible councils in proportion to their populations. In order to receive the performance payment councils need to meet all of the stipulated performance criteria and provide DECC with a performance improvement payment certificate.

The performance Improvement Payment represents a return to Council from money paid through the Waste Levy of approximately 15%. The DECC website does not give a clear indication of where the remainder of the Waste Levy is spent.

With an estimated 2.7% CPI increase per year on the current gate fee, it is estimated that by 2010 we will be paying a minimum of \$135 (excl GST) for every tonne of domestic residual waste tipped at landfill. At 2007/2008 tonnages, this will result in tipping costs for domestic residual waste alone of approximately \$1.6m. If Council does not act now to reduce the amount of waste discarded by households, this figure will be even higher.

Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001

The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 (WARR ACT 2001) sets out a diversion rate of waste to landfill of 66% by 2010.

In a waste audit conducted in 2008 by Anne Prince Consultants for all SSROC Councils, it was found that Woollahra diverted 64.6% of waste generated from landfill. This was the highest result found to date in any of the audits carried out by Anne Prince Consultants.

However, this figure is due to a significant increase in the collection of green waste in Woollahra, whereas the percentage recovery of key recyclables has actually fallen. We are collecting an average of 9.3kgs of green organics per week per household, compared to the average for all SSROC Councils of 5.4kgs per week per household. A desirable objective would be to reduce the amount of green waste required to be collected and the associated truck movements.

The audit also found that a further 9.5% could be diverted if all paper, bottles and green waste were removed from the domestic waste bin (total 74.1%) and that a maximum diversion rate of 81.1% could be achieved if food scraps were also removed.

Under the WARR Act, Councils are required to comply with the objectives stated below.

Part 1 - Preliminary

Part 1 includes the objects of the WARR Act and defines certain terms. The objects of the Act (section 3) are as follows:

- a. to encourage the most efficient use of resources and to reduce environmental harm in accordance with the principles of ecologically sustainable development,*
- b. to ensure that resource management options are considered against a hierarchy of the following order:*
 - i. avoidance of unnecessary resource consumption,*
 - ii. resource recovery (including reuse, reprocessing, recycling and energy recovery),*
 - iii. disposal,*
- c. to provide for the continual reduction in waste generation,*
- d. to minimise the consumption of natural resources and the final disposal of waste by encouraging the avoidance of waste and the reuse and recycling of waste,*
- e. to ensure that industry shares with the community the responsibility for reducing and dealing with waste,*
- f. to ensure the efficient funding of waste and resource management planning, programs and service delivery,*
- g. to achieve integrated waste and resource management planning, programs and service delivery on a State-wide basis,*
- h. to assist in the achievement of the objectives of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.*

The term 'waste' is defined in the Act to have the same meaning as in the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.

Proposed Policy and Strategy for future waste management in Woollahra

The Policy statement sets out Council's goals in adopting a waste reduction strategy.

Policy Statement

- Council will take action itself, and provide information and assistance to the community, to reduce the generation of waste, and to re-use and to recycle materials
- Council will provide information and assistance to the community to develop a perception of “waste” materials at the point of disposal as useful resources rather than items destined for landfill.

Objectives

- Achieve diversion from landfill targets as required by the WARR Act 2001
- Achieve further diversion from landfill by taking measures to divert all paper, bottles and green waste and food scraps from domestic waste bins
- Provide an economically and environmentally sustainable service to residents
- Ensure residents are well educated and informed on all waste avoidance and resource recovery options
- Encourage and assist residents to manage waste sustainably in accordance with the waste hierarchy as set out in the WARR Act 2001.
- Provide more sustainable waste management options to ensure maximum waste diversion and resource recovery
- Identify, promote and act upon re-use and recycling opportunities as they arise

To meet the objectives as set out above, there are three areas to be addressed:

1. Set targets
2. Modify Council services to improve diversion from landfill
3. Influence community attitudes and practices through:
 - (a) education and informationand
 - (b) pricing of services

1. Targets

It is proposed that Council set targets which address the requirements of the WARR Act 2001, and the further diversions which the Anne Prince audit indicates can be achieved. Proposed targets are:

- 66% diversion from landfill target by 2012 (as required by WARR 2001),
- A further 9.5% diversion from landfill by 2012 taking measures to divert all paper, bottles and green waste from domestic waste bins
- A further 7% diversion from landfill by 2012 taking measures to divert food scraps from domestic waste bins

2. Modify Council Services to improve diversion

Domestic Waste:

It is current policy that every household is provided with the equivalent of 120 litre per week disposal capacity for their domestic household "waste". This includes day to day kitchen, sanitary and miscellaneous non-recyclable wastes (e.g. plastic wrap, polystyrene etc). There is also provision for households to purchase an extra 120 litre by paying an extra Domestic Waste Management (DWM) charge. Currently there are approximately 1,000 households paying the extra DWM charge. This charge has been increased from time to time to cover the costs of investigating the need for extra services, providing advice on options for reducing waste generation and providing the extra services where found necessary.

Council has been trialling two initiatives that have proven to be successful in reducing residents' waste and educating them on sustainable waste management practices in order to avoid the need for a second bin.

The first is the food organics trial that was undertaken in Vacluse and Watsons Bay and was recently introduced as a full time service across the municipality:

Food waste comprises 40-50% of waste in residents' bins. Used correctly, residents can halve their waste and remove the need for requiring additional waste capacity in the form of an additional domestic waste bin. By recycling organics, we are also helping to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases normally created in landfill (1 tonne of waste is equivalent to 1 tonne of greenhouse emissions). Council has recently approved this service to be extended to the rest of the municipality.

Recycling food organics is the next step in recycling and should soon become second nature for residents. Nonetheless, to ensure this service is being used to its fullest extent, in time, we will need to investigate the possibility of reducing the collection of the residual bin to fortnightly, whilst continuing our current practice of collecting the organics and recycling bins weekly.

Secondly, in February 2007, we introduced a waste audit for any resident who requests to purchase an extra domestic waste service. This is particularly relevant where the household comprises fewer than five people. Industry standards indicate that 120 litre is enough to cater for 4/5 people. The audit involves our Waste Technical Officer visiting the resident on collection day, emptying the bin and sorting rubbish into items that can be recycled and those that can't.

This approach has proven to be a very effective educational tool and most residents have been encouraged by the fact that not only are they saving money by not having to purchase an extra domestic waste service, but that they are also helping the environment. Since commencing these audits we have received 138 requests for an extra service. If these services were to be supplied without question, it would have increased our tonnages by 57.4 tonnes per year, or an extra 6.5 truck loads. This is both economically and environmentally unsustainable. Data collected to date shows that carrying out these audits would more than halve this requirement, as many residents would not need the extra service at all and of those that do, many would only require the provision of an extra 20 litres.

It is therefore proposed that:

1. requests for an additional domestic waste service generally not be approved until an audit is carried out to assist these residents with all available recycling options
2. the extra service only be approved when, by way of the audit, it is agreed that the extra service is warranted

3. we offer to provide a 140 litre bin, for a nominal extra charge, rather than providing a full 120 litre second bin at the full additional domestic waste charge.

Special Event Bins

Special event bins are available for residents to hire to cater for any excess waste that may be generated as the result of entertaining guests, having parties, or over the Christmas period. This service carries a charge as per Council's adopted Fees & Charges.

Recycling bins are provided on request to cater for additional bottles, or other recyclable materials, which generally comprise the majority of additional waste generated during functions. This service is available free of charge.

Green Waste

As with the domestic waste additional service, there is currently no limit on the number of green waste bins a household can purchase.

The implementation across the municipality of the "organics service" described above means that some residents may need to have several organic waste bins, but this should be limited to a maximum of three bins. It is proposed that households that generate large amounts of green/organic waste be encouraged and assisted to carry out composting and/or worm farming

We currently run five or six composting and worm farming courses throughout the year and they are becoming more popular, with each course having at least 15 - 20 participants. To assist and encourage residents with taking up these options, it is proposed that Council will become a point of purchase and offer compost bins and worm farms at discounted rates, especially during workshops, as this will provide the opportunity for residents to immediately put into practice what they have learned. Requests for compost bins and worm farms are often made by residents participating in these workshops.

Composting is the most efficient and effective way of recycling organic resources as it reduces the need for their collection, which reduces waste to landfill, the associated labour and tipping costs and emissions created by truck movements. In addition to these savings, residents are able to keep and benefit from the product they have created to enrich and bring life back to their soils. Of particular significance in these times where global warming and drought is of concern, compost is most effective at improving the soil's capability to retain carbon, hold water and also can act as mulch which means residents can further save water.

Recycling

Households can currently purchase as many recycling bins/crates as they need, as well as being able to book in additional recycling on the same day as collection if they have more than their crates can hold. The use of this system will be continued and encouraged.

Household Clean-Up

Council currently provides residents with free quarterly household clean-up services for the collection of goods that can not be disposed of in the bins provided. These items include beds, wardrobes, fridges, etc.

We currently split the Municipality into 11 zones and carry out this service over 44 weeks of the year, ceasing the service for four weeks during March and April and again in December and January. In 2007/08, this service collected 1,162 tonnes of dry waste. Many of the items disposed of are items that could otherwise be recycled, or disposed of in a more appropriate and responsible manner, such as cardboard boxes and e-waste.

Council has for many years provided a separate scrap metal collection service, but this has been used by residents mainly for the disposal of fridges, washing machines and other large items. In 2007, Council entered into a contract with Waste Services New South Wales (WSN), for the disposal of our dry waste material. Under this contract WSN remove all scrap metals for recycling. Whilst this has removed a further 10 – 12 tonnes of scrap metal from landfill, it does not remove the other recyclable/re-usable products.

To ensure these household items are removed from the footpath as quickly as possible, the clean-up service is carried out by 14 staff from the Street Cleaning section. The impact on other services that these staff could be performing, such as street cleaning and weeding, is substantial.

It is proposed that this service be reduced from four to three free collections per year, by eliminating the second clean-up of each year, which runs between mid March and the beginning of June. This period coincides with the heavy leaf fall period and would allow staff resources to be concentrated on sweeping leaves from streets and gutters, rather than carrying out clean-up. It is also historically the lightest clean-up collection period of the four held each year. This may initially increase the incidence of illegal dumping, but with increased policing and education, it is anticipated that residents will use the alternative methods available to them,

Paid Pick Ups

A paid pick up service is available to residents to dispose of household clean-up items if they are moving house, or require items to be collected outside of the free clean up service. This paid service is well used and the usage is increasing each year. Whilst it is hoped that residents will recycle their products, this service can also be utilised by residents to supplement the proposed three yearly free collections.

3. Influence community attitudes and practices

3 (a) Education and information:

Things that we do not want or need are generally perceived as rubbish and an item to be discarded either in our garbage bins or through the household clean-up service. However, our environment can no longer take the pressure of the increasing rate of waste. This perception can be overcome and redefined with education and awareness guided by the waste hierarchy priorities set out in the WARR Act:

1. Avoidance
2. Resource recovery
3. Disposal as a last resort.

By following this hierarchy, rubbish will over time begin to be viewed as a resource that wherever possible should not be buried and wasted, but be put to another use.

In order for Council to effectively educate residents and shift attitudes towards sustainable waste management, a shift in our own operations and communications is proposed. We need to change both our own staff's and our residents' understanding that the service we are providing is moving from primarily waste removal, increasingly to become a resource recovery service.

Our communications and education programs to the community and to staff will give primacy to alternative waste treatment options, with collection of residual domestic waste being viewed as the last resort for materials which cannot be otherwise disposed of.

The refocusing of the service will be backed up by community education on the options available to residents for avoiding, recycling, or re-using unwanted resources. Our education campaigns will continue to focus on re-use and recycling, but will also address the wider issue of how residents can prevent the creation of waste in the first place, rather than just how they dispose of it.

We propose to encourage a change in community perceptions by re-branding to reinforce the messages, e.g. by naming the Council operations “Waste Reduction and Resource Recovery”, rather than “Waste Services”, and by describing the “Domestic Waste” collection as “Residual Waste”.

3 (b) Pricing

Currently, the Domestic Waste Charge is set at \$281.35 per year (includes domestic, green, recycling and clean-up collections).

Residents may currently request additional domestic waste services for \$275 per year per additional service. There is no limit on the number of additional services which may be requested. This provides little incentive for people to look at ways of minimising their waste.

In order to encourage residents to consider alternative options to purchasing extra services, it is proposed that, to cover the costs of investigating the need for extra services, providing advice on options for reducing waste generation and providing the extra services where found necessary, the fee for an additional service will be set at DWM charge plus 25%, with the maximum number of domestic waste bins being capped at two (that is a maximum of one additional service). This charge is set at a level to recover the costs of the audit, administration fees and the added costs of collection and tipping.

A cap of three bins per household will be placed on the organics bin, with no alterations made to the price structure, but to further encourage residents to use alternative waste avoidance methods such as worm farms and compost bins, it is proposed that Council will offer these bins at a discounted price, taking into account the purchase cost to Council and our internal administration and delivery costs.

Strategy

In summary, to achieve the policy objectives the proposed strategy is to:

1. Provide an Organics collection service in all areas (already under way).
2. Provide three free Clean-Up services per year in lieu of present four but supplemented by paid booked collections.
3. Make available worm farms and compost bins to residents at a discounted price to encourage their use.
4. Conduct a household waste audit with any household requesting an additional Residual Waste bin.
5. Provide, where indicated by a household audit, 140 litre Residual Waste bins in lieu of 120 litre.
6. Limit the provision of additional Residual Waste bins to a maximum of one per household.
7. Conduct audits on households with excessive Residual Waste bins where identified by collectors and are not paying the additional domestic waste fee.

8. Charge a fee at the standard DWM charge plus 25% for a second Residual Waste service to cover the costs of the audit, administration fees and additional tipping fees.

Conclusion:

Council, as the local waste authority has an obligation to consider comprehensive waste reduction measures that reduce waste generation and recover waste resources for the long term benefit of our environment and community.

Financial burden and regulation of usage are being placed on consumers as a response to dwindling water supplies. This can also be expected to be the case with waste, in response to concerns about limited landfill sites and environmental concerns, and can already be seen by the imposition and subsequent increase of the Waste Levy.

Council must look at initiatives that can be implemented in the short term and locally to contain the growing financial and environmental cost of waste disposal, for the benefit of the community and the environment. These initiatives should be part of a comprehensive strategy with clear targets and objectives.

Mark Ramsay
Manager Depot & Waste Services

Warwick Hatton
Director Technical Services

Item No: R2 Recommendation to Council
Subject: **Climbing the Little Green Steps**
Author: Celia Busted – Environment Education Officer
File No: 1142.G
Reason for Report: To seek Council endorsement for further development and implementation of ‘Little Green Steps’, an early childhood sustainability program.

Recommendation:

- A. That Woollahra Council adopt the further development and implementation of Little Green Steps pilot program into Woollahra Pre School.
- B. If the pilot is successful, that Council make this program available to other early childhood centres.
- C. By using the centre as a demonstration site, that Council promote Little Green Steps to other centres and the broader community through a variety of communication channels.

Background

The level of support for early childhood environmental education is growing. There is awareness that research, resources, training, policy and regulatory standards are needed to ensure that all early childhood services operate sustainably, and provide an environment for learning where children are immersed in education for sustainability.

In 2007, Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils (with funding from the NSW Government) developed a program called, ‘Little Green Steps’. The program provided a successful template for other Councils to implement sustainable practices into early childhood centres.

A partnership has been formed between five Councils, Woollahra, Waverley, Canterbury, Leichhardt and Hurstville to further develop and implement a pilot Little Green Steps program into Council childcare centres.

The program has many objectives, including to;

- Address the lack of environmental education, resources and support
- Run a regional project across Sydney, strengthening Council partnerships
- Integrate sustainability into childcare centres through physical changes, working operations and systems, product choice and centre principals and values
- Provide quality education for sustainability to young children aged 3-5 years
- Reach beyond children to family, friends, visitors and the wider community
- Develop partnerships across councils and childcare centres
- Reduce Councils potable water use, energy and waste consumption and provide a demonstration site to promote the adoption of efficient technologies and practices to the broader community.

Proposal

It is proposed that selected Council owned early childhood centres take part in a regional pilot project, Little Green Steps.

Through Environmental Trust grant funding, a Project Officer will be employed full time for 12 months to further develop and implement Little Green Steps into 10 centres across five local government areas.

The pilot project will utilise many techniques to integrate sustainable education and practices into early childhood centres, including audits, amendments to centre operations and systems, professional development and forums, all with the aim to reduce energy, water and waste consumption at centres. Centre management will be required to develop environmental plans that set targets to measure the effectiveness for evaluation. Councils will support by providing advice, resources and assistance in the implementation.

Children will learn through participation in hands on education of the five priority issues, outlined in the NSW Environmental Education Plan 2007-2010 Learning for Sustainability, that is, climate change, biodiversity enhancement, water conservation, waste avoidance and sustainable consumption. Families, visitors and the broader community will be exposed to changes in the centre through sustainability displays, design modifications and will be invited to environmental networks.

Woollahra Pre School will be involved in the pilot program over the next 12 months. This centre will become a demonstration site, showcasing the adoption of efficient technologies and practices and Council's proactive approach to saving water and energy and reducing waste to other early childhood centre and the broader community.

Consultation

Representatives from each Council form the Project Steering Committee. Each Council has been consulted about the best approach for this pilot and agreed, through grant funding, to employ a full time Project Officer for 12 months to facilitate and implement Little Green Steps.

Canterbury Council has agreed to employ and provide resources to the Project Officer and administer grant funds. The Project Officer will report to the Team Leader Environmental Issues, Canterbury Council and the cross council Project Steering Committee.

Identification of Income & Expenditure

There are no additional expenditure requirements. The Environmental Trust will fund a full time Project Officer and additional resources for 12 months. Councils were successful in securing \$100,000 for the pilot program.

Conclusion

The NSW Early Childhood Environment Education Network (ECEEN) noted 'a surge of interest and commitment to environmental education' in early childhood education. The State Government called it 'successful' and 'a practical guide for incorporating environmental education and sustainability principals in the early childhood sector'.

Woollahra Pre School will act as a demonstration site to other early childhood centres within the municipality showcasing examples of technologies, systems and operations they can implement. If the pilot proves successful, it is envisaged that the program be promoted by Council and adopted by other non-government centres. Council will assist on an advisory level.

Celia Busteed
Environmental Education Officer

Warwick Hatton
Director – Technical Services

ANNEXURE

1. Copy of the 'Climbing the little green steps' resource developed by Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils.
2. Copy of the Environmental Trust grant application EOI, submitted 18 April 2008.
3. Copy of Greens Steps Project Officer position description.

**POLITICAL DONATIONS DECISION MAKING FLOWCHART
FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCILLORS**

