

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X103899 **DATE:** 19 June 2025

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Kate Deacon, Executive Director Strategic Development and Engagement

THROUGH: Monica Barone PSM, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 7.5- Post Exhibition - Environmental Strategy 2025-2030

For Noting

This memo is for the information of the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Purpose

To provide Councillors with further information in relation to the Environmental Strategy 2025 -2030.

Background

At the meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Committee on 16 June 2025, further information was sought on the following:

Linkages between the Environmental Strategy and the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan

The Greening Sydney Strategy, along with its comprehensive suite of supporting policies including the Community Greening Framework and the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan, addresses all aspects of urban greening and biodiversity across our local area. This includes the analysis and development of targets for increased greening and canopy cover, tree species diversity metrics, and green space and habitat connectivity.

The Environmental Strategy 2025-2030 complements this by focusing on building efficiency, climate resilience, sustainable resource use, and environmental protection.

The strategy diagram on page 5 of the Environmental Strategy will be updated to include the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan. Further, references to greening targets will be removed from the Environmental Strategy to limit any confusion and to guide the community to the relevant primary strategy.

Connecting green spaces/corridors

The City's first Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan (UESAP) was adopted by Council in 2014. This plan included an objective to improve habitat connectivity across the local government area particularly between priority sites, and between identified habitat areas in adjoining local government areas. Since the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan was endorsed habitat connectivity has improved through:

- (a) Near continuous native vegetation has been achieved from Glebe Foreshore, Johnstons Creek Canal to Orphan School Creek – linking into Inner West LGA, a key habitat corridor.
- (b) Naturalisation of Johnstons Creek
- (c) Increased bush restoration areas in Sydney Park, Alexandra Canal Rosebery, Glebe and Surry Hills
- (d) Increased street gardens along corridors as part of the Public Domain Greening Program to strengthen linkages (turning grey to green)

The Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan is currently being reviewed and will be reported to Council in 2026. Defining appropriate targets and actions in relation to habitat connectivity will form part of the review.

Diversity of tree species

The Urban Forest Strategy 2023 includes detailed information and a specific action to promote the diversity of tree species (refer Action 9, pages 55-63), as well as a benchmark for appropriate diversity. This Strategy uses a combination of methods to measure and monitor diversity over time, for street and park trees collectively and separately, and at different spatial scales.

This benchmark is considered appropriate, and the inclusion of a new target into the Environmental Strategy is not recommended, as the change in the City's tree species diversity is incremental and occurring only when a tree is removed or planted. Most plantings are undertaken in accordance with the City's Street Tree Master Plan, and the improved diversity outcomes of that Plan were measured during its development. Further, as the Environmental Strategy does not contain any urban forestry or species diversity information, it's preferred to keep the benchmark within the primary strategy document.

We will commence reporting against the species diversity benchmark in the annual Green Report.

The measurement of the greening and canopy cover is undertaken every 2 years and is next scheduled in early 2026. A CEO Update will be provided once this data has been analysed, noting this will include a comprehensive review of the City's tree species diversity performance.

Future Greening Sydney and Urban Forest strategic reviews and developments will consider and include a tree species diversity target where appropriate.

Reclaiming laneways/urban greening

The City has an existing Footpath Gardening Policy which allows the community to green their footpaths through the use of planters and in-ground gardens without approval from the City (subject to compliance with the Policy). The Footpath Gardening Policy is currently being reviewed and expanded to allow the community to green laneways providing parameters for emergency vehicle access, drainage and street cleaning are met. The updated Footpath Gardening Policy will be reported to Council together with the Community Greening Framework and its associated guidelines (Community Greening Volunteer Guidelines, Footpath Gardening Guidelines and Community Garden Guidelines) in late 2025. Together these documents are key in delivering on the 'Greening Together' direction of the Greening Sydney Strategy.

The City also has an inroad tree planting program, which includes new canopy trees in laneways. To date this program has been focusing on wider roads, where medians can be installed, however will soon consider other opportunities including laneways.

Water usage target

The residential water use target has been revised to take account of changed external conditions. The previous target of 170L/person/day required the realisation of several developments that have not transpired: increased BASIX water requirements being introduced by the NSW Government, increased uptake of recycled water in the local area; and continued Sydney Water efficiency program funding. Therefore, we propose adjusting the target to match recent usage (average of last 5 years): Reduce residential potable water use to 204L/person/day by 2030.

City staff will meet with Sydney Water to seek further information on their plans for reducing residential water use.

Memo from Kate Deacon, Executive Director Strategic Development and Engagement

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Approved



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