Item 7.6
At Council
23 June 2025

Relevant Information for Council

FILE:	**X111526**	**DATE:**	19 June 2025
TO:	Lord Mayor and Councillors		
FROM:	Veronica Lee, Executive Director City Services		
THROUGH:	Monica Barone PSM, Chief Executive Officer		
SUBJECT:	Information Relevant To Item 7.6 – Post Exhibition - Weed Management Policy and Pesticide Use Notification Plan		

For Noting

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

Purpose

To provide further detail regarding consideration of action/s in the updated Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan (UESAP) currently in progress, involving the elimination of pesticide use and trialling pesticide free parks/areas.

Background

At the meeting of the Environment and Climate Change Committee on 16 June 2025, further information was sought regarding the elimination of pesticides by local and overseas authorities and consideration of actions within the updated Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan currently in progress for trialling pesticide-free management of parks and open spaces.

It is noted the City's use of the term pesticide aligns with legislated use, meaning it encompasses but is not limited to herbicides, termiticides, insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides, algicides, miticides, bactericides and nematicides. This is important when:

- Comparing the City's approaches to overseas authorities and their use of the term pesticide.
- Determining if the City should replace current integrated management, with pesticide-free approaches that may risk the safety of the community and the

integrity of our assets. Such examples include bindii in turf, asthma weed in parks or termites in trees, or park buildings and structures.

To inform the Weed Management Policy, the City undertook a 4-year weed management review that included research, benchmarking, field trials and interviews with industry, universities and other public authorities. It was important the review prioritised public authorities within the Greater Sydney Region (the Region), followed by Australian capital cities and interstate councils.

Overseas authorities were not considered past the initial stage of the weed management review given a range of variables (including climate and prevalence of different weed species) reducing their relevance to our practices in the region. Climate change means the region experiences summer-like conditions for the majority of the year and the City does not have the benefit of severe cold weather and snow to control weed growth.

As part of the review, the City identified over 60 councils across Australia who reviewed their use of glyphosate and of those, 11 banned its use with 9 then rescinding those bans. Of the councils who banned glyphosate, whether temporarily or to date, all used other pesticides (herbicides) to replace glyphosate to manage weeds. The City has not identified an Australian council who is managing pesticide-free parks and open spaces.

The City continues to review alternative approaches to pesticides in response to changes in research, industry practice and emerging technology. Removing pesticides has associated risks. By making data-driven decisions, the City is ensuring management approaches align with the City's Risk Appetite Statement and safety of the community.

Pesticide-free trials in parks and open spaces, such as street gardens and habitat corridors, will be considered as part of the update to the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan, to be reported to Council in 2026, noting the above definition of pesticide and a review of associated risks.

Memo from Veronica Lee, Executive Director City Services

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Approved

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