

Mount Barker District Council Environment Strategy 2018-2023: A Smaller  
Footprint for Mount Baker District

**SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION PROCESS**  
**August-December, 2017**

**PHASE 1: AUGUST 2017**

**A. STAFF CONSULTATION**

3 August 2017

12:00-2:00 PM, Council Chambers

Approximately 25 people in attendance

The session began with a presentation about the purpose and background of the Environment Strategy. Following this, participants split into small groups to discuss challenges, opportunities & actions in their choice of three out of five environmental topics. Groups selected their top three priorities for each topic. The session closed with a summary of the priorities and a group discussion about environmental stewardship.

The following is a summary of the priorities identified by participating groups under each category.

**Climate change & energy**

- Improve the energy efficiency of buildings through building orientation, design, materials and technology.
- Encourage a variety of transport options with a trails plan and infrastructure that supports more walking, cycling and public transport use.
- Council operations:
  - Set targets for renewable energy and improved efficiency
  - Set up renewable energy generation and advocate for feed-in tariff
  - Sell energy (i.e. solar panels on low-level council land)

**Biodiversity**

- Provide public education about litter reduction and the benefits of biodiversity.
- Emphasise & protect key areas of biodiversity. Link them together with trails (esp. along creek lines and wetlands).
- Integrate trails, watercourses and tree planting projects.
- Better protect roadside vegetation with sealing treatment of district roads for dust suppression.
- Fence watercourses to protect and improve water quality and riparian health.
- Provide incentives for landowners to enhance native vegetation or revegetation areas on their land.

- Provide opportunities for recreational motor vehicles &/ horses on specified tracks, away from key biodiversity areas.
- Do an action plan with a regional approach to enact rural DPA guidelines on biodiversity.
- Reassess the impact of urban development on biodiversity.
- Improve cat controls

### **Sustainable development**

- Explore how land division can influence improved energy efficiency of buildings
- Reassess system of development allocation for 'open space' (typically problematic sites provided). Aim for higher-quality land.
- Improve implementation of Community Land Management plans by requiring time frames, incremental staging, community ownership and promotion of community involvement.
- Provide a physical model of optimal sustainable development
- Showcase demonstration projects
- Provide incentives to developers to improve existing housing (e.g. in exchange for greenfield development)
- Provide incentives for environmentally sustainable new development
- Localise stormwater harvesting for use in verge landscapes
- Consider several satellite park 'n' ride centres rather than one or two centralised locations for easier access.
- Plant trees to reduce the urban heat island effect.
- Provide public education on simple ways for development to be more environmentally sustainable.
- Ensure adequate staff training: re: effects of urban development on the natural environment

### **Water management**

- Dedicate a supply of recycled wastewater to agricultural use
- New wastewater consumer at Callington (agri-business)
- Reuse water for sport and recreation sites
- Focus on aquifer storage and recovery
- Construct communal stormwater storage systems to irrigate reserves & gardens
- Provide public information about excess recycled wastewater and promote schemes for distribution and reuse.
- Investigate reasons for increasing water consumption.

### **Waste management**

- Provide incentives for household waste reduction
- Provide public information about landfill and how to reduce, reuse and recycle
- Windmill Hill (information) – jobs
- Set up swap meets for recycling
- Provide choice of bin size and cost/L
- Investigate waste-to-energy

## **B. ELECTED MEMBERS CONSULTATION**

7 August 2017

5:15-6:15 PM, Council Chambers

Elected members in attendance: Mayor Ann Ferguson and Councillors Carol Bailey, Jeff Bettcher, Debs Buchmann, Greg Morrison and Harry Seager.

Following a brief presentation outlining the purpose and background of the Environment Strategy, elected members participated in a facilitated discussion about the challenges, opportunities & potential actions across five environmental topic areas.

The following is a summary of proposed solutions under each topic area.

### **Climate change & energy**

- Facilitate renewable energy
- Provide an environment for developers to build more energy-efficient housing (policy, incentives, requirements, etc.)
- Enhance transport options (public transport, bicycles)
- Set an example as a Council

### **Biodiversity**

- Revegetate along walking corridors
- Protect natural areas from rubbish
- Partner with NRMs, landowners & community to achieve more outcomes
- Explore detention basins as functional wetlands

### **Sustainable development**

- Explore more transport options (e.g. solar power, HOV lane, congestion pricing)
- Consider the impacts of design on sustainability, such as single entry point to a neighbourhood
- Encourage better building designs and practices (e.g. use of recycled materials)
- Set an example as a Council

### **Water management**

- Return excess recycled water to aquifer
- Provide education on water-saving, especially to newcomers
- Keep pushing for more water saving and higher standards (increased storage requirement, better advice to homeowners about water needs, shared rain tanks built underground before housing)
- Build underground tanks with access at several points for fire.

### **Waste management**

- Address excessive packaging by partnering with neighbouring councils and lobbying for change
- Explore ways to address battery waste

- Reward those using and producing recycled products

### **C. OPEN HOUSES AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

#### **Open Houses**

All held 3:00-7:00 PM. Drop-in format with no formal program

- 15 August: Meadows Memorial Hall: 1 person
- 16 August: Pallet Home + Table, Nairne: 2 people
- 17 August: Mount Barker Public Library: 10+ people

#### **Social Media**

1 ad posted on Facebook

4,082 people reached; 66 likes; 30 shares

#### **Comments**

##### Climate change

- I would like to see the Council save energy and promote energy efficient and sustainable building.
- Higher standards, more specific guidelines to ensure energy efficiency in buildings, e.g. enabling passive solar, etc.

##### Biodiversity

- Seeking more information for landowners on helping to preserve, enhance native vegetation
- Better links between green spaces
- Protect and restore habitat
- I would like to see the council do as much as possible to protect the environment. Protect and restore habitat. I hope the council can make the environment a priority and be progressive.
- Green spaces and trees
- Encourage more landholders to plant native vegetation. Give any new resident at least two natives to plant. E.g. new Meadows subdivision, as a welcome from Council.

##### Sustainable development

- Why can't council do more to mandate minimum energy efficiency in housing?
- Solar PVs should be required on all new housing. Amount should be proportional to roof surface area. Apply simple formula.
- Re. impervious surfaces: Size of rain water tank should be proportional to surface area of roof. Apply simple formula.
- Big flash floods occur with heavy rains due to development upstream. This should be better mitigated in the planning stage.
- Aspect ratio, orientation should be considered by developers, also at the planning stage, not retroactively. Our approach is too cookie-cutter and not tailored enough to the local scenario.
- Rezoned areas by the state government subject to a Council DPA to improve living and environmental standards in these areas. This would be put in as an 'Update to

the Development Plan' to reflect a high demand by many for better quality environmental standards in relation to development applications. This element is very important to ensure new housing areas can meet better standards environmentally across the board. Residential areas are rarely (if ever) subject to changes re: a DPA, only town centre zones, and residential living (generally) in terms of population has a large impact on the environment. Such residential DPAs, if given support by the state government, will need to be user-friendly, not apply to existing homes or sold individual allotments or approved homes as those may be seen as too retrospective in terms of application. Rezoning should take in a range of elements to ensure also community health, facility, access, etc. and this (via rezoning) should be examined. Community health will reduce costs on the health budget.

- Council saw the changes to public transport locally in 2007, via sale of Council land, and people advised Council not to support such changes. This occurred due to the land sale and relocation of the Mount Barker bus depot, seeing timetable changes. People have wanted service reviews since 2007, with limited change as a result. Changes will be able to better service new residential areas and the wider public. Multiple levels of cooperation are also needed between government, community and groups.
- More trails please

#### Water management

- Council should provide better awareness-raising for those living along creeks. E.g. What are best trees, shrubs to plant to maintain a healthy creek? Even information on Council Web page would be helpful.

#### Waste management

- Ask Council to investigate how to reduce cost of dumping waste, e.g. Windmill Hill. I'm sure cost is a main deterrent to a ratepayer getting rid of their large domestic waste.
- Consider fortnightly waste collection from domestic premises.
- Waste options that work for all households, not just those in larger houses with yards (e.g. composting not feasible in many homes with small/no yard).
- I would like to see the Council increase recycling and reduce waste
- More recycling at waste transfer station
- Provide information sessions for community about recycling
- Ban plastic straws, encourage reusable coffee cups, think about reusing glass, shred rubber from tyres to reuse for soft matting in playgrounds, soft-fall areas
- Do the above but as long as doesn't cost more money just to create a new position
- Soft plastics recycling really needs addressing
- Coffee cups

## **PHASE 2: OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2017**

Feedback received during Phase 1 of community consultation was used to inform and prepare a draft Environment Strategy. Council endorsed the draft Strategy for release for Phase 2 in October 2017. The draft Strategy was made available for public comment from 10 October to 11 November 2017.

### **A. PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

#### **Objectives & Communication Methods**

The objectives of community consultation Phase 2 were to raise awareness of the strategy, to learn whether the proposed goals and actions met the expectations of the community, and to identify any gaps in information. To achieve these objectives, we used the following communication methods:

- Posters on public notice boards in townships throughout the district advertising the draft Strategy and inviting comment
- Local stakeholders such as community associations, environmental groups and Aboriginal community representatives contacted directly with a copy of the draft strategy and an invitation to provide feedback
- Summary flyers stocked at the Civic Centre and library, and distributed at public events
- Front-page banner and Community Consultation page on Council's website with details of how to participate and links to the summary flyer and draft Strategy
- Advertisement in the 11 October edition of The Courier
- Article in the spring 2017 edition of District Matters newsletter
- Interview on Hills Radio on 17 October, 11:30 AM
- Promotion on Council's Facebook page
- 'Have Your Say' table in three public places:
  - Mount Barker Central Shopping Centre, 12 October, 4:00-7:30 PM
  - Adelaide Hills Farmers Market, 14 October, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM
  - Academy Lawns in Hahndorf, 2 November, 4:00-7:00 PM (in conjunction with the draft Hahndorf Township Plan consultation)

The Weekender Herald ran an information article about the draft Strategy on 2 November 2017.

#### **Participation**

Approximately 120 people were engaged at the three public events. Comments were provided verbally by local residents and noted by staff in writing. 16 written submissions were received, including 5 from Council elected members and staff, 3 from community group representatives, 6 from individual residents, 1 from a State department and 1 from an external organisation.

#### **Feedback (includes written and verbal)**

##### General

- *Implementation*: Respondents are keen to see the Strategy implemented and provided suggestions to better ensure this will happen, such as adding more specific or additional action items; involving more departments and volunteers in implementation; and developing action plans now.
- *Monitoring and reporting*: Monitoring based on good baseline data and regular reporting that fits in the broader strategic framework are important to respondents.
- *Leadership*: Some respondents noted that this Council is in a good position to be a leader in environmental initiatives and recommended including actions that improve the energy and resource efficiency of Council operations to demonstrate this leadership.
- *Green economy*: Some respondents suggested incorporating the connection between the environment and the economy and including the green economy in the Strategy.
- *Vision and inspiration*: A few people said the Strategy should be guided by a strong vision and be more inspirational.
- *Framing and priorities*: No comment was made on the framing of the strategy as a Sustainable District. Regarding the proposed top three priorities (20% reduction in GHGs, 10% reduction in water and in waste), conflicting comments were made about the GHG reduction goal (see below). One comment was made on the water reduction goal (see below). No comments were made on the waste reduction goal.

## **Feedback on Environmental Goals**

### Low-Carbon and resilient

- Some noted a 20% reduction in GHGs is not ambitious enough; others noted it will be too difficult to achieve or to measure; some suggested using different benchmarks (i.e. baseline or target year).
- Several comments made on the importance of improving energy efficiency in the district and in Council operations, using renewable energy, and assisting residents to do so.
- A few respondents suggested adding more context to climate change adaptation including the contribution of weeds to fire hazard, and the urban heat island effect.

### Biodiverse

- This is the area that received the most response. Some do not feel the Strategy states a strong enough commitment to conserving, managing and promoting biodiversity well, in particular considering the rate of development in the district, and would like to see more specific statements of action.
- Exotic plants, not enough indigenous vegetation, weeds, cats and rapid residential development were listed as concerns or threats to biodiversity.
- Supporting volunteers, engaging landowners, improved regulation, buffer zones, and using development contributions to maintain biodiversity were some recommendations offered.

### Liveable

- Several respondents expressed concern about the nature and rate of development in Mount Barker and its impact on biodiversity.

- All who commented on this topic see a role for Council in encouraging housing and development that is more sustainable.
- Recommendations to improve sustainability of housing and development included more stringent requirements for energy efficient housing, a simplified approval process for sustainable development, direct negotiations with landowners, awarding model development, and providing a template for community-based sustainable living opportunities.
- Some respondents suggested improved and expanded transport options.

#### Water wise

- Very few comments were received on this topic.
- Suggestions for actions included: require water tanks, encourage greywater pipes in new development, and address riverbank erosion.
- One person suggested the goal of 10% water reduction should refer to mains water only.

#### Resource efficient

- Very few comments were received on this topic.
- Those who responded suggest Council do what it can to reduce disposable items in its operations and throughout the district; explore the use of recycled materials in Council public works; and explore expanded waste disposal and collection options such as commercial food waste and scheduling.

For detailed feedback, please see “Attachment 1 to Item 13.3 Draft Environment Strategy – Summary of Community Consultation” from the Council Meeting Agenda 4 December 2017, available on our Web site at:

<http://www.dcmtbarker.sa.gov.au/councilmeetings>

### **B. STAFF BRAINSTORM**

Tuesday, 5 December 2017

4:00-5:00 P.M.

Nine invited staff attended from departments of Strategic Planning, City Development, Open Space & Environment, Economic Development, Field Services, Regional HUB Delivery and Tourism/Events.

Goal: To generate ideas for 3-5 high profile flagship items to propose as part of the Strategy that will build interest and that could begin to be implemented in the first year of adoption of the Strategy.

#### **Ideas**

- Solar panels on all Council buildings
- Rain water tanks required
- Provide rates concession for houses greater than 5 star energy rating

- Provide information to homebuyers about upfront investments in energy efficiency and resulting savings from energy cost savings as incentive to increase demand for more sustainable housing options
- Scalability of sustainable housing options which can be expanded over time
- Hold a design competition or offer a subsidy for construction of 8+ star energy rating house
- Aim for high star-rating for Council buildings, e.g. Environmental Service Centre
- Partner with Forestry SA – sustainable wood in new buildings
- LED streetlights – mandatory in growth area, retrofit existing areas
- Design an app for the trail network, including trip generators
- Provide high-speed charging for electric cars
- Expand public transport – priority bus lane on freeway, lobby
- Encourage multi-person households to have only one car
- Develop a Mount Barker ride share app
- Design fun, funky recycling bins, educate & promote their correct use
- Provide communal green bins in high density areas
- Take a more regional approach to waste reduction
- Make Council-supported events waste-free
- Offer option of 120L waste bin rather than the 240L bin