

# MEETING AGENDA

## Meeting

<b>Name:</b>	Environmental Advisory Group		
<b>Date:</b>	30 August 2023	<b>Time:</b>	5 pm to 7 pm
<b>Chairperson:</b>	Councillor Anderson	<b>Venue:</b>	Port Stephens Council Admin Building and Zoom
<b>Minutes:</b>	Kyera O'Dell		
<b>Purpose of Meeting:</b>	To provide community representation for consultation, advice and advocacy on environmental matters in Port Stephens		
<b>File:</b>	PSC2023-01499		

## Attendance

Councillor Anderson Port Stephens Council	Kate Drinan Port Stephens Council	Michelle Hession Independent representative	Alarna Bristow Independent representative
John Clarke Independent representative	Alisha Onslow Climate Action Port Stephens	Sue Olsson EcoNetwork Port Stephens	Jill Cronin Voices of Wallalong and Woodville (VOWW)
Carmel Northwood Koala Coalition	Nigel Dique Mambo Wanda Wetlands Ramsar Working Group	Iain Watt Marine parks Association	Ewa Meyer Renew - Hunter Region Branch
Elaene Williamson Tilligerry Habitat	Nigel Waters Tomaree Ratepayers and Residents Association Inc. (TRRA)	Kyera O'Dell Port Stephens Council	Cassandra Kottaras Port Stephens Council

The following guests are invited to attend:

Brock Lamont  
Port Stephens Council

Apologies

Josephine O'Brien  
Friends of Tomaree National Park

Councillor Francis  
Port Stephens Council

Item	Topic	Time Required	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
<b>1.0</b>	<b>WELCOME AND APOLOGIES</b>				
1.1	Acknowledgement of country We acknowledge the Worimi people as the original Custodians and inhabitants of Port Stephens. We acknowledge and pay respects to Worimi elders past and present. May we walk the road to tomorrow with mutual respect and admiration as we care for the beautiful land and waterways together.	2 mins	Chairperson	<b>RECORD</b> – Acknowledgement of Country undertaken.	Nil
1.2	Chair Welcome	2 mins	Chairperson	<b>RECORD</b> – Councillor Anderson welcomed the group and provided an overview of inception of meeting.	Nil
1.3	Introductions	20 mins	Chairperson	<b>RECORD</b> - Each person introduced themselves, groups connected to, and their favourite place in Port Stephens.	Nil
<b>2.0</b>	<b>BUSINESS ITEMS</b>				
2.1	Meeting Code of Cooperation	5 mins	Kate Drinan	<b>RECORD</b> – The meeting code of cooperation was summarised. <b>ACTION:</b> Wording change in code of cooperation to state “we publicly	Nil Completed

Item	Topic	Time Required	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
				accept the decisions of the panel” rather than “we publicly support”.	
2.2	Meeting structure and format	5 mins	Kate Drinan	<p><b>RECORD</b> – The group was provided with a summary of meeting structure and format. It was acknowledged that the inception meeting would be run differently to future meetings.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – Next meeting date set for 8 November 2023.</p>	<p>Nil</p> <p>Completed</p>
2.3	Environmental Advisory Group Terms of Reference	5 mins	Kate Drinan	<p><b>RECORD</b> – The group was provided with a summary of the Terms of Reference and it was noted that members all acknowledged that they read and understood the Terms of Reference as part of their application.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – It was agreed to provide meeting agendas 10 business days before the meeting.</p>	<p>Nil</p> <p>Next meeting</p>
2.4	What’s happening in the Natural Systems Team	10 mins	Kate Drinan	<p><b>RECORD</b> – The group was provided with an overview of the Natural System team structure and current key focus areas.</p> <p>The PowerPoint presentation is included as <b>Attachment 1</b> to the minutes.</p>	Nil

Item	Topic	Time Required	Responsible Officer	Action	Status/Date to be Completed
2.5	Workshop – Group frustrations	15 mins	Kate Drinan	<p><b>RECORD</b> – The group went around the room and each individual noted the current frustrations they feel in the environmental space.</p> <p>The list of frustrations are included as <b>Attachment 2</b> to the minutes.</p>	Nil
2.6	Workshop – Action setting	30 mins	Kate Drinan	<p><b>RECORD</b> – The group used post it notes to note 2 key things they would like the Group to action.</p> <p>The list of actions are included as an <b>Attachment 3</b> to the minutes.</p>	Actions to be reviewed and prioritised next meeting.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>OTHER MATTERS</b>				
3.1	Thank you and close		Chairperson	<p><b>RECORD</b> – Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 8 November 2023.</p> <p><b>ACTION</b> – Councillor Anderson requested feedback from the Group on how they felt the first meeting went.</p>	

**MEETING CLOSED AT: 7:05 PM**

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

**Date: 8 November 2023**

**Time: 5pm to 7pm**

**Venue: Port Stephens Council Admin Building and Zoom**

Attachment 1

**Environmental Advisory Group**  
30 August 2023

PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL

### Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Worimi as the original Custodians and inhabitants of Port Stephens.

May we walk the road to tomorrow with mutual respect and admiration as we care for the beautiful land and waterways together.

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### Introductions

- Name
- Groups connected to
- Favourite place in Port Stephens

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### Meeting Code of Cooperation

MEETING CODE OF COOPERATION	
We start on time and finish on time.	We respect the diversity of group and views.
We respect the Chair.	We follow the agenda and maintain our focus on the agenda items.
We stay focused on our Purpose Statement.	We reach agreement by majority consensus.
We actively listen to what others have to say and do not speak over each other.	We keep an open mind.
We share knowledge.	We publicly support the decisions of the panel.
We commit to attending as a delegate.	We complete actions on time.
We endorse decisions at the next meeting.	We ensure everyone has a voice.
We will not threaten or intimidate each other.	We do not use inappropriate language.

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### Meeting Structure & Format

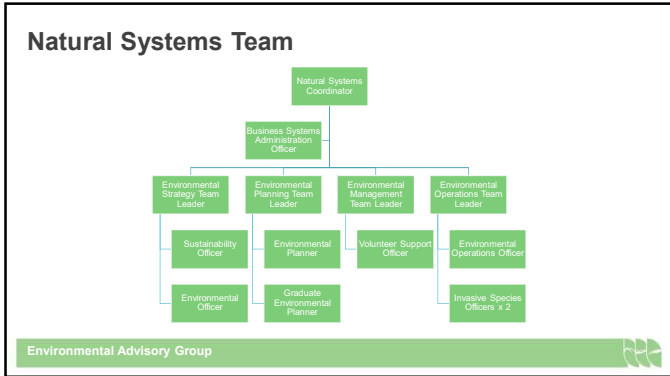
- The Group will meet 4 times a year.
- Meetings will be held in February, May, August and November.
- The meetings will be up to 2 hours.
- Meetings to be held in Council's Administration Building, or other locations as determined by the Chairperson.
- Members can attend in person or over zoom.

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### Terms of Reference

- The group will provide advice and advocacy on environmental matters, including biodiversity, climate change and sustainability in our LGA.
- The group will share knowledge, network and build environmental understanding.
- The group will promote the importance of the environment in the community.
- Will align to the term of Council.
- Includes 4 Council members – 2 Councillors and 2 staff.
- Media liaison associated with the group's activities shall be undertaken in accordance with Port Stephens Council Policy.
- Everyone acknowledges they have read and understood it as part of their application.

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### Key Focus Areas

- Coastal Management Program
- Carbon Neutrality
- Volunteer Support and Action Plans
- Grant delivery – Koala, Rehabilitation and Biosecurity
- Biosecurity and Natural Area Maintenance Programs
- Tree, Ecological and Environmental Advice, Assessments and Referrals
- Council NOMs
- Circular Economy\*

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### Group frustrations

What is a key frustration for you in the environment space?

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### Action setting

Considering our purpose:

- The group will provide advice and advocacy on environmental matters including biodiversity, climate change and sustainability in our LGA.
- The group will share knowledge, network and build environmental understanding.
- The group will promote the importance of the environment in the community.

What are 2 key things you would like the group to work on?

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# Questions?

PORT STEPHENS  
COUNCIL

## Attachment 2

Group Frustrations
Competing layers of environmental legislation.
Biodiversity needs to be focused on as well as climate change.
We are moving too slowly to address climate change. Now is the time to act with meaningful action.
Council staffing changes impacting on the momentum of environmental projects.
Loss of habitat due to development.
Overdevelopment of the area.
Emotive decision making rather than rational and strategic decisions making.
Loss of habitat in the west ward.
All the different portals to find out about different development applications. Difficulty in accessing DA information, specifically using the NSW planning portal.
Slow pace of change.
Staff resourcing and time spent on required activities. Insufficient resourcing available to put to discretionary things that the group may wish to work on.
Insufficient national standards and structures for dealing with environmental matters.
Balancing housing needs with environmental concerns. Limited available area. Difficult conversation with the community.
Conflicting priorities from state and federal government are challenging to manage. In particular housing pressure and environmental protection. Strategies need to talk to one another.
Lack of influence over other government bodies impacting the way our LGA is managed.
Limited resources.

## Attachment 3

Group Actions
Improve community engagement and information sharing on what Council is doing in the environment space.
Get community onboard to help Council meet its housing targets.
Show mapping of corridors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Progress</li><li>- Gaps in current funding</li></ul>
Investigate protection of Wanda wetlands Aboriginal Place and green space to demonstrate value of environment and cultural heritage.
Sustainability initiatives for community members.
Community education programs/events initiatives
Finalise PSGL Marine Parks review.
Register concern for demise of Pipi population.
Serious discussion of environmental constraints on green field development.
Tree cover in built-up areas. New plantings insufficient to replace tree loss from infill development.
Communicate Council policy on matters such as tree removals policy, fire policy, cat policy.
Establishment of wildlife corridors including West Ward.
Implement a sustainable neighbourhoods program (similar to Lake Macquarie Council).
Implement a domestic and feral cat control program (including animal management plans).
Focus on how to maximize learning outcomes from environment initiatives.
How to improve communication outcome of environment initiatives.
State advocacy on planning matters.
Identifying areas for potential housing development. Considering environment and community aspects.
Providing education on Council plans.
Reduce dependency on plastics.
How to adapt to sea level rise.
Environmental education programs/events.



Funding for improving existing wildlife corridors between reserves to ensure refuge for species i.e. nesting boxes and food trees included aid with movement between reserves.

Stormwater drains sediment control and reduction of pollutants into our waterways.

Greening strategy:

- Identification of corridors of ecological importance for additional scrutiny before trees are removed.  
<https://haveyoursay.midcoast.nsw.gov.au/greening-strategy-and-vegetation-management-midcoast/vegetation-management-policy>
- Identification of housing corridors that link major bush reserves (including Tomaree NP) and could be a focus for linking garden corridors of native plants -/- birds, bees, butterflies, beetles, bugs and of koalas (so more than planting trees, habitat corridors).
- Greening with street trees that create shade and climate control - and ways to limit loss of street trees (another couple just cut down in Church St outside the corner motel - and developer removed street tree recently at 10 Thurlow, presumably permission).
- Identification of older trees with hollows to be actively protected (not just plants 5 new trees).

Educate and coordinate. Coordinate environment awareness education.

Communicate. Communication of issues through schools, etc.