



**Minutes of the Environment Committee  
held on Tuesday, 4 April 2023 at 8.00 pm  
Council Chamber, Council Administration Centre  
245 Sturt Road, Sturt**

## **PRESENT**

Councillor Jason Veliskou (Chair)

His Worship the Mayor Kris Hanna – left the meeting at 8:10pm, re-entered at 8:35

Councillor Raelene Telfer from 8:10pm

Councillor Sarah Luscombe

## **In Attendance**

Councillor Luke Naismith

Chief Executive Officer - Tony Harrison

General Manager Corporate Services – Angela Allison

Executive Officer to the General Manager City Services - Colleen Madsen

Unit Manager Environmental Sustainability - Rebecca Neumann

Waste Education Officer - Allison Byrne

Coordinator Arboriculture - Ian Seccafien

Community Gardens Coordinator - Anna Haygreen

Environmental Engagement Office – Jess Mitchell

## **1 Open Meeting**

The Chair opened the meeting at 8.05pm.

## **2 Kaurna Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge the Kaurna people, the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to their elders past and present.

## **3 Elected Member Declaration of Interest (if any)**

The Chair asked if any member wished to disclose an interest in relation to any item being considered at the meeting.

The following interests were disclosed:

- Nil

## **4 Confirmation of Minutes**

### **4.1 Confirmation of Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting held on 7 February 2023**

**Report Reference**                      EC230404R4.1

**Moved Councillor Luscombe**

**Seconded Mayor Hanna**

That the minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting held on 7 February 2023 be taken as read and confirmed.

**Carried unanimously.**

## **5 Business Arising**

### **5.1 Business Arising Statement - Action Items**

<b>Report Reference</b>	EC230404R5.1
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The schedule of upcoming items was discussed.

The Committee decided on the following topics for the 6 June 2023 meeting.

- Biodiversity Plan
- Resilient South

**Moved Councillor Luscombe**

**Seconded Mayor Hanna**

That the Environment Committee:

1. Notes the business arising statement, meeting schedule and upcoming items.

**Carried unanimously.**

## **6 Confidential Items - Nil**

## **7 Reports for Discussion**

### **7.1 Waste and recycling**

<b>Report Reference</b>	EC230404R7.1
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Shani Wood, Environment Officer at the City of Holdfast Bay (CoHB) provided a presentation on their weekly FOGO and fortnightly landfill system.

#### **The Committee noted the following during the presentation:**

- The system has been implemented over the past 4 years.
- In 2007 CoHB moved to 3 bin system and saw a 47% diversion rate. Kitchen caddies were introduced 10 years ago, and the landfill diversion rate jumped to 58% but has since plateaued.
- Benefits of a weekly FOGO collection:
  - Removes smell barrier of food scraps sitting in a FOGO bin.
  - Encourages residents to be more diligent with their waste.
  - More environmentally sustainable and over the long-term no additional cost to the community.

- Increases resource recovery rates of food waste which is processed into compost.
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions associated with organic disposal to landfill.
- Diverts waste away from landfill.
- Main challenges - multiple unit dwellings, businesses, and elderly residents.
- 3,000 residents commencing trial 4 years ago with an opt in model (25% uptake). Swapping to a trial opt out model across 300 households saw an increase in numbers trialing it (76%).
- Council-wide model rolled out July 2022, across a 3-month period. Strongly recommended to stage the roll out and resource well due to number of enquiries i.e., requests to upsize the bins, many residents (including elderly demographic) who were not computer literate phoned to opt out of the service and general enquiries about the program. CoHB received approximately 3,000 additional call centre calls over a six-month period.
- Bin size - households that stay on the weekly FOGO model; if you have a household with 5 or more family members or a household with a family member in nappies or a medical condition, you can have a 240l landfill bin or 360l recycle bin.
- Community engagement is key to the success of the program. Residents wanted to hear from their neighbours that were engaging in the program.
- 70% landfill diversion was reached in November 2022, 20% increase in FOGO tonnage.
- 22% of eligible households have opted out. (Within predicted range.)
- Emissions from additional truck; when organic matter breaks down in landfill it creates methane, a greenhouse gas that is 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Emissions associated with an additional bin truck are insignificant compared to the methane emissions saving from the switch to weekly FOGO.
- Nappies – Many resident enquiries centered on the smell of nappies in the bins. Following a trial in Lake Macquarie City Council it found that the average odour of a landfill bin with nappy waste for a week was approximately the same as the average odour rating of a nappy bin at the end of a fortnight.
- Finances – collection cost is approximately 10% more due to the cost of the additional truck required on recycling week, however, is offset by not having to pay for diverting waste to landfill.
- Green Industries best practice guide (June 2023) will include a savings and cost spreadsheet.

#### **Questions/discussion from the Committee included:**

- Is there any prediction of the slope of opting in, will there be momentum?
  - CoHB is an opt out model city-wide, sitting about 22% and having about 30 households opting out each week. Hence the reason for the focus group to ascertain how to get households to opt back in.
- Cost recovery - The presenter advised that the old service is costing the council more and is not as good for the environment. It is possible to consider the option if you can have weekly landfill but will have to pay more for that service.

- Clarification on opt out – 22% what is the real cost of collecting that weekly with the trucks circulating the streets on two occasions? Can we extrapolate the \$ cost of addressing the demand for weekly landfill collection over our size and scale?
  - The presented responded that it will probably depend on how the contractor invoices - no opt out option would be cheaper.
  - EPA legislation does not allow this option.
- CEO commented that the Deputy Premier has advised the legislation is not currently up for review and considers the current legislative provision to be appropriate. If lobbied sufficiently they may be interested in reviewing it.
- The chair questioned what the backlash/consequence of forcing people onto FOGO would be.
  - The presenter's opinion was that the main backlash of forcing people onto the system or charging them is a lack of understanding the model.
- CoM green organics goes to Peat Soils, a local composter at Langhorne Creek for processing.
- Home composting is promoted - we offer home composting rebates for interested residents. Generally, households need a larger yard to compost. Approximately 10 -15% of our residents' compost.
- How far away are we from our contract changing to a pickup system?
  - Approximately 3 or more years on our current contract, however we can negotiate an alternative when re-contracting.
- CoHB auditing of what is going into the bins - paying someone to sort through the bins. Auditing around 400 households on the weekly FOGO service, 400 households on the opt out service, businesses, and larger multi-unit dwellings.
- Contractor - it may be worth speaking with City of Charles Sturt as they are also with Cleanaway and currently undergoing a trial. May have some recommendations on how to work with the contractor.

**Further discussion from the Committee included:**

- Community groups seeking information around environmental initiatives – staff regularly conduct educational sessions and are happy to be referred to the groups.
- Attachment 3 – Business case development (approx. \$30,000)
  - We have good evidence on each of the main variables.
  - There is a preference for the Business case to be done within existing resources using internal expertise and in collaboration with the City of Holdfast Bay and other Councils. Noted that if more detail is needed later this could be revisited.
  - Administration commented that a specialised consultant would provide a thorough due diligence process.
  - Noted additional resources may be required for roll out.
  - Business case to be presented to Council prior to Council commitment on the project.
  - Noted should a consultant not be engaged we need to utilise the spreadsheet from the Green Industries Guidelines which is anticipated will be available in July.

**Moved Councillor Luscombe**

**Seconded Councillor Telfer**

That the Environment Committee:

1. Notes that the Committee has provided feedback on the waste and recycling priorities for 2023 (refer Attachment 1).
2. Notes the presentation from City of Holdfast Bay Environment Officer Shani Wood on the weekly “FOGO” program and the written summary of the Holdfast Bay FOGO collection provided in Attachment 2.
3. Notes that the Committee has provided feedback on the proposed stages and timeframes for a weekly organics collection service presented in Attachment 3.

**Carried unanimously.**

## 7.2 Trees and Urban Greening

**Report Reference**                      EC230404R7.2

Unit Manager Environmental Sustainability provided a summary of the report.

The Committee noted the following discussion points and comments:

- Street tree removal requires flexibility as the criteria does not always cover all situations.
- We have an ambitious tree planting program, however staffing and service level funding are not as ambitious. Determine what quantification is required to ask for in future budgets.
- SA Power Networks (SAPN) may give some challenges regarding what types of trees we can plant and may also have resourcing implications.
- Service reviews have reduced the numbers of FTEs, and we will have a shortfall of internal resources to maintain the increased number of trees.
- Receiving a high number of resident complaints about our trees i.e., insects, berries etc.
- Tree management and maintenance are becoming a significant issue.
- It is important to have guidelines on the selection and planting of our trees.
- Management on pruning and maintenance of trees.
- Greening Strategy needs to be strategic, refers to general principles that mark service standards, references other policies and procedures and that any action plans are treated as plans as part of the Open Space Plan, Forestree etc.
- Vandalism is an ongoing battle. Report through the salesforce portal which we are looking to integrate with Forestree.
- Urban Tree Warriors volunteer program launched - allocated a section of Forestree where they look after their own section of the trees.
- Working to create a digitised Urban Tree Asset Management Plan (first in Australia).
- Key principle in AMP is the connection with habitat.
- Tree sucker issues – staff advised that some trees would shoot from root systems and others below the graft coming off the root stock. Looking at using a couple of options on how

to better manage the problem: 1. A chemical treatment option that is used in grapevines very successfully. The City of West Torrens piloted that program over the past 12 months with very good results. A chemical is used to suppress the sucker growth from developing, this is applied around Springtime and has been used on their Pyrus trees. CoM is going to trial this in Spring. Harder to prevent when coming off the root system of the tree. This chemical has been approved by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA).

**Moved Mayor Hanna****Seconded Councillor Telfer**

That the Environment Committee:

1. Notes the Committee provided feedback on priorities for trees and greening for 2023 (Attachment 1).
2. Notes the Committee provided feedback on the proposal and timeframes for the Marion Greening Strategy (Attachment 2).
3. Notes the Committee provided feedback on the Trees Asset Management Plan (Attachment 3).

**Carried unanimously.**

### 7.3 Environmental Engagement

**Report Reference**                      EC230404R7.3

The report and attachments were taken as read.

Unit Manager Environmental Sustainability, Rebecca Neumann introduced the Environmental Engagement Officer, Jess Mitchell and Community Gardens Coordinator, Anna Haygreen who presented on the environmental engagement priorities.

The Committee noted the following:

- There is a strong appetite in the community for environmental issues.
- Focus on the many people who want to do the right thing. Can be a mis-guided effort to focus on the small group that already engages. Need to make it easy for the 'middle group' who want to do the right thing but are not sure how.
- Can staff look at ways to support people with savings, such as growing seedlings etc.
- Community Gardens – when the guidelines are reviewed look at ways to make it easier for community groups to grow community gardens. Is there an opportunity to have land set aside just for community gardens, can it be easily set aside without the need to jump through hoops?
- Through engagement activities it was noted there is an increase in food growing and a high level of interest in community gardens.

- Community gardens would not get planning approval to be zoned - if we are to set aside land for community gardens, we would either manage those ourselves or call for an expression of interest.
- We have a verge incentive fund. Recently ran a fully booked workshop on planting natives on verges. Has worked as a good model around rebate incentive schemes. Potentially looking at a small incentive scheme for greening.

**Moved Councillor Telfer**

**Seconded Councillor Luscombe**

That the Environment Committee:

1. Noted the discussion and provided feedback on the current range of environmental engagement themes and initiatives for 2023 (Attachment 1).

**Carried unanimously.**

## **8 Reports for Noting - Nil**

## **9 Workshop / Presentation Items - Nil**

## **10 Other Business**

## **11 Meeting Closure**

The meeting shall conclude on or before 9.30pm unless there is a specific motion adopted at the meeting to continue beyond that time.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.27pm.

CONFIRMED THIS 6 DAY OF JUNE 2023

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CHAIRPERSON