

ENVIRONMENT
RESTORATION
PLAN

APRIL 07



"Environmental actions for our future"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Liverpool forms part of both the Georges River and Hawkesbury-Nepean River catchments and has a unique natural environment that includes a number of endangered ecological communities, such as Cumberland Plain Woodland. With the added pressures of large scale development over the next three decades, Liverpool Council needs to be even more proactive in striving to maintain and conserve the natural environment of Liverpool. As a result, Council would like to continue the environment restoration efforts of the Environment Plan in a new environment levy program called the Environment Restoration Plan.

Council's current environment levy program, the Environment Plan, was approved by the Minister for Local Government for a five-year period concluding in June 2007. The Environment Plan has delivered a number of successful environmental programs, including environmental restoration projects, environmental education and support for community environmental activities. To ensure these programs are continued and new initiatives are implemented, Council is developing the Environment Restoration Plan.

The Environment Restoration Plan is an outline of the environmental projects, programs and plan of on-ground works to be funded by the environment levy. These projects, programs and

on-ground works aim to improve the natural environment of Liverpool for the long-term benefit of Liverpool and its community.

The Environment Restoration Plan is focused on restoring Liverpool's natural environment. For the purposes of the Environment Restoration Plan the natural environment will include ecosystems (and their constituent parts) and natural resources. Broadly this will include creeks, rivers and waterways, riparian areas and other bushland reserves and areas.

The program delivered by the Environment Restoration Plan will depend on the amount of the levy approved by Council and the Department of Local Government. The broad projects included in the Environment Restoration Plan to be funded by the levy are:

- Bushland restoration and revegetation*
- Environmental education*
- Support for the Environment Advisory Panel, Environment Group Sub-committee and environment groups*
- Community environmental activities and events, including tree planting days, tree giveaways and Bloomin'*
- Employment of staff to deliver the Environment Restoration Plan.*

It is proposed that the final Environment Restoration Plan will be endorsed by Council in April 2007. In May 2007, Council will apply to the Minister for Local Government for the continuation of the environment levy. If approved, the Environment Restoration Plan will commence from 1 July 2007.



1 Introduction

In 2006 the Department of Environment and Conservation NSW completed a survey titled 'Who cares about the Environment in 2006?'. Results from this survey showed that people value the environment as part of their lives - 93% say it is important or very important. Environment ranked third after family and friends.

Research conducted by Liverpool Council, including Liverpool Directions, Social Research and Focus groups, has also shown a strong support from our community to protect the environment. We are all concerned about the state of our environment and the Environment Restoration Plan shows Liverpool Council's commitment and support to protect and maintain our local natural environment.

In 2002 the Department of Local Government approved a five-year environment levy for the Liverpool Local Government Area (LGA). The environment levy program, known as the *Environment Plan*, commenced in July 2002 and will conclude in June 2007. As a result of the

many successes of the Environment Plan, Council is proposing to continue the environment levy program. This new levy, The Environment Restoration Plan? Environmental actions for our future, aims to continue the programs implemented as part of the current environment plan and to develop new environmental initiatives to be delivered in the Liverpool LGA.

It is proposed that the Environment Restoration Plan will commence in July 2007 and run for a period approved by the Department of Local Government. The Environment Restoration Plan will provide a framework for the delivery of key environmental projects for the long-term benefit of Liverpool and its community.

This document will outline:

- Liverpool's natural environment
- Council's responsibility to the natural environment
- Council's current environment levy program - the Environment Plan (2002-2007)
- The continuation of the Environment Plan program.

A scenic photograph of a park path leading to a lake. On the left, a large, mature tree with thick, light-colored bark stands prominently. A paved path winds from the foreground towards the right, leading towards a body of water. In the middle ground, a wooden bench sits on a grassy area. The background is filled with lush green trees and foliage, with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating dappled shadows on the path and grass. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

2 Liverpool Directions

Liverpool Directions was developed as a result of Council's Creating Our Future Together Partnership Project involving more than 1,700 Liverpool residents, workers, students and visitors. The Liverpool Directions document incorporates the views and opinions of the local community on what they want for Liverpool for the future.

A major component identified through the development of Liverpool Directions is the natural environment of Liverpool. Liverpool Directions includes two sections with an environment focus, including:

- The land between two rivers where city and country meet
- Sustainability.

These two sections outline the main focus of what the community would like to see for Liverpool's natural environment in the future. The information below is taken from Liverpool Directions and shows the actions the Liverpool community would like taken to preserve its natural environment.

LIVERPOOL DIRECTIONS SECTION:

The land between two rivers where city and country meet

- The city's natural areas, in particular, waterways such as the Georges River, Nepean River and the Cabramatta Creek system, will be cleaner, healthier and more widely and responsibly enjoyed as places for recreation
- As significant urban development takes place, some of the rural character of Liverpool will be maintained
- Agricultural land, open space and protected bushland will be part of an inviting and attractive mix of land uses.

Role of Council

Natural systems do not fit within administrative boundaries, therefore Council has a role to maintain working relationships with government agencies and other parties in the management of natural areas and waterways. Council has a role to improve the appearance and health of waterways through rehabilitation projects, including partnerships with environmental groups and volunteers. As part of its planning role, Council also influences the protection of rural land uses.

Council's Corporate Plan strategies are to:

- Review planning controls so they improve delivery of the community's aspirations, including (where appropriate) the retention of rural character through precinct planning and urban design policy
- Undertake bushland restoration and rehabilitation in partnership with other agencies and the community

- Promote awareness and appreciation of natural assets such as bushland and waterways
- Seek funding from government agencies for bushland acquisition, restoration and rehabilitation projects
- Protect the environment through enforcement and education programs
- Promote the responsible use of open space through education programs
- Undertake, with the involvement of the community, on-ground environment works at selected sites in accordance with the Environment Plan.

LIVERPOOL DIRECTIONS SECTION:

Sustainability

- Community, business and governments will deliver specific programs to make Liverpool more sustainable
- Reduced waste, pollution and water usage will be the major noticeable results of future actions for sustainability
- There will be local or easily accessible education and training for all ages, supported by well-equipped and convenient libraries.

Role of Council

As part of its environmental leadership role, Council has developed programs to improve the sustainability of its own operations and services. It also promotes sustainable development through its policymaking, education and regulatory roles. Council has a role to establish and maintain sound working relationships with government agencies in their management of environmental pollution, water conservation and energy usage. Through its planning roles (zoning, infrastructure planning and urban design) Council encourages business and industrial development.

Council's Corporate Plan strategies are to:

- Improve the efficiency of water and energy use and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through education, incentive programs and programs that promote upgrading with water saving devices
- Increase the community's awareness of sustainability and environmental issues through education programs.

Liverpool Directions shows that the Liverpool community values their local natural environment and supports the delivery of environmental projects. During the development of Liverpool Directions, the community has shown support for the improvement of the environment. The implementation of the Environment Restoration Plan will contribute to the improvement of the environment as supported by Liverpool Directions.



3 Council's responsibility to the environment

3.1 COUNCIL'S LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Council operates within the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and other relevant legislation. Section 8 of the Local Government Act sets out the 12 statutory objectives of the Council Charter. Objective 5 requires councils to:

"Properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of its area in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development."

For the purposes of Council's projects, environmentally sustainable development means:

- To enhance individual and community wellbeing and welfare by following a path of economic development that safeguards the welfare of future generations
- To provide for equity within and between generations
- To protect biological diversity and maintain essential ecological processes and life-support systems.

3.2 COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN

Each year, Liverpool City Council develops a Corporate Plan which outlines Council's main objectives and projects to be implemented that year. The implementation of the Environment Plan has been a major component in the delivery of the objectives for Council from 2002-2007.

Council's 2006-07 Corporate Plan incorporates planning to continue the Environment Plan. Section 6 Sustainability (pp10-11) includes "development of a new city-wide environment plan" as one of the highlights of specific actions for 2006-07. Once adopted, the Environment Restoration Plan will become an integral part of Council's Corporate Plan.

3.3 OTHER COUNCIL ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND STRATEGIES

There are a series of natural environment related strategies within Council which provide direction for Council in its activities, the three most relevant in relation to the Restoration Plan being:

Liverpool City Council Biodiversity Management Plan

The Biodiversity Management Plan provides for the conservation of native plants, animals, habitat and ecological processes in the Liverpool LGA. It provides priorities and guidance for Council in making decisions relevant to managing these native plants and animals, and the natural environment, guidance for the use, conservation and enhancement of natural resources according to the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development and a

greater level of certainty for the community via a pre-defined, transparent and accountable process.

Liverpool City Council Water Strategy

The Water Strategy is a document that updates and consolidates Council's Stormwater Management Plans and the Regional Catchment Blueprints (a planning document prepared by Catchment Management Boards that constitutes an integrated regional catchment management plan) into a single document to address all water related issues of Council.

Liverpool City Council Water Quality Monitoring Framework

The Framework will help Council monitor and sustain or improve current, or likely future, environmental values for Liverpool's aquatic ecosystems.

A close-up photograph of a flowering plant, likely a wattle, featuring bright yellow, fluffy flower heads and long, narrow green leaves. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

4 Liverpool's natural environment

4.1 ENVIRONMENT DEFINED

The word 'environment' can be defined in many ways. At its broadest definition environment can include ecosystems and their constituent parts, including people and communities; natural and physical resources; the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas; heritage values of places; and the social, economic and cultural aspects of everything mentioned above.

The Environment Restoration Plan is focused on restoring Liverpool's natural environment. For the purposes of the Environment Restoration Plan the natural environment will include ecosystems and their constituent parts and natural resources. Broadly this will include creeks, rivers and waterways, riparian areas, other bushland reserves and areas.

4.2 CURRENT STATE OF LIVERPOOL'S ENVIRONMENT

The Liverpool LGA has a total area of 306km² (30,604ha) and is made up of 39 suburbs. The south eastern portion of Liverpool is controlled by the Department of Defence and is a significant natural environment asset. The western half of Liverpool is currently zoned for rural purposes, and supports both small and large lot farming, some intensive plant and animal agriculture and rural residential housing.

The Liverpool LGA has 69.8km² (6,980.9ha) of bushland. This includes pristine bushland, many kilometres of waterways and areas of great natural beauty.

4.3 OUR CATCHMENT AREA

The Liverpool LGA lies within two significant river catchments - the Georges River to the east and the Hawkesbury-Nepean to the west. The Georges River forms the eastern boundary with Bankstown Council and the Hawkesbury-Nepean River forms the western boundary with Wollondilly Council. The ridgeline separating the two catchments falls within the western Sydney regional open space corridor.

Significant tributaries of the Hawkesbury-Nepean River traverse the Liverpool LGA, including South, Kemps and Badgerys creeks. Much of the eastern portion within the Georges River catchment of the LGA drains to the Cabramatta Creek sub-catchment including Hinchinbrook, Cabramatta, Maxwells and Brickmakers creeks. Liverpool's waterways form part of a larger ecological system entwined with riparian vegetation and natural terrestrial bushland areas.



Above: Remnant Cumberland Plain woodland at Overett Reserve, Kemps Creek



4.4 FUTURE PRESSURES ON LIVERPOOL'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Liverpool City is currently experiencing significant growth and will continue to grow for the next 30-40 years. Twelve per cent of the state's future population growth is predicted for Liverpool. This growth is a mixture of new land being released for development and urban consolidation. In order to achieve growth targets, residential suburbs will be developed within the south west growth sector and Liverpool's established areas will increase in population density.

As a result, Liverpool's natural environment will be exposed to more pressure from development and urban sprawl. It is therefore essential that Council and the community implement projects and programs to conserve and maintain Liverpool's natural environment.

Continuing pressure on our natural environment will contribute to:

- Degradation of remaining bushland through weed invasion
- Increased aquatic weed infestations
- Reduced native species diversity
- Local and regional extinction of native species and communities
- Predation and competition from feral animals and plants
- Destruction of habitat, for example, bush rock removal, removal of snags and logs from waterways
- Erosion and salinity
- Reduced soil quality and productivity
- Increased soil nutrient and soil contamination
- Reduced water quality
- Altered flow regimes and flooding behaviour
- Bushland clearance
- Loss of native animal and plant habitat.

4.5 LIVERPOOL'S FLORA AND FAUNA

A number of vegetation communities in the Liverpool LGA are listed as endangered ecological communities. The Cumberland Plain woodland, in particular, is recognised at regional, state and federal levels as a significant endangered ecological community. Before European settlement, the Cumberland Plain woodland extended across western Sydney, covering 122,000ha. Today, only eight per cent of the original woodland area remains.

Numerous species of threatened flora and fauna occur within the Liverpool LGA as well as many regionally significant and vulnerable species including the population of *Dillwynia tenuifolia* (small shrub) at Kemps Creek. Other animal species such as the powerful owl and koala have been found in our area.

To maintain and protect our local native flora, bushland and waterways means we maintain and protect the homes of our local native fauna.





5 The Environment Plan (2002-2007)

The Environment Plan is a partnership between Council and its community, including local environment groups, volunteers, business and industry, to restore and rehabilitate our local riparian vegetation and bushland.

The five-year Environment Plan was considered and adopted by Council in May 2002 and approved by the Minister of Local Government in June 2002. The implementation of the Environment Plan commenced in July 2002 and will conclude in June 2007.

More specifically, the Environment Plan is an integrated program of restoration activities and on-ground works designed to preserve and conserve the natural environment of Liverpool. It aims to improve the health of our natural environment, in particular the riparian vegetation and waterways.

5.2 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT PLAN

In October 2006, a snapshot of some of the major achievements of the Environment Plan included:

Number of trees planted	
(total)	103,892
(those planted by volunteers)	37,200
Metres of creek line being restored	18,202m
Number of community members involved	
(regular volunteers)	100
(community participants)	550
Number of tree planting activities completed	169
Number of environment groups	10
Total area regenerated or revegetated	546,368m ²
Number of sites	31
Number of trees given away	37,600
Number of environmental workshops run	26
Length of pathways installed	approx 222m



5.1 ENVIRONMENT PLAN DELIVERABLES

Outlined below is the list of key deliverable's that were adopted in the Environment Plan. These are the broad objectives that Council aims to achieve with the Environment Plan:

- Enhancement of existing and potential ecological connectivity
- Cleaner waterways
- Revegetation of waterways
- Construction of access paths
- Fence waterways in rural areas where appropriate
- Protecting and expanding all endangered ecological communities and other bushland
- Rehabilitation of urban and rural waterways
- Establishing green gateways into the city
- Improving the city Image
- Building community networks.



5.3 THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

Over the five years of the Environment Plan, more than 20 bush regeneration projects have been implemented. The sites for these projects were selected using a site selection process developed and adopted by Council in October 2003.

The site selection process was developed to provide some rigour and scientific framework behind the selection of sites for Environment Plan works. The process incorporates three matrices using environmental, social and economic criteria to prioritise sites for Environment Plan works.

Some parts of the site selection process could be refined and improved to ensure the process produces the most appropriate sites for Environment Plan works. The site selection process will be reviewed and updated for works under the Environment Restoration Plan.

The sites selected for Environment Plan works go through a community consultation process and are then adopted by Council. As part of this process the community has the opportunity to provide suggestions for sites to be selected for environment works. For further information on the current site selection process please visit www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au.

5.4 ENVIRONMENT PLAN PROJECT SITES

The list of sites across Liverpool selected for works during the five years of the Environment Plan are outlined below. Sites were selected for three rounds. Round 1 includes the first four sites which were chosen prior to the implementation of the Environment Plan. Round 2 includes sites selected to commence in 2004-05, and the Round 3 sites were selected to commence in 2005-07 (Round 2 and 3 sites were selected using the site selection process).

ENVIRONMENT PLAN SITES 2002-07

Round 1

Amalfi Park, Lurnea
Collimore Park, Liverpool
Kelso Park, Moorebank
Overett Reserve, Kemps Creek

Round 2

McMillan Park, Moorebank
McGirr Park, Cartwright
Havard Reserve, Prestons
Lt Cantello Reserve, Hammondville
Clinches Pond, Moorebank
Overett Reserve - Area 2, Kemps Creek

Round 3

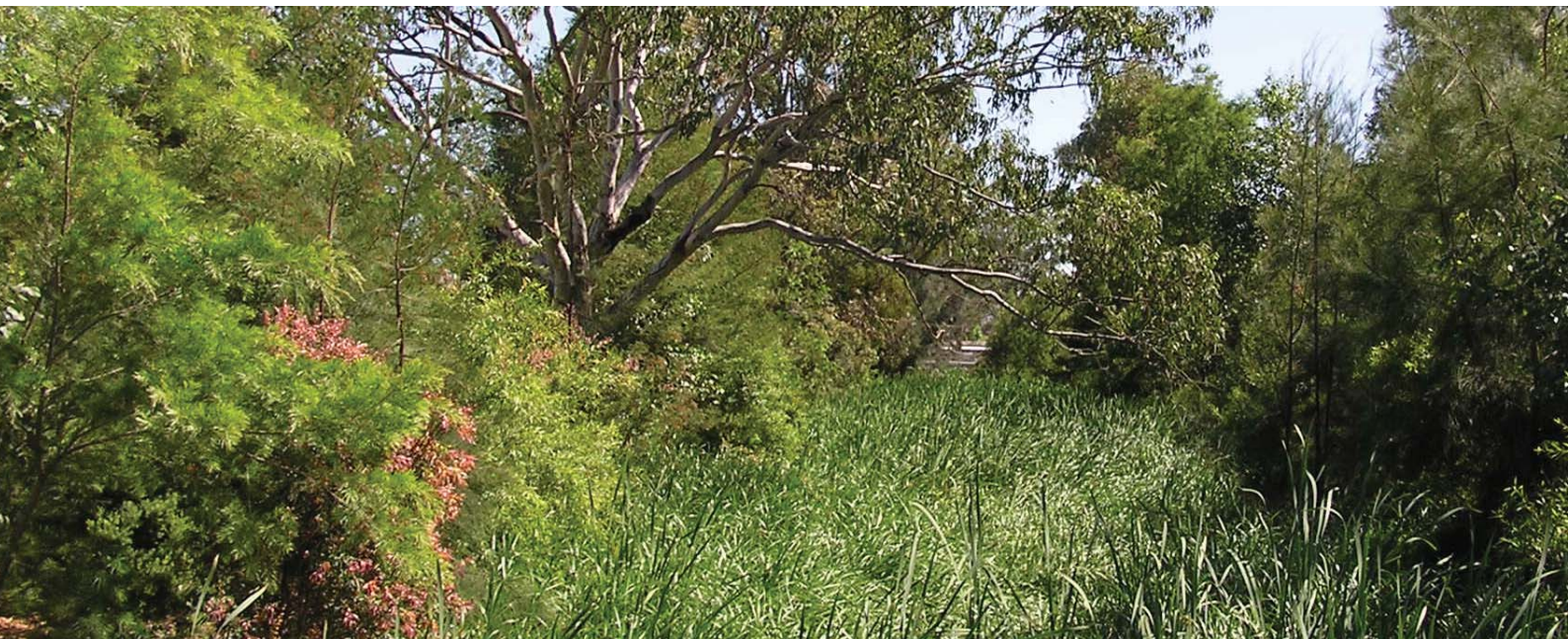
Ernie Smith Reserve - Area 1, Moorebank
Meere Park, Lurnea
Light Horse Park, Liverpool
Harris Creek Reserve, Holsworthy
Creekwood Reserve, Voyager Point
Cabrogal Park, Hinchinbrook
Miller Park, Cartwright
Bradshaw Park, Busby
Fassifern Park, Cartwright
Ernie Smith Reserve - Area 2, Moorebank



5.5 ENVIRONMENT PLAN SITES - BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS



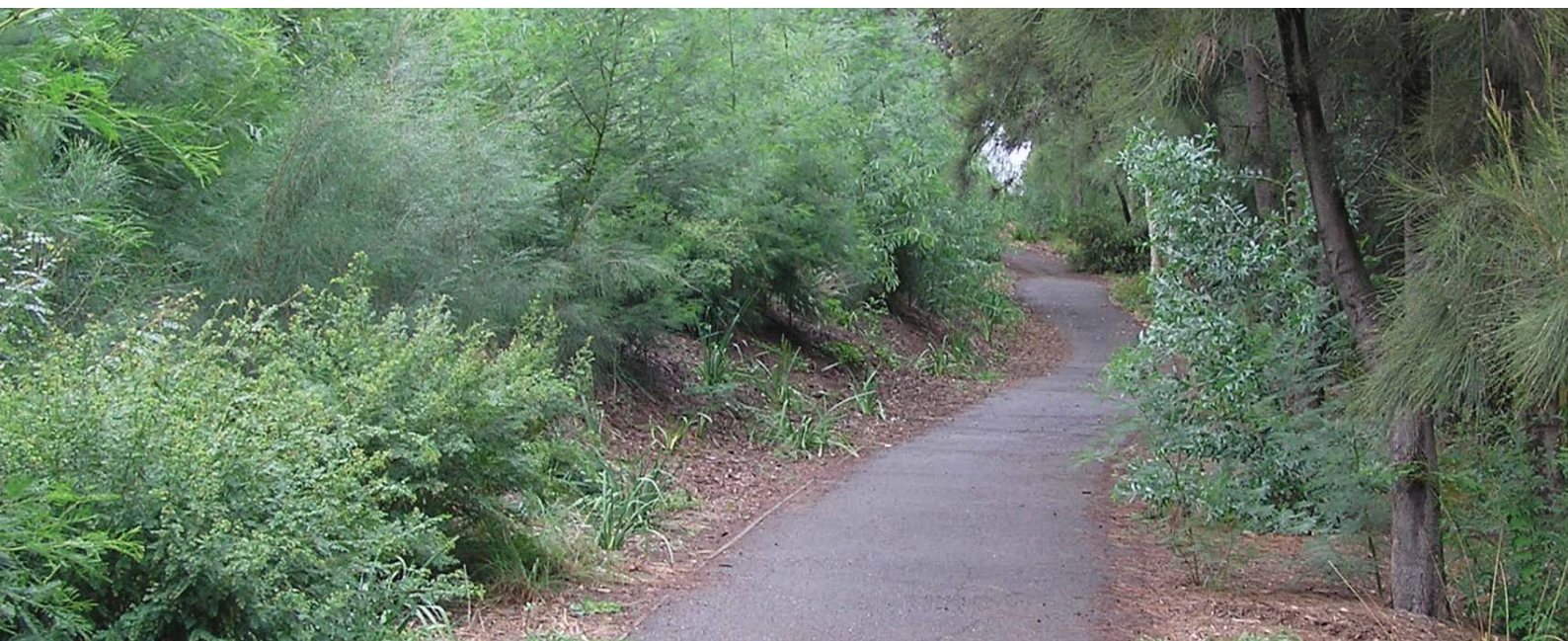
Amalfi Park before



Amalfi Park after



McMillan Park before



McMillan Park after

5.5 BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS CONTINUED



McGirr Park before



McGirr Park after



Collimore Park before



Collimore Park after



5.6 PLAN WORK SITES

There are also a number of other sites across Liverpool where Environment Plan works have been completed. Works on these sites include Environment Group activities, community tree planting days, grant funded projects and workshop activities. The sites where other Environment Plan works have been completed across Liverpool are listed below:

- Elouera Bushland Reserve - Ireland Park, Ashcroft
- The Avenue, footbridge and lake area, Voyager Point
- Glen Regent Reserve - Leacocks Lane, Casula
- Glen Regent Reserve - Kylie Way, Casula
- Lt Cantello Reserve, Hammondville
- Amalfi Park, Lurnea
- Clinches Pond, Moorebank
- Remount Park, Holsworthy
- Rossmore Grange, Rossmore
- Weaving Garden, Casula
- Blamfield Oval, Ashcroft
- Wattle Grove Lake, Wattle Grove
- Tusculm Park, Wattle Grove
- Light Horse Park, Liverpool.



5.7 AWARDS

The success of the Environment Plan has been reflected in Council receiving a number of awards for its achievements. In 2003 Council received first prize for "Playing our part in sustaining Liverpool" in the National Parks and Wildlife Services' Metro Pride Awards category of the Urban Habitat Restoration and Renewal Award.

On 1 December 2005 Council's Sustainable Environment and Health Unit received two awards at the Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards:

- The Environment Plan won the Division C* category of the Urban Waterway Restoration Award
- Council's Environment Volunteer Program won a Highly Commended Award in the Division C* category of the Environment Education Award.

* Divisions A, B and C represent the population size of councils. Liverpool City Council is in Division C.



5.8 ENVIRONMENT PLAN REVIEW

In July 2005, the Environment Plan was reviewed. The main aim of the Environment Plan Review was to:

- Conduct a mid-term review of the Environment Plan programs against the deliverables defined in the Environment Plan
- Explore options and opportunities for the remaining period of the Plan
- Report review findings to Council and the Department of Local Government.

Each program implemented under the Environment Plan was reviewed and evaluated. The following factors were considered for each of the programs:

- Program background
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Recommendations.

The review showed the majority of programs being implemented under the Environment Plan were successful and should be continued as part of a new environment levy program. The information from the Environment Plan review has now been used to contribute to the development of the Environment Restoration Plan. For further information please visit www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au.

5.9 THE CONCLUSION OF THE ENVIRONMENT PLAN

The Environment Plan will conclude at the end of June 2007. In accordance with Council's resolution of 17 October 2005, Council will apply for a new environment levy program called the Environment Restoration Plan. It is intended that Council will seek approval for the levy to continue indefinitely. The Environment Restoration Plan will continue the projects implemented under the Environment Plan in addition to implementing some new environmental initiatives and programs.

6 The Environment Restoration Plan



6.1 WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENT RESTORATION PLAN?

The Environment Restoration Plan is an outline of the environmental projects, programs and plan of on-ground works to be funded by the environment levy. These projects, programs and on-ground works aim to improve the natural environment of Liverpool for the long-term benefit of Liverpool and its community. It is proposed that the Environment Restoration Plan continues the programs and projects commenced under Council's current environment levy program, the Environment Plan.

6.2 WHY CONTINUE THE ENVIRONMENT PLAN?

As shown by the Environment Plan Review, environmental awards received by Council and results from recent consultation on the development of the new environment levy program, the Environment Plan has facilitated a number of excellent environmental projects. However, the natural environment of Liverpool does need long-term commitment to ensure projects are maintained until they function as a natural ecosystem.

The current environment levy will conclude in June 2007 and Council would like to ensure the successful projects that have commenced under the Environment Plan will be continued.

The main reasons for retaining the environment levy program are to:

- Continue to restore Liverpool's natural environment
- Continue environment projects commenced under the Environment Plan between 2002-2007
- Ensure the community has a funding mechanism to support their environment groups and projects
- Play our part in sustaining Liverpool.

6.2.1 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Importantly, the levy has also provided various avenues for the Liverpool community to be directly involved in the decision making processes and on-ground actions to improve the natural environment of Liverpool, including:

- The Environment Advisory Panel
- The Environment Group Sub-committee
- Involvement in over 10 environment groups around the Liverpool LGA
- Participation in numerous tree planting activities and workshops
- Contribution to consultation on the Environment Plan and development of the Environment Restoration Plan.

As a result, the community has been and will continue to be an integral part of the development and delivery of the Environment Restoration Plan.

6.3 HOW IS IT FUNDED?

The Environment Plan is funded by an *ad valorem* charge per ratable property (this means that the charge for each property is not a flat fee, but a percentage of the individual property value). The Environment Restoration Plan and the Environment Plan are funded in the same way. This method is fair as it relates to property values. The property value method of charging is defined under section 508(2) of the Local Government Act (1993).

The amount available for environment restoration works will be subject to the approval of the environment levy amount. The amount approved will be one of the funding options outlined in the matrix (see page 24).

The Environment Restoration Plan will be subject to ongoing analysis and review and will include consultation with the community.

6.4 CONSULTATION TO DEVELOP THE ENVIRONMENT RESTORATION PLAN

6.4.1 THE ENVIRONMENT RESTORATION PLAN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

One of the key components of the planning and development process for the Environment Restoration Plan is community engagement. The Liverpool community has been involved in the development, facilitation and monitoring of the current Environment Plan (2002-2007) and has become an integral part of its delivery and success.

As part of the development of the Environment Restoration Plan, an engagement strategy was developed. The aim of the engagement strategy was to provide a comprehensive outline, using Council's Community Engagement Tool Kit, on how Council will engage relevant stakeholders to contribute to the development of the new Environment Levy program, the Environmental Restoration Plan. For further information please visit www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au.

To enable thorough community input to the Environment Restoration Plan, the engagement will be undertaken in two stages:

- **Stage 1:** Active participation to ascertain the Liverpool community's environmental and sustainability priorities and their willingness to pay for an environment levy (the Environment Restoration Plan)
- **Stage 2:** Consult and inform to provide comments and input on the draft Environment Restoration Plan.

6.4.2 STAGE 1

The main objective of Stage 1 of the consultation strategy was to engage the community, Council staff and other relevant stakeholders to provide fundamental information to allow the development of the Environment Restoration Plan.

This approach to community consultation is at the active participation level of Council's draft Community Engagement Tool Kit.

The proposed outcomes of Stage 1 consultation included:

- Determining the willingness of the community to pay an environment levy
- Determining the amount the community will pay for an environment levy
- Identifying the participants' main environmental issues/concerns
- Prioritising the participants' main environmental issues/concerns
- Identifying specific environmental programs participants would like included under the Environment Restoration Plan
- Determining the method of ongoing community consultation.

The main component of Stage 1 was to conduct five focus groups to provide the basis for the development of the Environment Restoration Plan. The five focus groups were conducted by an independent consultant in August and September 2006. These findings contributed to the development of the Environment Restoration Plan. For further information please visit www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au.

RESULTS FROM STAGE 1 - FOCUS GROUPS

As outlined in the final report of the findings of the focus groups (titled "*Liverpool City Council Community Consultations for the new Environment Plan*"), the five focus groups enabled community members, Council staff and other stakeholders to provide valuable input into the new Liverpool City Council Environment Plan-The Environment Restoration Plan (a copy of the full final report is available on www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au). It was clear from the responses of the group that environmental issues are important to Liverpool residents and that they welcome the opportunity to be consulted on future activities addressing these issues.

In terms of the outcomes desired from the conduct of the focus groups, the following conclusions can be made:

1) The willingness of the community to continue to pay an Environment Levy

Despite prevailing economic pressures being experienced by residents, such as increasing interest rates and petrol prices, the focus groups indicated a general willingness of community members to continue to pay an Environmental Levy.

2) Determining the amount that the community are willing to pay for an Environment Levy

There was general, but not universal, support for an increase in the Levy amount. The results from the two community focus groups suggest that a majority of participants would be prepared for the average household levy to increase from around \$12 pa to \$20 pa.

3) Identification of the participants main environmental issues/concerns

Participant issues and concerns were diverse in scope, with some probably falling outside the reach of Environment Restoration Plan activities. Nine key themes were identified through the focus groups.

4) Prioritisation of the participants main environmental issues/concerns

The priority issues, expressed in terms of the key themes were: Bush Protection, Repair and Regeneration; Waterways; "Community Awareness and Education"; Parks and Recreation Areas; and Developmental Planning.

5) Identification of specific environmental projects participants would like included under the new Environment Plan

A number of project ideas were generated in the focus groups although many were short on details. The theme "Community Awareness and Education" produced the most project ideas.

6) Determining the method of ongoing consultation with the community (community focus groups only).

Community representatives participated enthusiastically in the focus groups and the vast majority (84%) indicated an interest in further participation in the development of the Environment Restoration Plan. Suggestions from the groups on how this should be done were not generally forthcoming, although some suggested that "neighbourhood forums" were appropriate. Further focus group based consultations - either run by Council staff or independent facilitators - might also be appropriate.

6.4.3 STAGE 2

The main objective of Stage 2 of the engagement strategy is to invite the community, Council staff and other relevant stakeholders to make comments on and provide input into the draft Environment Restoration Plan. This input will enable the final document to be produced and final adoption by Council, facilitating the application to the Department of Local Government. This approach to community engagement is outlined in Council's draft Community Engagement Tool Kit.

The proposed outcomes of Stage 2 engagement will include:

- Provision of comments and feedback from the community and other stakeholders in relation to the Environment Restoration Plan

- Incorporation of comments into the Environment Restoration Plan, finalising the document
- Enable the Environment Restoration Plan to be finalised for adoption by Council.

RESULTS FROM STAGE 2 - PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Council endorsed the Draft Environment Restoration Plan on 18 December 2006 to go on Public Exhibition. The Draft Environment Restoration Plan was placed on Public Exhibition from 8 January to 23 February 2007. The draft document was placed on Council's website, and copies were made available at Council's Administration Centre and Library for comment. The Public Exhibition period was advertised in the Council page of the Liverpool Champion on the 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31 January 2007, and 7 and 14 February 2007.

The Public Exhibition period concluded on 23 February 2007 with nine submissions being received.

All comments were considered and relevant comments were incorporated into this document to finalise the Environment Restoration Plan.

At the conclusion of the Environment Restoration Plan, Council will have achieved or contributed toward these deliverables which will contribute to sustaining Liverpool.

6.6 WHAT WILL IT DELIVER?

The type and number of programs to be implemented under the Environment Restoration Plan will depend on funds generated through the environment levy.

The Environment Plan levy is approximately \$12 per household per annum (based on a 650m² property) which generated approximately \$700,000 in the 2006-07 financial year. The following matrix is based on this level of funding as a minimum and projects outlined in the column for \$12 pa is based on an annual budget of \$700,000 per annum.

A matrix outlining the various programs that can be delivered, depending on the amount approved for the new environment levy, appears on the following page. The \$12 pa column shows the proposed programs that can be delivered based on an average environment levy of \$12 per property per annum (Amount for Environment Plan levy). Other columns show what additional programs can be delivered for additional amounts of \$15, \$18 and \$20 per property per annum.



6.5 KEY DELIVERABLES OF THE ENVIRONMENT RESTORATION PLAN

The key deliverables Council aims to achieve from the Environment Restoration Plan are outlined below. These key deliverables have been derived from the Environment Plan and have been reviewed and updated to include:

- Protecting and restoring Liverpool's local endangered ecological communities and other bushland
- Building community networks and partnerships
- Delivering environmental education to the Liverpool community
- Supporting environmental projects across Liverpool
- Installing fencing and access paths (as required)
- Improving the city image
- Cleaner waterways.

PROJECT/PROGRAM	\$20 PA	\$18 PA	\$15 PA	\$12 PA
ON-GROUND WORKS/PROJECTS				
Bush regeneration - four projects pa				✓
Bush regeneration - five projects pa			✓	
Bush regeneration - six projects pa		✓		
Bush regeneration - eight projects pa	✓			
Matching funding for grant opportunities	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Tree Day event	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community tree planting program	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community nursery	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access paths and fencing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Set up of no-mow zones (research, signage, fencing and advertising)	✓	✓	✓	✓
GOVERNANCE				
Support of the Environment Advisory Panel	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support Environment Group Sub-committee	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support Environment Groups	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support for Environment Volunteer Program	✓	✓	✓	✓
EDUCATION				
Sustaining Liverpool Newsletter	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community engagement strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Business engagement strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bi-monthly activity calendar	✓	✓	✓	✓
Workshop series	✓	✓	✓	✓
School education program	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merchandise	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bloomin'	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environmental Education Centre/Sustainable House	✓	✓	✓	✓
STAFF				
Environment Restoration Plan Coordinator	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environment Restoration Plan/Projects Officer	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environment Restoration Plan Education and Grants Officer	✓	✓	✓	
Two bush regeneration staff		✓		
Three bush regeneration staff	✓			
ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION MANAGEMENT				
Environment Restoration Plan indicators	✓	✓	✓	✓
Environmental audits	✓	✓	✓	
Fauna surveying	✓	✓	✓	

A photograph of a riverbank with dense trees and a fallen log in the water. The scene is captured in a natural, slightly overcast light, with the water reflecting the surrounding greenery and the sky. A large, dark log lies horizontally across the middle of the frame, partially submerged in the water. The background is filled with a thick canopy of trees, their leaves in various shades of green and yellow, suggesting a late summer or autumn setting. The overall mood is serene and naturalistic.

7 Monitoring, reporting, review and maintenance

7.1 MONITORING

7.1.1 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

A formal structure was set up to govern the Environment Plan and its programs and enable a reporting mechanism to Council. Figure 1 shows the governance structure. Over the time of the Environment Plan the governance structure has proved to operate effectively in its role and as a result will be continued under the Environment Restoration Plan.

This structure includes two main committees and the supporting environment groups that have been set up to review and provide input into Environment Plan programs:

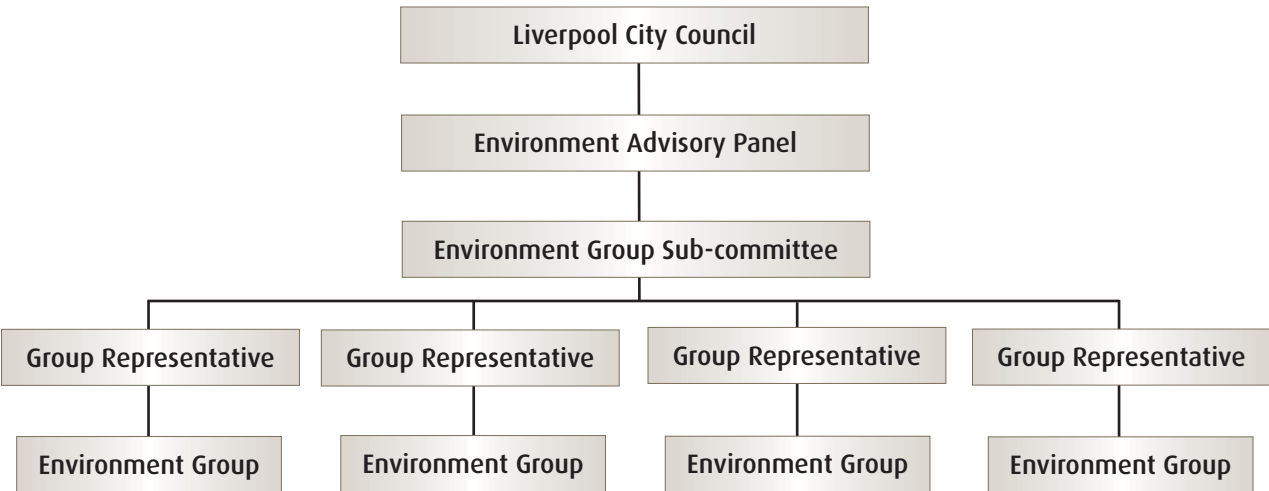
- The Environment Advisory Panel
- Environment Group Sub-committee
- Environment groups.

The main objective of this governance structure is to:

- Support our volunteers on an ongoing basis
- Provide a formal mechanism within Council to canvass environmental and sustainability issues
- Help deliver the Environment Plan.

More information on the Environment Advisory Panel, Environment Group Sub-committee and environment groups can be found in Appendix 1.

Figure 1: The Environment Plan Governance structure



7.1.2 ENVIRONMENT PLAN INDICATORS

The Environment Plan indicators, developed to assist in evaluating the direction and status of the Environment Plan, were adopted by Council on 28 July 2004. It has become apparent, after using the Environment Plan indicators over the period of the Environment Plan, that a number of programs, processes and circumstances have evolved since the development and adoption of the indicators in July 2003. Some of the criteria have now been exceeded or are no longer appropriate. It is proposed that the Environment Plan indicators be reviewed and updated and implemented for the Environment Restoration Plan.

The Environment Plan indicators were developed to assist in evaluating the direction and status of the Environment Plan. In essence, an indicator is a simple measure of direction or status in relation to reportable environmental trends. Once reviewed, the indicators will measure the progress of the Environment Restoration Plan. The results from the indicators will be reported to the Environment Advisory Panel, Council and the Department of Local Government annually.

7.2 REPORTING

7.2.1 DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPORTING

In accordance with the Instrument of Approval under Section 508(2) of the Local Government Act, Council will be required to provide an annual report to the Minister for Local Government on the progress of the Environment Restoration Plan. This report includes details of Environment Restoration Plan programs and a financial report.

7.2.2 STATE OF ENVIRONMENT REPORTING

Each year Council completes a State of Environment Report including a section covering information on the Environment Plan. Data calculated from the Environment Plan Indicators are incorporated into the annual State of Environment Report.

7.2.3 REPORTING TO THE ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY PANEL (EAP)

The Environment Advisory Panel will be the main focus for reporting of Environment Restoration Plan programs. All programs implemented under the Environment Restoration Plan will be reported to the panel in a six-monthly update on programs. In accordance with the Environment Restoration Plan governance structure, programs will then be reported to Council for endorsement.

7.3 REVIEW

In accordance with the review process of the Environment Plan, the Environment Restoration Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that all proposed projects will be delivered.

It is proposed that the Environment Restoration Plan will be adopted as a permanent levy. There will be major reviews completed over five years. These reviews will:

- Ensure proposed projects are on track to be delivered
- Provide an opportunity for community consultation in relation to the progress of the Environment Restoration Plan
- Assess whether the proposed projects and on-ground works are consistent with the Environment Restoration Plan and Council's Corporate planning process

In addition the Environment Restoration Plan will be under constant review through the Environment Advisory Panel as outlined in 7.2.3.

7.4 MAINTENANCE

One of the main aims of the Environment Restoration Plan is to complete on-ground works to improve the natural environment of Liverpool.

On-ground works completed under the Environment Restoration Plan will mainly include bush regeneration and revegetation. It is important that Council has long-term maintenance programs in place to ensure that these works will continue until they are able to function as natural ecosystems. As a result, Council will employ qualified staff to maintain all Environment Restoration Plan works, including contracted primary bush regeneration works, tree planting activities and assist in supporting Environment Group site works.

8

Where to from here?

The next stages of the process to facilitate the adoption and implementation of the Environment Restoration Program are outlined below. If approved, the Environment Restoration Plan will commence in July 2007:

- Environment Restoration Plan adopted in principle by Council for Public Exhibition 18 December 2006
- Environment Restoration Plan on Public Exhibition 8 January-23 February 2007
- Comments from Stage 2 consultation of Engagement Strategy for Environment Restoration Plan incorporated into final document after 23 February 2007
- Final Environment Restoration Plan endorsed by Council 16 April 2007
- Application to Department of Local Government for new environment levy including Environment Restoration Plan developed March-April 2007
- Application to Department of Local Government sent for approval April-May 2007 (sent when applications are requested by Department of Local Government)
- Notification to Council of approval of new environment levy and approval of Environment Restoration Plan May - June 2007
- If approval is granted commencement of environment levy and implementation of the Environment Restoration Plan 1 July 2007.

GLOSSARY

Ad valorem - in proportion to the value (e.g. duties on imports that are fixed at a percentage of the stated value). In relation to the Environment Restoration Plan the annual levy on each rateable property is an ad valorem charge, i.e. a small percentage of the value of the property.

Biodiversity - the variety of plants, animals and microscopic organisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they are part of.

Bush regeneration - the rehabilitation of bushland from a weed infested or otherwise degraded plant community to a healthy community composed of predominantly indigenous species. This can include natural regeneration (encouraging locally native seed in the ground to grow), weeding and replanting of locally native plants.

Catchment - an area of land, bounded by hills or mountains from which all runoff water flows to the same low point. The low point could be a lake, dam, river or the mouth of a river where it enters the ocean. As well as rivers, creeks, lakes and dams, a catchment also includes groundwater, stormwater, wastewater and water-related infrastructure (source: Sydney Metro CMA website).

Ecologically Sustainable Development - using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased.

Ecosystem - a dynamic complex of plant, animal, fungal and micro-organism communities and associated non-living environment interacting as an ecological unit.

Ecological community - an assemblage of species occupying a particular area.

Habitat - an area or place occupied by a species, population or ecological community. It may be occupied permanently or occasionally.

Riparian vegetation - vegetation that occurs on the banks of a waterway, river or creek or any lands which are in, adjoin, directly influence or is influenced by a body of water.

Salinity - concentration of salts in soil or water.

Species - a group of organisms which are biologically capable of breeding and producing fertile offspring with each other but not with members of other species

Tributary - any watercourse that contributes its flow to a larger watercourse.

Vegetation - the structure, cover and species composition of the plants in an area.

Waterway - any stream, creek, river, wetland, lake or other depression in the landscape that carries or contains water, either constantly or intermittently. Waterways may be natural or modified and are often characterised by a defined bed and bank.

APPENDIX 1

1.1 ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY PANEL

The Environment Advisory Panel (EAP) is one of the main committees that were set up to review and provide input into Environment Plan programs. The EAP is a committee of Council constituted under Section 355 of the Local Government Act. The EAP reports directly to Council and holds no delegations. Any reports requiring formal decisions or expenditure of funds are referred to Council for endorsement.

The EAP will be one of the main reporting mechanisms for the Environment Restoration Plan and will ensure sufficient input is provided for Environment Restoration Program. The EAP will continue to function under the Environment Restoration Program. The purpose of the panel is to:

- Consider key environmental issues facing Liverpool and make recommendations to Council

- Provide input to Council with respect to the development of environmental programs for Liverpool
- Work in partnership with Council in terms of various environmental initiatives
- Provide input to the implementation of Council’s Environment Plan, including the development of performance indicators and monitoring of outcomes
- Provide input to the development of future programs as part of the ongoing implementation of the Environment Plan
- Provide advice, direction and support to environmental groups within Liverpool City Council
- Provide opportunities for meaningful community participation.

The establishment of the EAP was a critical step in the process of engaging the Liverpool community in environment and sustainability issues. Table 1 represents the membership of the panel. As outlined in Table 1, EAP members come from a variety of organisations and also from the community.

Table 1

REPRESENTATIVE	NUMBER	TERM	METHOD OF APPOINTMENT
Community	Two	Two years	Expression of interest
Councillors	Two	One year	Resolution of Council (currently two staff representatives nominated by the Administrator)
Corporate Manager City Planning	One	Ongoing	Position holder automatically assumes membership
Manager Sustainable Environment and Health	One	Ongoing	Position holder automatically assumes membership
Gandangara Land Council	One	Two years	Nominated by the Land Council
Tharawal Land Council	One	Two years	Nominated by the Land Council
Industry expert	One	Two years	Expression of Interest
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources	One	Two years	Nominated by Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
Local Environment Groups	Two	Two years	Nominated by the Environment Group Sub-committee
Landcare Regional/ Divisional Representative	One	Two years	Nominated by Landcare

The Environment Plan team facilitates the EAP meetings, which are held bi-monthly. Council staff provide reports on Council environment projects and programs at these meetings for consideration by the panel. At the meetings the EAP provide comments and feedback on these reports and ultimately forward any recommendations for endorsement. Minutes, reports and recommendations required by Council are then included in a Council report for endorsement. All reports, minutes and correspondence can be viewed on Council's website. For more information visit www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au.

- Environment Group Sub-committee
- Environment groups
- Regular consultation with community
- Environment Restoration Plan Review every five years - including extensive consultation.

1.2 ENVIRONMENT GROUP SUB-COMMITTEE

The Environment Group Sub Committee (EGSC) is the other main committee set up under the Environment Plan governance structure. The EGSC is also a committee of Council constituted under Section 355 of the Local Government Act. The EGSC reports to the EAP and holds no delegations. Any reports or minuted items requiring formal decisions or expenditure of funds are referred to the Environment Advisory Panel for endorsement by Council. The purpose of the Environment Group Sub-committee is to:

- Provide two representatives to act as members on the Environment Advisory Panel, on behalf of the Environment Group Sub-committee
- Consider any issues relating to the formation and operation of the environment groups operating in Liverpool and make recommendations to the panel regarding such issues.
- Provide advice, support and networking opportunities to environmental groups within Liverpool City Council
- Work in partnership with Council and the Environment Advisory Panel in various environmental initiatives
- Provide opportunities for meaningful community participation.

The linkages between the Environment Advisory Panel and the Environment Group Sub-committee are designed to:

- Facilitate support and provide structure and form to the environmental groups within Liverpool
- Provide a linear connection between Council and environment groups in Liverpool.

The EGSC membership includes representatives from each of the environment groups established under Council's Environment Volunteer Program. The chairperson of the committee is an environment group representative elected by the committee. The secretary of the committee is Council's Environment Plan Coordinator. Council's Environment Plan team facilitates the committee.

The EGSC meets bi-monthly, and on alternate months to the EAP. At their meetings the EGSC discusses:

- Activities occurring at each of their sites
- Issues that may arise as a result of these activities
- The environment volunteer program processes and programs.

1.3 ENVIRONMENT GROUPS

The environment groups are the other link in the Environment Plan governance structure that will be continued under the Environment Restoration Plan. Each of the environment groups operate under the by-laws of the Environment Advisory Panel constitution. The environment groups hold no delegations.

Any items requiring formal decisions or expenditure of funds are referred to the Environment Advisory Panel through the Environment Group Sub-committee for endorsement. The environment groups meet (usually monthly) to complete environment restoration activities at their sites. Activities include weeding, tree planting, watering, bird watching, water testing and rubbish removal.



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