



Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

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DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGY PLAN

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Community Strategy Plan.

Sutherland Shire Environment Centre supports the overall goal with its emphasis on working together as a community to remain informed and engaged to preserve and enhance the natural beauty and ecological features of the Shire. We are especially heartened to see the Community Strategic Plan recognise what our group has been saying since its inception in 1991: that Sutherland Shire residents recognise the importance of their surrounding natural environment and that they have a strong desire to protect it.

This is an opportune time to increase the implementation of renewable energy by residents, businesses and through community projects as it is not only an essential step for combatting climate change but also will address the goals of maintaining a prosperous, liveable community with a high quality of life.

Equally important is the construction of active transport which tackles the issues of increasing road congestion, rising obesity and building vibrant, productive local centres and enhancing social opportunities for all age groups. The urgency for a comprehensive active transport system is obvious when looking at the expected increase in population over the next 10 years. Clearly, steps need to be taken to entice Shire residents to love their cars much less unless they want to spend increasingly more time sitting in traffic.

Our specific recommendations:

Strategy 2

2.1.2

- Assist businesses and community groups with large roof area with the installation of photovoltaics (PV). Golf and surf clubs, large businesses such as Bunnings are ideal as they use most their power during the day when demand and electricity prices are

highest. Council could encourage installation of PV systems by organising consultants to provide information on systems and the savings they will provide on electricity bills. The Sutherland Shire currently has one of the lowest percentage installation of residential PV nationwide so there is certainly room for improvement.

- Increase the use of electric vehicles (EV) powered by green electricity.
 - Council should replace its current fleet with EV.
 - Installation of power charging stations in the Shire in commercial centres such as Miranda and Cronulla would provide customers and employees with an option to charge their vehicles. It would have the added benefit of attracting tourists and other visitors travelling in electric vehicles to choose the Shire as a place to stop, spending money on accommodation and other amenities. The presence of charging stations will make the use of emission-free electric vehicles a viable choice for more residents increasing air quality and decreasing traffic noise.
 - Power for these stations should be provided directly by PV which could be installed on the roof of parking lots. See photo below.
 - Power charging facilities for electric vehicles should be mandatory in garages of all new multi-unit dwellings.



2.2. We are concerned that increasing development and density is having a negative impact on biodiversity and tree canopy. Planning determinations tend to replace bushland or less developed landscapes with more modified ones. The few natural areas that are left within the built areas of the Shire are precious to all residents (both local and those from suburbs further away). Neighbour notification policies mean that many residents do not become aware of a proposal for change until after the decision has been made. There needs to be a continued, conscientious effort made to conserve and improve all areas of urban

bushland/greenweb and no decisions should be taken to undermine Sutherland Shire's effective tree protection policies.

2.3.1 The SSEC has contributed to the installation of one water filter near South Cronulla to discourage the use of disposable drink bottles. It would be desirable to have similar water filters installed every 1.5-2 kilometres from Wanda to Bass and Flinders lookout to amplify the effect[JG1].

Perhaps council could consider promotion of the Take 3 for the Sea campaign to encourage residents and visitors to properly dispose of rubbish. <https://www.facebook.com/take3forthesea>

2.4 Many of the most admirable qualities of the Shire are those that will also make it most vulnerable to climate change whether it be increased flooding in recently built developments on low lying land such as Shark Park and Greenhills or increased fire risk to our many suburbs that border the Royal National Park and other bushland. A more general risk that impacts on the ability to respond to the emergencies of flood and fire is the loss of power. As summer temperature rise, the increased use of power for air conditioning is a major contributor to power blackouts. It is recommended that the strategic plan include the implementation of microgrids to allow energy to be provided from local sources if the larger grid is incapacitated. The building of microgrids would involve the implementation of PV as described in 2.1 combined with battery storage, some of which could be reserved for use in emergencies.

Strategy 2: measurements of success

- It is not enough to increase rates of recycling and waste diversion. The overall amount of "stuff" consumed from our planet needs to be reduced. We would suggest adding a KPI of reduced waste per household/resident.

3.2, 3.3 Active transport addresses all the goals within these strategies by empowering all residents including the disadvantaged and vulnerable with a safe and free option for transport. It provides opportunities for old, young and those with disabilities to engage and interact with others in a way that enhances community well-being. One only needs to walk or cycle Bourke Street, Cooks River, Wollongong to feel the vibrancy that this type of infrastructure brings.

4.3.2 SSEC supports the suggestion that development should not impact on places in Sutherland Shire that have exceptional importance for our community. This should include open vistas and blue skies not being encroached by large highrise buildings. Again, while direct neighbours are considered in the planning approval process large buildings can block out public views from very far away, e.g. Sharks development blocks views of Botany Bay from southern parts of the

Shire. As more and more highrise buildings are built in centres residents will lose the blue skies that they now enjoy[JG2].

6.1 Sutherland Shire Environment Centre advocates the use of the Climate[JG3] Fund to accelerate plans for safe, connected cycleways and shared paths which yield a very high benefit for very little cost compared to other transport solutions. SSEC and its members have been campaigning for a Cronulla to Sutherland Shared path for over 10 years and while many dollars have been spent preparing studies and plans, we are still waiting for the project to be initiated Funds should be allocated for building of public showers and bike storage facilities in the CBD and other commercial centres to encourage people to get out of their cars and walk or cycle to work.

In the meantime, consideration should be given to allowing cycling on footpaths outside of local business areas. While most cyclists will still prefer to ride on roads using quieter streets, some newer riders prefer the perceived safety of the footpath. Also, this would enable high school students to ride to school legally using footpaths.

Similarly, the fund could provide subsidies to assist businesses to install showers and other amenities that encourage employees to ride or walk to work.

Other incentives should be offered to people who commute to work by public or active transport, such as tax deductions for bicycle purchase, maintenance and insurance.

All commercial and industrial developments should require highly visible and convenient bicycle parking facilities, both for staff and customers.

6.2 Any affordable housing developments should include solar power installations to reduce power bills for residents.

6.4 To the list of strategies in this section, should be added: 'require the construction of healthy buildings'.

It is fundamentally important that buildings are constructed with the health of occupants in mind to alleviate the chronic stresses that 'weaken the fabric of a community on a day-to-day

or cyclical basis' (Principle 4) and 'sustain Sutherland Shire as a liveable place where we can all continue to enjoy a high quality of life' (Goal 6).


The construction of healthy buildings should consider measures that require the use of natural, nontoxic materials and avoid exposure to:

- harmful chemicals
- heavy metals

- harmful electromagnetic fields
- mould and other toxins.

Strategy 6 KPIs: Rather than only measuring “perception of cycling safety”, we would suggest a measurement of “students riding to school”, “ride to work”, etc.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Gormley', written in a cursive style.

Jenni Gormley
Chairperson