

# Environmental Levy

## Sustaining our City for the next 20 years

**HAVE YOUR SAY**

November 2023





# Sustaining our City for the next 20 years

It's sometimes easy to forget how far we've come as a City in 20 years.

2004 is etched in my mind as it was about this time that my husband and I made the decision to settle in Maroubra in Randwick City and raise our family here.

Like many people, we loved the location, the coastal environment and the sense of community.

Coincidentally, it was also the same year that Randwick Council – long before I was elected to Council – embarked on its ambitious Sustaining our City program.

At the time sustainability was still seen as 'optional' – something nice to have. But our community embraced it and agreed that paying a little extra to improve water quality at our beaches, reduce energy consumption and avoid waste was worth it.

Every five years we've gone back to you and asked for your feedback on continuing the levy and each time a majority of our community has supported the levy.

For around 28c a day or \$1.95 a week, the Sustaining our City Environmental Levy represents excellent value for what we've been able to deliver for our community.

All Council buildings and streetlights are now powered by 100% solar from NSW solar farms and we've built 12km of Coastal Walkway – including reinstating public access to Malabar Headland for the first time in over 100 years. Both of which has been made possible due to the levy.

With the levy due to expire on 30 June 2024, we have a choice to make – continue paying what you've always paid for 20 years and keep delivering for our environment, or cease the levy meaning Council will have to delay, reduce in scope or cancel many sustainability projects.

I know many households are suffering from rising cost of living pressures. However I fear that not investing in our environment will cost us and our children more in the future.

Please take a few minutes to read this booklet – it will give you some important information about what the levy means for you. It is important for you to have your say so that we make the right decision for our community's future.

**Councillor Philipa Veitch**  
Mayor of Randwick

2004	2006	2008	2010	2011	2018	2018
Environmental Levy commences	First annual Eco Living Festival held	Marine & Coastal school holiday program commences	Randwick Environment Park opens	Compost Revolution launches	Malabar Western Escarpment Walking Track opens	Cape Banks Coastal Walkway link at NSW Golf Course opens

## About the Environmental Levy

Since 2004, Randwick Council's sustainability initiatives and environmental improvements have been funded by an Environmental Levy. The levy has five key priority areas:

- Conserving our coast
- Tackling climate change
- Protecting biodiversity
- Reducing consumption of resources
- Community engagement and education

### PROJECT HIGHLIGHT WASTEWATER REUSE

After the drought conditions of 2006, Council commenced an extensive investment in water re-use encompassing rainwater, stormwater, borewater and other wastewater.

There are currently 25 parks and playing fields across Randwick irrigated with treated stormwater, borewater and wastewater systems.

These capture, treatment and re-use systems are conservatively saving Council in the order of 350 million to 450 million litres of potable water each year.

They also provide upwards of 60 percent of all of Council's operational water use – not just for irrigation but toilet flushing in public toilets.

This provides financial savings of about \$1.1M each year in water costs.

Over approximately 15 years of Environmental Levy investment in stormwater and wastewater re-use, Council has saved in the order of 6,000ML and \$15 million in water costs. That's more than the equivalent water in 1,800 Olympic-sized swimming pools!

### Recognition for Environmental Levy

Randwick Council's Sustaining our City Environmental Levy program has won **74 awards** since 2004.

These include the Local Government NSW Excellence Awards, Excellence in the Environment Awards, Greater Sydney Planning Awards, Local Government Professionals Awards, Local Government NSW Awards, Green Globe Awards, Banksia Awards, World Environment Day Awards and more.



2019	2020	2021	2022
Plant With Us commences	14th stormwater harvest system opens at Maroubra Beach	Household sustainability rebates program commences	Council goes 100% solar

## ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY HIGHLIGHTS 2004-2024



### 12km

Coastal Walkway upgrades completed including Malabar Headland, Cape Banks and Randwick Environment Park boardwalk.



### 38

Gross Pollutant Traps installed preventing more than 300 tonnes of rubbish entering our oceans each year.



### \$1.1M

The amount householders are saving on annual energy costs through Council's Sustainability Rebates program.



### Moree, Hillston & Nevertire

The NSW towns where our solar power is collected to power Council buildings and streetlights with 100% renewable energy.



### 16

Public EV charging stations installed.



### 7,800

Compost bins and worm farms provided to households since 2004.



### 6.5 tonnes

The amount of food waste diverted from landfill through Council's Compost Revolution program.



### 7

Community gardens opened.

# Our plan for the future 2024-2029

## What continuing the Environmental Levy will achieve

### COASTAL

**Budget: \$5M**

- Coastal Walkway upgrades and enhancements, South Coogee, Lurline Bay and Little Bay to Kamay Botany Bay National Park
- New Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs) and rain gardens to minimise pollution entering our oceans
- Crayweed and posidonia citizen science restoration

### CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE

**Budget: \$5.5M**

- Upgrade solar on Council buildings
- Solar storage batteries
- Sustainability rebates for residents and businesses
- New fast public EV charging points
- Microgrid investigations
- Installation of community batteries
- Power purchasing agreement
- Solar farm at DRLC
- Urban greening and maintenance for cooler town centres and residential areas

### COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

**Budget: \$4.5M**

- Sustainability workshops & courses
- Eco Living Festival
- Marine & Coastal Discovery program
- Sustainability education 'hub' improvements
- Environmental school grants
- First Nations stewardship collaborations
- Sustainability Street community program
- Community resilience hubs

### WATER SAVING

**Budget: \$2M**

- Stormwater re-use and recycling at Randwick Community Centre
- Rainwater tank re-use at Council sites
- Blackwater recycling and re-use (Heffron Park and Frenchmans Bay)
- Reedbed irrigation amenities at Randwick Environment Park

### FOOD

**Budget: \$2M**

- Community gardens
- Edible garden support in schools

### BIODIVERSITY & HABITAT

**Budget: \$2.5M**

- Native and Indigenous planting and upkeep for town centres and residential areas
- WIRES Wildlife Rescue re-location & interpretive facilities
- Whale watching platforms
- Tree planting on every verge
- Revitalise Bunnerong Creek
- Green roofs and walls on new developments
- Heffron Park wetland
- Expanded ClimateWatch citizen science trails

### WASTE AVOIDANCE

**Budget: \$1M**

- Food waste avoidance, schools, cafes and restaurants
- Circular Economy procurement
- Construction and demolition waste recovery initiative
- Randwick Collaboration Precinct

### ACTIVE TRANSPORT

**Budget: \$4M**

- North-south cycleway completion
- First Nations walking trail, La Perouse
- Sydney Great Coastal Walk – partnership with Walking Volunteers
- EV infrastructure partnerships and incentives
- End of trip facilities for cyclists and walkers
- 'Green grid' walking and cycling connections

### OTHER

**Budget: \$2M**

- Landfill monitoring program
- First Nations art trail
- Sustainable markets
- Green living plan for public land developments
- Environmental sculptures on Coastal Walkway
- Children's environmental art at Munda Street Reserve sustainability hub

Note: The above projects show total budget allocations based on the next five years of the Environmental Levy. Some of these projects will take longer than five years to achieve and will likely be carried over and funded by the Levy in future years if required. All projects listed are subject to Council's usual community engagement and decision-making processes and are subject to change depending on circumstances at the time.

# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

## SUSTAINABILITY REBATES

Helping households save energy and water



Since 2020 Randwick Council has been helping households implement energy and water saving improvements in their own homes by offering up to \$5,000 per household in rebates.

**FUNDING AREA**  
Climate and resilience

**BUDGET**  
\$5.5M

**TIMEFRAME**  
2024-29

**LOCATION**  
LGA-wide

**STATUS**  
Commenced 2020; ongoing

### DID YOU KNOW?

In September 2023 Randwick Council provided its 1000th Sustainability Rebate for a family in Maroubra installing solar panels. The extra funding meant they could stretch their budget to also install a solar battery system.

SUSTAINABILITY REBATE	PROVIDED TO DATE
Rooftop solar installations	551
Solar battery storage	85
Electric vehicle chargers	72
LED lighting upgrades	65
Insulation installs	69
Heatpump hotwater replacement	47
Energy assessments	28
Rainwater tank installations	22
Cooktop replacement (induction for gas)	22
Solar system health check	16
Energy efficient pool pumps	15
Waterfix upgrades (in conjunction with Sydney Water Waterfix program)	8

# MEETING OUR CLIMATE CHANGE TARGETS



The Environmental Levy is critical to help meet Council's commitments on climate change.

## EMISSIONS

# 60%

Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions across Randwick City by 2030 – but aspiring to a 100% reduction in same timeframe.



### HOW WE'RE TRACKING

Achieving a 60% reduction in emissions across the entire Randwick LGA is a challenging target and requires a whole of community approach. Council's programs such as our Sustainability Rebates program, Solar my School, Solar my Club, Compost Revolution and Public EV chargers are aimed at positively influencing and encouraging Randwick homes and businesses to reduce emissions by using renewable energy and making more sustainable transport decisions whether in cars or 'active' transport such as walking, cycling or taking public transport.

LGA-wide greenhouse gas emissions are down about 12% over the past few years and Council's own emissions have been slashed by 42% over the same timeframe. 100% of Council's electricity needs have been supplied by renewable solar energy since 2022.

## WATER

# 30%

Reduction in the consumption of water across Randwick City per capita by 2030, from a 2017 baseline.



### HOW WE'RE TRACKING

Randwick Council is leading by example when it comes to water conservation with 350 to 450 million litres of drinking water saved every year through stormwater re-use and treatment systems installed as part of our environmental levy across 25 of our parks and playing fields. The parkland foreshores of Coogee Beach and Maroubra Beach are now irrigated by 100% recycled water.

## TREES

# 40%

Council's target tree canopy coverage for Council managed land by 2040.



### HOW WE'RE TRACKING

Council is accelerating its tree planting through a variety of programs including Plant With Us which saw 4,400 established trees and 28,000 understorey shrubs, grasses and groundcovers planted in 2022 and 2023. An additional 2,000 advanced trees are being planted in 2023 and 2024 as part of a State Government grant. New Council planning controls require development on private property to include more trees. As an inner-city council with limited land area, increasing our canopy from 17% to 40% represents a challenge that we are continuing to tackle.

# What continuing or stopping the Environmental Levy would mean for you

OPTION 1 CONTINUE LEVY					OPTION 2 DISCONTINUE LEVY																																						
<p>Under this option, ratepayers continue paying the Environmental Levy and it is made permanent. The levy will fund important sustainability improvements, maintenance and projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conserving water and reducing pollution entering our oceans</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tackling climate change and reducing urban heat island effect</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public renewables and EV charging</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability grants, community workshops and programs</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Completing coastal walkways including whale watching platforms</li> </ul>					<p>This option proposes discontinuing the Environmental Levy. Ratepayers would receive a small reduction in their rates, but Council will have to cancel, reduce or delay many sustainability projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conserving water and reducing pollution entering our oceans</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tackling climate change and reducing urban heat island effect</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Public renewables and EV charging</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability grants, community workshops and programs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Completing coastal walkways including whale watching platforms</li> </ul>																																						
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\*Annual rate increase (rate peg) is set by IPART. The Council's financial forecasts rely on the assumptions outlined in our Long-Term Financial Plan 2023-33, adopted by Council in September 2023. The rate peg by IPART has not been determined at the time of this publication. Any variance between the assumptions in the Long-Term Financial Plan and the Council's estimates will directly affect the financial outcomes.

\*\* excludes Port Botany businesses (29 properties)

# Frequently asked questions

## What is the Environmental Levy?

Since 2004 ratepayers in Randwick City have paid a little bit more on their rates each year to go towards sustainability initiatives. This levy has delivered important improvements across our City and Council is seeking to continue it.

## What is the rate peg?

The rate peg is the percentage that councils in NSW are permitted to increase their overall rates revenue by each year. The rate peg amount varies each year and is determined by an independent organisation called IPART – The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

## Who is responsible for deciding whether the Levy continues?

As the Environmental Levy is an increase to your rates over and above the set rate peg, councils must apply to IPART for approval to vary rates income above the set rate peg. This process is known as a Special Rate Variation. IPART conducts a thorough assessment of applications from councils taking into consideration the need for the extra revenue, how it will be spent, council financial efficiencies and community feedback. IPART may approve proposals completely, in part or reject them.

## Will my rates go up by 11.67% in real terms?

No! This figure shows how much Council's total rates income is proposed to increase in 2024/25 from a baseline of no Environmental Levy and no rate peg increase. As you're already paying the Environmental Levy, in real terms your increase will be the mandatory rate peg (estimated to be 5%).

## How do I work out how much Environmental Levy I will pay?

Your levy amount is listed on your July rates notice. Each property owner pays a slightly different amount depending on the value of your property. The figures on the table on the opposite page show how much the average residential or business ratepayer will pay. Most residential ratepayers will actually pay less than the average.

## When will the Environmental Levy end?

We are proposing to retain the Environmental Levy permanently in the rates base, rather than seeking approval for another 5-year timeframe (as we have done previously).

## What is Council's view?

We support continuing the levy and believe this is the best financial, social and sustainable outcome.

## What happens if the levy doesn't continue?

Council will be worse off by about \$6M in annual funding. This means that the projects proposed in this information booklet either won't happen, be reduced in scale or delayed.



# Have your say

We are seeking your feedback on the Environmental Levy for 42 days from 7 November to 19 December 2023. You can obtain information about the Environmental Levy in the following ways:



- Electronically on Council's Your Say Randwick website [www.yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au)
- In hard copy at the following locations:
  - Randwick Council Administration Building, 30 Frances Street Randwick
  - Lionel Bowen Library, 669-673 Anzac Parade Maroubra
  - Margaret Martin Library, Level 1, Royal Randwick Shopping Centre, Randwick
  - Malabar Community Library, 203 Anzac Parade, Matraville



## Survey



Every Randwick City ratepayer will receive a letter and survey in the mail. Follow the instructions to complete the survey online using the supplied unique URL and QR code, or complete the paper survey and mail it back to Council. Note you only need to complete one survey option.



## Telephone survey

We'll be phoning 750 randomly selected Randwick City residents in November 2023 to seek your views. If we phone you, please consider taking part.



## Submissions

If you wish to provide a submission to Council, you may do so through the following means:

- Online at Council's Your Say Randwick website [www.yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au](http://www.yoursay.randwick.nsw.gov.au)
- Via email to [council@randwick.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@randwick.nsw.gov.au) marked "Submission: Environmental Levy"
- In writing to Randwick City Council, "Submission: Environmental Levy", 30 Frances Street, Randwick NSW 2031.



## Pop-up sessions

Council staff will be at various locations during November and December to talk about the Environmental Levy.

### 14-16 November

Margaret Martin Library, Level 1, Royal Randwick Shopping Centre, Randwick

### 21-23 November

Pacific Square, Anzac Parade, Maroubra Junction

Scan the QR code or phone 9093 6000 for more dates and locations to drop by and see us. No appointment is required.