

AGENDA

Environment and Planning Committee

Tuesday, 09 June 2026

Committee Meetings commence at 6.00pm and run consecutively

**Dragon Room
Georges River Civic Centre,
Hurstville**



OATH OF OFFICE OR AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE

All Georges River Councillors are reminded of their Oath of Office or Affirmation of Office made at the time of their swearing into the role of Councillor.

All Councillors are to undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of the Georges River Council area and are to act faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the *Local Government Act 1993* or any other Act to the best of their ability and judgement.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

All Georges River Councillors are reminded of their obligation to declare any conflict of interest (perceived or otherwise) in a matter being considered by Council or at any meeting of Council.

ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

ORDER OF BUSINESS

OPENING

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Council acknowledges the Bidjigal people of the Eora Nation, who are the Traditional Custodians of all lands, waters and sky in the Georges River area. I pay my respect to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live, work and meet on these lands.

APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE

REQUEST TO JOIN VIA AUDIO VISUAL LINK

NOTICE OF WEBCASTING

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

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CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Item: ENV020-26 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Environment and Planning Committee Meeting held on 11 May 2026

Author: Executive Services Officer

Directorate: Office of the General Manager

Matter Type: Previous Minutes

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Minutes of the Environment and Planning Committee Meeting held on 11 May 2026, be confirmed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment [↓](#)1 Minutes of the Environment and Planning Committee Meeting held on 11 May 2026

MINUTES

Environment and Planning Committee

Monday, 11 May 2026

Dragon Room
Georges River Civic Centre,
Hurstville

UNCONFIRMED



GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL

PRESENT

COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Mayor, Councillor Elise Borg, Councillor Peter Mahoney (Chair), Councillor Matthew Allison, Councillor Elaina Anzellotti, Councillor Tom Arthur, Councillor Oliver Dimoski, Councillor Thomas Gao, Councillor Gerard Hayes, Councillor Christina Jamieson, Councillor Kathryn Landsberry, Councillor Nancy Liu, Councillor Peter Mahoney, Councillor Natalie Mort, Councillor Leon Pun, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Sam Stratikopoulos, and Councillor Ben Wang.

COUNCIL STAFF

General Manager – David Tuxford, Director Assets and Infrastructure – Bryce Spelta, Director Environment and Planning – Joseph Hill, Director Community and Culture – Kristie Dodd, Director Business and Corporate Services – Danielle Parker, Manager, Office of the General Manager – Vicki McKinley, Manager Development and Building – Kristy Griffiths, Manager Strategic Planning – Luke Oste, Chief Audit Officer – Steven Baker, Executive Services Officer – Marisa Severino, Executive Services Officer – Nickie Paras, General Counsel - James Fan, Executive Manager City Futures – Kent Stroud, and Technology Services Officer Brendan Thorpe.

OPENING

The Chairperson, Councillor Mahoney, opened the meeting at 6:46pm.

APOLOGIES/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

MOTION: Councillor Gao and Councillor Anzellotti

That an apology and leave of absence be accepted for Councillor Arthur and Councillor Pun.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: Mayor, Councillor Borg, Councillor Mahoney, Councillor Allison, Councillor Anzellotti, Councillor Dimoski, Councillor Gao, Councillor Hayes, Councillor Jamieson, Councillor Landsberry, Councillor Liu, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Wang

Against the Motion: Councillor Mort

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was twelve (12) votes FOR and one (1) vote AGAINST. The Motion was CARRIED.

REQUEST TO ATTEND VIA AUDIO VISUAL LINK

There were no requests to attend via Audio Visual Link.

DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest made.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

ENV017-26 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Environment and Planning Committee Meeting held on 13 April 2026
(Report by Executive Services Officer)

RECOMMENDATION: Councillor Allison, Councillor Landsberry

That the Minutes of the Environment and Planning Committee Meeting held on 13 April 2026,

be confirmed.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: Mayor, Councillor Borg, Councillor Mahoney, Councillor Allison, Councillor Anzellotti, Councillor Dimoski, Councillor Gao, Councillor Hayes, Councillor Jamieson, Councillor Landsberry, Councillor Liu, Councillor Mort, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Wang

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

ENV018-26 Development and Building Q3 Metrics Report
(Report by Manager Development and Building)

RECOMMENDATION: Councillor Mort, Councillor Allison

That Council note the Quarterly Development and Building Team Functions and Services Metrics Report for the period January to March 2026.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: Mayor, Councillor Borg, Councillor Mahoney, Councillor Allison, Councillor Anzellotti, Councillor Dimoski, Councillor Hayes, Councillor Jamieson, Councillor Landsberry, Councillor Liu, Councillor Mort, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Wang

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

ENV019-26 Endorsement of Council Submission to the draft Statewide Community Participation Plan
(Report by Manager Strategic Planning)

Note: It was noted that Councillor Gao left the Chambers at 07:04pm

RECOMMENDATION: Councillor Liu, Councillor Mort

- (a) That Council endorse the Georges River Council submission to the NSW Government on the draft Statewide Community Participation Plan (**Attachment 1**).
- (b) That Council authorise the Director, Planning & Environment to finalise and submit the endorsed submission, including any minor amendments that do not alter the substantive intent.

Record of Voting

For the Motion: Mayor, Councillor Borg, Councillor Mahoney, Councillor Allison, Councillor Anzellotti, Councillor Dimoski, Councillor Hayes, Councillor Jamieson, Councillor Landsberry, Councillor Liu, Councillor Mort, Deputy Mayor, Councillor Stratikopoulos, Councillor Wang

On being PUT to the meeting, voting on this Motion was UNANIMOUS. The Motion was CARRIED.

CONCLUSION

The Meeting was closed at 7:06pm.

Chairperson

UNCONFIRMED

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Item: ENV021-26 Zero Litter to Georges River - Progress Update Report - June 2026

Author: Manager Environment Health & Regulatory Services

Directorate: Environment and Planning

Matter Type: Committee Reports

ENV021-26

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council note the progress made towards Council's target of Zero Litter to Georges River originating from terrestrial locations above the high-water mark within the Georges River Local Government Area by 2030.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides the third update report regarding Council's progress towards achieving its Zero Litter to Georges River by 2030 target.
2. Since 2024, Council has continued its approach to reducing litter by maintaining waste services, improving education and enforcement, and working closely with partners like Georges Riverkeeper. Further, Council was awarded grant funding to deliver projects across the local government area for litter and illegal dumping prevention.
3. The increase of litter removal throughout the local government area is due to several contributing factors, such as population growth, increased reliance on single-use plastics, and rainfall events that transport debris through stormwater systems. In addition, Council's capacity to quantify the total volume of litter entering the Georges River is limited, and responsibility for litter management is shared among multiple agencies.
4. Council is continuing to strive toward its aspirational 2030 target, supported by partnerships with Georges Riverkeeper, introduction of new programs and initiatives, ongoing infrastructure maintenance and community education. The actual goal of Zero Litter to the Georges River is difficult to quantify and monitor but Council continues to work towards minimising litter within our LGA. Continued collaboration will be vital to progress and work towards minimising litter.
5. New initiatives and programs delivered since the last report include: Council trialling the Return and Earn 'Bin Basket Program'; securing \$103,881 in funding under the NSW Environment Protection Authority's Illegal Dumping Prevention grant to address illegal dumping in our parks and bushland; Councils 'Binfluencing' Campaign; 'Never Bin a Battery' Campaign; Illegal Dumping Awareness Campaigns; delivering the Healthy Hospitals project with grant funding from NSW EPA to reduce litter; E-waste events have been expanded to accept additional non-E-waste items and detecting litter in our waterways using artificial intelligence pilot project with CSIRO.
6. Further Zero Litter to Georges River Progress Update Reports will be presented to Council in 2028 and 2030.

BACKGROUND

7. At its meeting on 22 June 2020, the Zero Litter to Georges River by 2030 (ENV019-20) report was resolved by Council:

- “(a) That Council aims for a target of zero litter originating from terrestrial locations above the high-water mark within the Georges River Local Government Area entering the Georges River by 2030.*
- (b) That to reduce litter entering the Georges River and to support the zero litter target, Council:*
- i. maintains the existing litter reduction programs and infrastructure systems delivered by Council and regional groups as outlined within this report.*
 - ii. implements the mechanisms/approaches/programs recommended for additional litter reductions as contained in this report subject to the identification/allocation of funding.*
 - iii. continues to investigate future funding opportunities from the NSW Environment Protection Authority and other agencies or industry bodies to fund the implementation of the additional litter reduction initiatives.*
- (c) That further reports detailing the progress of the actions outlined above be provided to Council every two years commencing in 2022.”*
8. To date, the following progress reports have been presented to Council:
- ENV020-22: Zero Litter to Georges River - Progress Update report on 2 August 2022
 - ENV034-24: Zero Litter to Georges River - Progress Update Report on 26 August 2024.
9. The first Zero Litter to Georges River – Progress Update report (ENV020-22) was provided to Council at its meeting on 2 August 2022, whereby Council resolved the following:
- “That Council note the progress made towards Council’s aim for a target of zero litter originating from terrestrial locations above the high-water mark within the Georges River Local Government Area by 2030.”*
10. The second Zero Litter to Georges River – Progress Update report (ENV034-24) was provided to Council at its meeting on 26 August 2024, whereby Council resolved the following:
- “(a) That Council note the progress made towards Councils target of zero litter to Georges River originating from terrestrial locations above the high-water mark within the Georges River Local Government Area by 2030.*
- (b) That Council note a litter target update report will continue to be provided every two years in line with Council’s resolution dated 22 June 2020.”*
11. Further, Council resolved (NM059-23) at its meeting on 23 October 2023 that:
- “The General Manager makes an application under the New South Wales litter Prevention Grant Program in order to take advantage of the numerous environmental benefits which will arise from Council’s involvement in the program.”*
12. Under section 144A of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (POEO Act), 'litter' includes
- a) any solid or liquid domestic or commercial refuse, debris or rubbish and, without limiting the generality of the above, includes any glass, metal, cigarette butts, paper, fabric, wood, food, abandoned vehicles, abandoned vehicle parts, construction or demolition material, garden remnants and clippings, soil, sand or rocks, and*
 - b) any other material, substance or thing deposited in or on a place if its size, shape, nature or volume makes the place where it has been deposited disorderly or*

detrimentally affects the proper use of that place, deposited in or on a place, whether or not it has any value when or after being deposited in or on the place.

13. As per the definition of litter above, litter can be blown, dropped, washed or deposited by other means into the Georges River directly, or into a portion of the Georges River catchment. Therefore, it is impossible to determine the total volume of litter entering the entire Georges River catchment over any given period from the Georges River local government area.
14. It is also impossible to determine the source of all litter collected (or not collected) from the Georges River, given the possibility of numerous sources of litter. Council can only quantify volumes of litter collected through only solid waste collections of street and park litter bins, as well as stormwater infrastructure and street sweepers as outlined further within this report.
15. With an increase in consumerism in today’s society leading to increased use of single use plastic items, and an increased population, combined with higher rainfall in periods during La Niña, it can be expected that the volume of litter captured will also increase.
16. The responsibility for litter within the Georges River varies between numerous agencies (Table 1) and Council is only responsible for litter within terrestrial locations above the high-water mark within the Georges River LGA. As such, Council cannot assume responsibility for all water-borne litter within the Georges River, particularly given the extent of the Georges River catchment.

Table 1: Responsibilities for Litter Management in the Georges River

Location of Litter	Responsibility
Terrestrial locations above the high-water mark	Local government agencies and NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)
Aquatic locations in natural tributaries and rivers below the high-water mark	NSW Maritime (Transport for NSW)
Aquatic locations in channelised infrastructure below the high-water mark	Sydney Water
Mangrove locations below the high-water mark	NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development* (DPIRD)

*Due to mangroves being classified as ecologically important fisheries.

Report Summary

17. The full detail of Councils Zero Litter to Georges progress update can be found in Attachment 1 of this report, with updates detailing the progress of litter prevention and reduction actions at a local and catchment level over the past two years since the last report was presented to Council in 2024. These progress updates are formatted in order of sub-heading as they appeared in the ENV019-20 report Zero Litter to Georges River by 2030 presented to Council on 22 June 2020.
18. A summary of key achievements delivered by Council, regional partners and external stakeholders over the past 2 years to progress towards Councils target of Zero Litter to Georges River originating from terrestrial locations above the high-water mark within the Georges River Local Government Area (LGA) by 2030 are outlined below:

Council Waste and Litter reduction Programs:

- Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs) captured approximately 334 tonnes of litter and debris annually from entering the stormwater system and ultimately the Georges River waterway.
- Council has re-established its illegal dumping response through a dedicated Ranger-Waste position and has secured \$103,881 in grant funding to deliver a two-year program targeting illegal dumping hotspots.
- Council delivered an innovative AI litter detection trial with CSIRO, capturing 280,000 images and identifying soft plastics as the most common litter type, supporting future data-driven decision-making
- The Return and Earn program continues to be supported by Council, with a 'Bin Basket' trial underway to improve recycling and reduce contamination in public waste bins.
- The Hook and Line bin program has continued, following a successful trial period at key fishing hotspots to reduce fishing related litter and raise awareness on responsible fishing.
- The Get the Site Right campaign was supported by Council over the past 2 years, with ongoing enforcement actions addressing non-compliant construction sites to prevent pollution entering the stormwater system.
- Councils' street sweeping program is actively preventing litter entering the stormwater systems, with approximately 1,080 tonnes collected in 2024/25 and 949 tonnes collected to date in 2025/26.

Council drop-off, collection and community events:

- Councils E-Waste and Extras Drop-Off events has expanded to include additional non e-waste items, diverting over 1,046 tonnes of material in 2025/26 and increasing resource recovery opportunities.
- Councils Household Chemical Cleanout events have significantly increased in collection, with more than 1,031 tonnes collected in 2025/26.
- Community participation in Clean Up Australia Day increased, with litter collection increasing from 1.26 tonnes in 2025 to 1.50 tonnes in 2026.
- Community education and clean-up initiatives were delivered, including a successful cross-council Salt Pan Creek paddle clean-up involving 24 participants and the removal of 12 bags of litter and bulky waste.

Georges Riverkeeper Programs:

- 5,805.4 Kilograms of litter removed from 27 sites across the Georges River LGA between 2024 and 2026 (up to 31 December 2025) by the partnership with Corrective Services NSW and Georges Riverkeeper.
- Delivery of campaigns, events, and partnerships to protect and remove litter from Georges River Catchment, including 'Get the Site Right', Clean-up events and litter collection days
- In February 2025, Georges Riverkeeper helped to secure \$665,000 of grant funding to deliver the Georges River Estuary Coastal Management Program (CMP) stages 2-4. This is a coordinated plan for managing the estuary, including stormwater and will allow Council to access NSW Coastal and Estuary Grant funding to implement projects to protect and enhance the Georges River Catchment.

- River health monitoring and research programs continued, providing critical data to inform infrastructure planning and catchment management, with Jewfish Bay Baths added as a new Microplastics monitoring site as of April 2026.

Conclusion

19. Georges River Council will continue to support the work of Georges Riverkeeper and neighbouring councils in coordinating catchment-wide litter prevention and reduction initiatives. Council will also advocate for increased involvement of the Georges River LGA in on-ground projects, including pilot litter reduction initiatives.
20. Council will continue to promote litter prevention and management within the LGA through engagement with all levels of government and will seek external grant funding to support progress towards the aspirational Zero Litter to Georges River target.
21. Council will continue to monitor and report on water quality and litter levels to relevant organisations, including the Georges Riverkeeper through its Research and Monitoring Program.
22. Further progress updates on the Zero Litter to Georges River initiative will be provided to Council in 2028 and 2030.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

23. No budget impact for this report. Council continues to deliver waste collection services funded through the Domestic Waste Management Charge. Further, Council supports the Georges Riverkeeper to deliver the programs outlined in this report.
24. Council will explore external grant funding in line with the details of this report to enable further litter projects and campaigns to be delivered within the Georges River LGA.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

25. **Strategic Risk 5: Climate Change:** There is a risk that Council fails to protect and maintain the natural and built environment, including failing to plan for and implement sustainable waste management initiatives and services to prevent environmental contamination and work towards the target of Zero Litter to Georges River by 2030.
26. **Strategic Risk 6: Reputation:** There is a risk of Council's identity as a lead in the environmental space is negatively impacted, without implementing litter reducing programs and activities to work towards the target of Zero Litter to Georges River by 2030.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

27. Community engagement and education for the initiatives coordinated by the Riverkeeper have been undertaken by Georges Riverkeeper's Communications Officers through updates to their website, social media posts and community events.
28. Georges River Councils communications and engagement team undertake social media and media releases for litter reducing programs, community events and education through Councils Waste education program.

FILE REFERENCE

D26/144200

ATTACHMENTS

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Attachment 1 | Zero Litter to Georges River Progress Updates - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 2 | Georges Riverkeeper Annual Report 2024-2025 - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 3 | Georges Riverkeeper River Health Report Card 2024 - <i>published in separate</i> |

document

Attachment 4 Georges River Litter Strategy 2023 - *published in separate document*

Attachment 5 Georges River Council - CSIRO Report: Detecting litter in waterways - June 2025 - *published in separate document*

Item: ENV022-26 **Cooks River Alliance Membership consideration**
Author: Manager Environment Health & Regulatory Services
Directorate: Environment and Planning
Matter Type: Committee Reports

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council receive the report reconsidering Cooks River Alliance membership.
- (b) That Council does not reconsider membership with Cooks River Alliance until they have a finalised business plan and resolved their legal entity status, which are key issues identified by Council in 2017 that remain outstanding.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report addresses the Notice of Motion (NM004-26) dated 23 February 2026, for Council to prepare a report to be presented to a future meeting of Council to consider rejoining the Cooks River Alliance (CRA).
2. Georges River Local Government Area (LGA) spans three catchments; Georges River Catchment (78.56%), Cooks River Catchment (19.50%), and Scarborough Ponds Catchment (1.94%).
3. Georges River Council represents only 8.8% of the Cooks River catchment area, with 76.5% of the catchment already represented by four existing member Councils; Canterbury-Bankstown, Bayside, Inner West and Strathfield Council. The remaining Councils in the Cooks River catchment that are not current members, excluding Georges River Council are City of Sydney, Burwood Council, Randwick Council and Cumberland Council.
4. Council previously participated in the CRA through the former Hurstville City Council in 2011, however chose not to renew membership in 2016 following amalgamation. This decision was made due to limited benefits, the finalisation of the CRA draft business plan, ambiguity around the CRA as a legal entity and Council's ongoing financial commitment to the Georges Riverkeeper. To date, CRA have still not addressed its status as a legal entity and currently operate under the host Councils Australian Business Number (ABN).
5. The cost to join Cooks River Alliance (CRA) as a member Council in the 2026/2027 financial year is \$56,164.30 (ex GST). After reviewing the membership benefits provided by the Cooks River Alliance, there is minimal benefit to Council and the Community, with CRA playing more of an advocacy role. This does not represent value for money to Council. A number of these benefits can be achieved by Councils staff internally or are already currently being delivered.
6. There is currently no internal budget or external grant opportunities available to fund the Cooks River Alliance membership fees. Joining as a member Council would require additional staff resourcing to support participation and engagement with CRA.
7. Council is currently a financial member of Georges Riverkeeper which delivers five main programs consisting of catchment restoration, water quality monitoring, pollution reduction, community education and regional coordination, providing both strategic and on-ground outcomes for the Georges River Catchment, which deliver tangible benefits to the community, such as litter removal, environmental conservation projects, water quality monitoring and more.

BACKGROUND

- 8. Council resolved on 23 February 2026 (NM004-26), That the General Manager prepares a report to be presented to a future meeting of Council to consider:
 - “(a) The history of Council’s previous involvement with Cooks River Alliance, and Georges River Council’s current relationship with the Cooks River, including the fact that a vast proportion (23%) of the Georges River LGA drains into the Cooks River catchment*
 - (b) The rationale for, and environmental benefits to Georges River Council and neighbouring LGA’s arising from Council rejoining the organisation*
 - (c) The timing, feasibility and approximate cost of Council potentially resuming its membership, including internal and external funding sources and State and Federal grants.”*
- 9. Georges River Council considered a Report on Cooks River Alliance (CCL075), at its Council meeting held on Monday 5 September 2016 and the following was resolved:
 - “(a) That Council discontinue its \$49,000 annual membership with the Cooks River Alliance (CRA) and that these funds be re-directed to on-ground works to enhance the quality of stormwater entering the Cooks River.”*
 - b) That with the additional resources available following Council amalgamations, Council will perform the functions of the CRA internally, to work towards the enhancement of the Cooks River.”*

Report

- 10. The Cooks River is approximately 23km long, flowing through south-west Sydney, starting at Graf Park, Yagoona, through to Botany Bay at Kyeemagh. The northern area of Georges River Council local government area, including portions of Beverly Hills, Narwee, Kingsgrove, Penshurst and Carlton make up part of the Cooks River Catchment.

Cooks River Alliance

- 11. The Cooks River Alliance is a partnership between organisations in the Cooks River Catchment, including Bayside Council, Canterbury-Bankstown Council, Inner West Council, Strathfield Council and Sydney Water (financial partner). The purpose of the Cooks River Alliance is to facilitate whole of catchment management for the Cooks River by sharing resources of its member organisations and coordinating them to this purpose.
- 12. The Cooks River Alliance states the following:

“The Alliance uses the combined resources, experience, knowledge and skills within its member organisations and, in close collaboration with the community, works to address the complex environmental problems of the Cooks River Catchment. The Alliance is committed to the revitalisation of the waterways, ecosystems and public spaces, to the benefit of the local environment and the health and wellbeing of the people who work and live within the Cooks River Catchment.”

Cooks River Catchment

- 13. The Cooks River Catchment consists of the land from the following Councils (Table 1), as provided by the Cooks River Alliance (ATTACHMENT 1):

Table 1 – Percentage of Cooks River Catchment by Council.

Council:	Percentage of Cooks River Catchment:
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	Council:	Percentage of Cooks River Catchment:
1	Canterbury-Bankstown	34.11%
2	Bayside	24.05%
3	Inner West	11.54%
4	Strathfield	6.80%
5	City of Sydney	10.51%
6	Georges River	8.80%
7	Burwood	2.04%
8	Randwick	1.23%
9	Cumberland	0.92%
10	Unincorporated – Botany Bay Area	0.01%

ENV022-26

14. Currently, 4 Councils within the Cooks River catchment are current members of the Cooks River Alliance:
- 1) Canterbury-Bankstown Council
 - 2) Bayside Council
 - 3) Inner West Council
 - 4) Strathfield Council
- Note: Sydney Water is also a financial member of the Cooks River Alliance, however not a local government organisation.
15. These 4 CRA Member Councils represent 76.5% total Cooks River Catchment (Table 2), and all have direct access to the Cooks River waterway with management of adjacent parks and reserves.
16. The remaining Councils within the Cooks River catchment that are not currently a member of the Cooks River Alliance are:
- 1) City of Sydney
 - 2) Georges River Council
 - 3) Burwood Council
 - 4) Randwick Council
 - 5) Cumberland Council
17. The current non-members represent 23.5% of the Cooks River Catchment (Table 2), which indicates that the Councils with smaller land contributions to the Cooks River Catchment have not joined the alliance.
18. Council has not investigated the reasons for the other non-member Councils as to why they are not a member of the Cooks River Alliance, as this report only evaluates the benefits and feasibility for Georges River Council.

Table 2 - Percentage of Councils in the Cooks River Catchment that are current members and non-members:

Cooks River Alliance	Percentage of Cooks River Catchment:
Current Member Councils area	76.5%
Non-member Councils area	23.5%

Georges River Council Catchments

19. The Georges River Catchment area is approximately 906km², home to approximately 1.4 million residents. The Georges River local government area is approximately 40 km² and consists of 3 main catchments (Table 3), with most of the area falling in the Georges River Catchment.

Table 3 - Percentage of the Georges River Council area by Catchment (LGA Boundaries have been used as per Office of Local Government)

Catchment:	Percentage of Georges River LGA:
Georges River	78.56%
Cooks River	19.50%
Scarborough Ponds (Botany Bay)	1.94%

20. Given the proportion of the LGA that contributes to the Georges River Catchment, Council has allocated staff resourcing and financial commitments by way to support the largest Catchment in the LGA and with a direct boundary with the Georges River waterway.

Georges Riverkeeper

21. Georges Riverkeeper who formed in 1979, is a regional partnership of councils and stakeholders that works to protect, improve and manage the health of the Georges River catchment.
22. There are currently seven Councils that are a financial member of Georges Riverkeeper, including Bayside Council, Campbelltown City Council, City of Canterbury Bankstown, Fairfield City Council, Georges River Council, Liverpool City Council, and Sutherland Shire Council, with Sydney Water also a financial partner. Wollondilly Shire Council is the only Council that is not a current member of Georges Riverkeeper and ceased their membership approximately 2 years ago
23. The Georges Riverkeeper membership fee and program fee for Council in the 2025-2026 financial year is \$94,846.27 (ex GST).
24. Georges Riverkeeper delivers five integrated program areas that consists of catchment actions, monitoring and research, stormwater management, community engagement, and program coordination of the Georges River Catchment. Georges Riverkeeper also facilitate grant applications, development of the Coastal Management Program (CMP) and various community education events across the Catchment.
25. Georges Riverkeeper also deliver a range of on-ground works throughout the year, aimed at improving water quality, habitat condition, and overall river health, including, but not limited to:
- Litter removal and prevention

- Riparian and habitat restoration
 - Wetland and estuary rehabilitation
 - Stormwater quality improvement works
 - Aquatic habitat improvements
 - Water sampling and ecological surveys
 - Provide Boat access for Council compliance team for foreshore inspections
26. As highlighted above, Georges Riverkeeper delivers a variety of on-ground works in the Georges River Catchment and continue to play an advocacy role. Recent examples of project being delivered in the Georges River LGA include the installation of an Osprey Nesting Platform and securing the Urban Rivers Grant: Saving Flying Fox Habitat at Myles Dunphy Reserve 2025-2028.
27. The membership and program fees for Georges Riverkeeper deliver tangible outcomes and benefits across the Georges River LGA, which Council views as value for money when compared to the cost to join Cooks River Alliance at \$56,164.30 (ex GST) who provide more of an advocacy role for Councils in the catchment

History of Councils previous involvement with Cooks River Alliance:

28. Council previous involvement with Cooks River Alliance dates to 2011 where the former Hurstville City Council became a financial member of the Cooks River Alliance (CRA). The former Kogarah City Council declined the offer to become a financial member in 2011.
29. After the amalgamations of former Hurstville City Council and former Kogarah City Council, Membership was reassessed in 2016 post the formation of Georges River Council.
30. In September 2016, Georges River Council resolved that Council discontinue its \$49,000 annual membership with the Cooks River Alliance (CRA) and that these funds be re-directed to on-ground works to enhance the quality of stormwater entering the Cooks River.
31. This decision was made as Council had the ability to perform the functions of the CRA internally, to work towards the enhancement of the Cooks River.
32. In September 2017, Council considered future membership with CRA, however the following matters needed to be addressed, which was communicated directly to CRA:

Finalisation of the draft Business Plan:

- Council notes that the current draft Plan contains a significant number of assumptions regarding future membership contributions, future increases in OEH funding and additional contributions from other organisations. The Plan also proposes to freeze membership contribution rates whilst allowing for increases in staff salaries.

Formal legal status of the Alliance:

- As a priority, establishing the Alliance as a legal and financial entity in its own right with the ability to manage and be responsible for its own grant funding and financial reporting is essential. This action would reassure members, current and future, that it is a strong and viable organisation and also lower any financial risk for the host Council.
33. To date the Cooks River Alliance operates under the host Councils Australian Business Number (ABN), which is currently Canterbury-Bankstown Council, and no formal business plan has been provided to Council, so this risk matter has still not been addressed, despite Council notifying that such matters require addressing in 2017 prior to any further consideration by Council in re-joining as a member.

34. The decision to not re-join Cooks River also factored in that Council was already financially supporting and hosting the Georges Riverkeeper. Council assessed the benefits and value of the Georges Riverkeeper membership higher than that offered by CRA at the time. Georges Riverkeeper (Georges River Combined Councils' Committee Incorporated) have an active ABN since 26 May 2000.
35. Therefore, it is recommended that That Council will not reconsider membership with Cooks River Alliance until they have a finalised business plan and resolved their legal entity status as advised by Council in 2017.

Rationale for and environmental benefits to Georges River Council for rejoining Cooks River Alliance:

36. The Cooks River Alliance has communicated directly with Georges River Council staff, outlining the benefits of joining the Cooks River Alliance, their response follows (in italics):

Tangible Benefits

- *Council will have a seat at the table (and direct line) with neighbouring Councils and Sydney Water, to address complex issues related to catchment and harmonise planning objectives (flooding, channel naturalisation, ecological restoration & management, open space planning, etc.)*
- *Funding pathways, including the Coast & Estuaries grants through the Cooks River Coastal Management Program or the Urban Rivers and Catchments Program (which the Alliance currently manages \$10m in funding from [sic])*
- *Promotional support for Council initiatives related to catchment planning and management (across Alliance platforms)*
- *The Alliance Secretariat team has a direct and strong connection with the community via the Cooks River Catchment Community Collective, a working group comprised of representatives across the catchment. This helps us understand community values and sentiments.*
- *The Alliance works closely with other catchment groups, such as the Georges Riverkeeper and Parramatta River Catchment Group, to advocate for policy reforms for catchment governance. We are working with NSW DCCEEW on the current Water Governance Review.*

Social Benefits

- *Be part of the increasing social awareness of the importance of urban waterways (eg: Swimmable Birrarung campaign to improve the Yarra)*
- *We note that Council proudly promotes work with the Georges Riverkeeper on the Environment Page. This is an opportunity to talk about what Council is doing for the Cooks River Catchment, which is a large section of the LGA.*
- *Public visibility. Georges River Council is on the brand-new public-facing interactive map. Be publicly recognised for your efforts to reduce stormwater pollution, increase vegetation and access to waterways.*
- *Be part of the award-winning 'Our Backyard River' campaign that is gaining attention from across the country. The campaign is new and innovative way of communicating the catchment-wide masterplan objectives*
- **[sic] The simple benefit of doing the right thing by the residents, waterways and habitats in the Georges River LGA*

37. As outlined above, the Cooks River Alliance provide more of an advocacy role for the Cooks River Catchment and do not provide on-ground assistance to Councils, such as litter collection, water quality sampling etc.
38. The tangible and social benefits outlined by CRA will lead to minimal on-ground outcomes, and many of the actions are already being achieved by Council, including playing an advocacy role for our waterways, applying for grant funding and delivering community education and awareness for the Georges River.
39. It should also be noted that Georges River Council has no direct boundary with the Cooks River natural waterway, however the stormwater systems in the northern section of the Georges River LGA do drain into the Cooks River Catchment. In addition, much of the Cooks River is heavily modified and consists of large stretches of channelized concrete, with only a small portion being a naturalised waterway.
40. In comparison, Georges Riverkeeper works with Georges River Council and other member Councils to look after the natural waterway of the Georges River by undertaking activities within five main Programs to guide best practice management to protect natural resources and improve liveability along the Georges River.
41. This includes the Catchment Action Program, Education & Capacity Building Program, River Health & Research Program, Stormwater & Sewage Program and Operations Management Program. The outputs of Georges Riverkeeper are both tangible and beneficial to Council. The value from the membership fees to Council are realised throughout the year.
42. Whilst the Cooks River Alliance deliver important messaging and advocacy for the Cooks River, given the small catchment area of the Georges River LGA that contributes to the Cooks River, the benefit of joining the Cooks River Alliance does not represent value for money to Council can achieve several of the advocacy outcomes, community education on waterways and apply for Grant funding
43. This is particularly important when compared to Councils existing membership with Georges Riverkeeper, and the five program areas that are delivered.

Timing, feasibility and approximate cost of Council for rejoining Cooks River Alliance:

44. For Georges River Council to join the Alliance next financial year (2026-2027) it's contribution to the Alliance would be \$56,164.30 (ex GST), as advised by the calculations provided by the Cooks River Alliance in March 2026 (ATTACHMENT 2).
45. To rejoin the Cooks River Alliance, Council would need to allocate further resources for Council staff to attend meetings and provide input into the advocacy actions outlined by the Cooks River Alliance.
46. Council has already allocated staff resources to be an active member of Georges Riverkeeper, assisting in the delivery of grant projects, environmental conservation projects, community education events, attending committee meetings and development of the Georges River Coastal Management Program.
47. Currently, there is no internal Council budget that can be allocated to fund the proposed Cooks River Alliance membership fees of \$56,164.30 (ex GST) for the 2026/2027 financial year. To seek internal funding for the proposed Cooks River Alliance membership fees, budget would need to be requested through Councils annual budget bid process, with the 26/27 financial year progress near its conclusion.

Internal and external Funding Sources, including State and Federal Grants:

48. At the time of writing this report, there were no applicable State Grants available to fund the Cooks River Alliance membership fees. In NSW, typically there are no environmental

grants that allow grant funds to be used to pay for membership fees, such as the fees required for Cooks River Alliance.

49. Federal Grants are similar in nature to State Grants, where they do not allow Councils to pay ongoing membership fees. State and Federal Grants generally exclude ongoing operating costs, subscriptions or memberships fees and standing service arrangements.
50. Given the lack of funding available, it is further recommended that Council does not join the Cooks River Alliance.

CONCLUSION

51. As outlined above in this report, given the lack of benefit and value from the proposed membership with Cooks River Alliance, available funding and the legal entity status of the CRA, it is recommended that that Council does not join the Cooks River Alliance.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

52. If Council chooses to re-join the Cooks River Alliance, there are financial implications of the membership fee of \$56,164.30 (ex GST) for the 2026/27 financial year.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

53. Strategic Risk 5: Climate Change – There is a risk of Council not being prepared and planning for climate and environmental risks, such as those associated with the Water Catchments in our LGA, resulting in a negative impact on the natural environment, including the waterways, bushland and biodiversity. This risk can be mitigated through continued support with Georges Riverkeeper.
54. Strategic Risk 6: Reputation - The risk of Council's identity as an environmental leader being negatively impacted and Council ability to provide the community with access to healthy waterways and green spaces without continued support to the Georges Riverkeeper.
55. Strategic Risk 7: Ineffective governance – Failure of Council's Governance and Compliance Frameworks to ensure compliance with relevant legislative, statutory, regulatory and policies and procedures. This poses a risk to Council with the current legal entity status of the Cooks River Alliance.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

56. Community engagement was not conducted.

FILE REFERENCE

D26/144746

ATTACHMENTS

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Attachment 1 | Cooks River Catchments Map with percentage of each Council Area - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 2 | Georges River Fee Calculation - Provided by Cooks River Alliance - <i>published in separate document</i> |

Item: ENV023-26 Development Assessment Timeframes Ministerial Action Plan Finalisation

Author: Coordinator Advisory & Specialist Assessment

Directorate: Environment and Planning

Matter Type: Committee Reports

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council endorse the attached Action Plan provided by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces wrote to Council on 6 March 2025 regarding Council's performance against the required criteria for reducing Development Application assessment timeframes, requesting a written response and Council endorsed action plan within 28 days.
2. A report (CCL-020-25) was presented to the Council meeting on 24 March 2025, seeking endorsement of a written response and Action Plan for submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to address Development Application assessment timeframes, as requested in the Minister's correspondence, which was subsequently endorsed by Council.
3. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has now finalised the Action Plan and written to Council (refer to Attachment 1) on 6 May 2026 requiring Council to adopt the Action Plan in full at its next meeting.
4. This report provides an overview of the Action Plan and outlines Council's position in relation to each action to inform Council's consideration of the proposed endorsement.

BACKGROUND

5. New benchmarks for Council performance on development assessment, planning proposals and strategic planning began on 1 July 2024. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces issued a formal letter on 3 July 2024 to all Council Mayors outlining his expectations. The expectations established target assessment times for Councils as follows:
 - a) *Determine development applications for which it is the consent authority (including DAs determined by a local planning panel) as soon as practical and whichever is the lesser of council's previous financial year average, or an average of:*
 - *From 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025: 115 days from lodgement*
 - *From 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026: 105 days from lodgement*
 - *From 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2027: 95 days from lodgement*
 - *From 1 July 2027 onwards: 85 days from lodgement.*
6. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure sent a second letter dated 8 August 2024 titled 'League Table Publication' which announced the second iteration of Council league tables to help in monitoring Councils performance against the Minister's expectations.
7. The letter also outlined each council's ranking relative to others for the previous financial year, noting that Georges River Council recorded an average development application

determination time of 215 days for 2023/2024. The letter further reiterated the performance expectation that Council's average determination timeframe for the 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025 period be reduced to 115 days.

8. A further letter dated 6 March 2025 from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to the Mayor, Councillor Elise Borg, advised that the NSW Government has been monitoring council performance against key criteria for Development Application assessment. The letter noted that Georges River Council's average assessment timeframe was still at 214 days, with only 20% of applications determined within the benchmark timeframe.
9. As a result, the Minister contacted Council to discuss performance against the criteria and gave Council 28 days (from the date of the letter) to provide a written response endorsed by the elected Council. This response was to include an action plan, along with an associated program to swiftly improve performance.
10. The Action Plan was submitted to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure 7 August 2025 and, following refinement, has been returned to Council in the Minister's letter dated 6 May 2026 for endorsement (refer to Attachment 1).
11. Council's Development and Building Team have made significant improvements in DA assessment and processing times over the past 18 months, reporting to Council on a quarterly basis, and evident in the most recent report to the Environment and Planning Committee Meeting of 11 May 2026 - ENV018-26 – Development and Building Q3 Metrics Report.

REPORT

12. Council staff have reviewed the Action Plan (**Attachment 2**) which contains 24 action items. The action items are listed on the table below with associated timeframes and status.
13. Comments on the implementation of the Action Plan items are provided in the Action Plan Matrix (**Attachment 3**).
14. The timeframes associated with each action are considered achievable from the point of adoption by Council – 11 items have been completed, 10 are in progress and 3 on hold.

ACTION ITEM	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
Item 1: Lodgement and Triage	1 month	Completed
Item 2: Pre-lodgement Information	3 months	In Progress
Item 3: Lodgement and Triage	2 months	In Progress
Item 4: DA Allocation	3 months	Completed
Item 5: Referral Processes	2 months	Completed
Item 6: Request for Information (RFI)	2 months	Completed
Item 7: Determinations	3 months	In Progress
Item 8: Templates – Rejection	1 month	In Progress
Item 9: Templates – RFI letters and structure	1 month	Completed
Item 10: Templates – Reports	2 months	In Progress
Item 11: Managing legacy DA matters	4 months	Completed
Item 12: Oversight and Governance - Ageing DAs	2 months	Completed
Item 13: Oversight and Governance - Councillor interaction / probity	3 months	Completed
Item 14: Review of Policies relating to Development Applications	24 months	In Progress

ACTION ITEM	TIMEFRAME	STATUS
Item 15: IT and Systems – General	5 months	On Hold
Item 16: IT and Systems – Integration	6 months	On Hold
Item 17: IT and Systems - Conditions/templates tools	3 months	Completed
Item 18: IT and Systems - Planning Portal capability	1 month	In Progress
Item 19: IT and Systems - Dashboard/reporting	4 months	Completed
Item 20: Investigate the Implementation of a Low Impact / Fast Tracked DA Assessment pathway	3 months	In Progress
Item 21: Delegations	3 months	In Progress
Item 22: Resources and Recruitment – Assessment	1 month	In Progress
Item 23: Resources and Recruitment – Specialists	2 months	On Hold
Item 24: Recruitment (Culture)	3 months	Completed

15. By the time Council considers this report, Council staff will have likely met with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to discuss the Action Plan and a verbal update can be provided.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. Action Item 14 (pertaining to the development of a new DCP) and Action Item 16 (a review the DA management system) may require additional funding allocations depending on the scope of work required and/or review recommendations. As the scope has not been defined for either Action Item the financial implications are not yet known and would be subject to a further report to Council.
17. The implementation of the remaining Action Plan items is occurring within existing resource allocations.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

18. Delegation risk – if the Government is of a mind to consider that Council is not implementing the Action Plan, resulting in improvements to development application determination times, then it has a range of powers to compel compliance, including the issuing of a Performance Improvement Order or assign an administrator to deal with the determination of DA's.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

19. Community engagement has not been undertaken for the preparation of this report.

FILE REFERENCE

D26/138844

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Letter from The Hon Paul Scully MP - Finalisation of Action Plan - *published in separate document*
- Attachment 2 GRC Action Plan - *published in separate document*
- Attachment 3 Action Plan Matrix - *published in separate document*

Item: ENV024-26 Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's Exhibition of 'Two Proposed Pathways to Assess Homes in 50 days or less' - Council submissions

Author: Coordinator Advisory & Specialist Assessment

Directorate: Environment and Planning

Matter Type: Committee Reports

ENV024-26

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council endorse the Georges River Council submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on the Variations and Changes to Complying Development: Explanation of Intended Effect (**Attachment 1**).
- (b) That Council endorse the Georges River Council submission to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on the Low-rise Housing and Targeted Assessment Discussion Paper (**Attachment 2**).
- (c) That Council authorise the Director, Planning & Environment to finalise and submit the endorsed submission, including any minor amendments that do not alter the substantive intent.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure has released two proposed policies for public exhibition, being:
 - (a) Variations and Changes to Complying Development: Explanation of Intended Effect (**Attachment 3**); and
 - (b) Low-Rise Housing Reforms and Targeted Assessment Discussion Paper (**Attachment 4**).
2. These proposed policies seek to introduce two new planning approval pathways enabling the assessment of homes in 50 days or less.
3. A detailed review of the proposed policies review has resulted in a number of concerns being identified with constructive feedback provided in the proposed submissions surrounding matters such as impacts on infrastructure delivery, Council staff resourcing and practicality of the proposed changes.
4. The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of the submissions to the *Variations and Changes to Complying Development: Explanation of Intended Effect* and *Low-Rise Housing Reforms and Targeted Assessment Discussion Paper*.

BACKGROUND

5. The State Government is aiming to make it easier and faster to build homes with two new pathways that seek to reduce assessment times for low-rise homes which account for 70 per cent of all Development Applications (DA) in NSW.
6. The two pathways which are now out for consultation propose an expansion of complying development and new targeted assessment pathway which aims to allow more low-rise, low-impact development like homes to be assessed in 50 days or less so construction can start sooner.
7. The changes are enabled by the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Planning System Reforms) Act 2025 (Planning System Reforms Act)*, which was adopted

by the NSW Government with the intent to modern the planning system and make it faster, fairer, more proportionate and outcomes focused.

VARIATIONS AND CHANGES TO COMPLYING DEVELOPMENT: EXPLANATION OF INTENDED EFFECT

8. The complying development framework is structured on the premise that potential impacts are effectively “pre-managed” through strict, predetermined development standards set out in State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and complying Development Codes) 2008 (Codes SEPP). Under this approach, matters typically considered in a merit-based assessment, such as overshadowing, privacy, visual bulk, and streetscape compatibility are addressed upfront through objective controls.
9. Where a proposal satisfies all applicable standards, it is assumed to result in an acceptable level of amenity and environmental impact.
10. The NSW Government consider that the complying development pathway is too rigid, as all development standards must be met, otherwise the development must go through a full development application (DA) process. Notwithstanding this was the original intent of Complying Development the NSW Government are seeking to make it easier for more development to use the Complying Development pathway and have released *Variations and Changes to Complying Development: Explanation of Intended Effect (Attachment 3)* for public consultation.
11. To facilitate this, it is proposed to:
 - Allow variations to certain complying development standards; and
 - Amend existing development standards in the Codes SEPP.
12. Council considers that the proposed reforms in their current form, materially expand the scope and complexity of Complying Development beyond its original intent as a fast-tracked approval pathway for straightforward, compliant low-impact development.
13. Putting aside Council’s overall objection to a complying development variation pathway in principle, a number of complexities and concerns have been identified in relation to the potential impacts of the proposed reforms on local planning outcomes, governance and resourcing if this pathway is introduced.
14. Accordingly, if the pathway is introduced, stronger statutory safeguards, clearer assessment criteria, appropriate environmental protections and improved operational controls are required to mitigate the impacts of the reform.
15. Council officers have prepared a Submission to this reform, and this is provided at **Attachment 1** which outlines Council’s objection to the proposal on the following key issues:
 - Assessment Timeframes;
 - Fees and Cost Recovery;
 - Variations to LEP Standards;
 - Dual Occupancies (Lot Width, Access);
 - Building Design;
 - Gross Floor Area / Floor Space Ratio;
 - Tree Protection;
 - Privacy Controls;
 - Compliance and Governance Risks; and
 - Overall Strategic Concern.

LOW-RISE HOUSING REFORMS AND TARGETED ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION PAPER

16. Part of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Planning System Reforms) Act 2025 (Planning System Reforms Act)* introduced Targeted Assessment to the NSW planning system.
17. Targeted assessment provides a briefer form of evaluation compared to the full merit-based assessment of a regular Development Application by 'switching off' a number of matters of consideration under Section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Rather than considering the broad range of environmental, social and economic impacts typically assessed for a development application, a targeted assessment focuses only on specific criteria or matters prescribed by the relevant pathway. Currently, there are no pathways for Targeted Assessment and this discussion paper (**Attachment 4**) explores the implementation of the first pathway, Codes for low-rise housing.
18. A code is a set of rules that guide how land and buildings can be developed. Codes aim to create clear and consistent expectations so communities, councils and developers understand what can be built and how development should relate to its surroundings.
19. Codes are legal instruments, not guidelines. When a code is adopted, it becomes part of (or replaces) the planning rules that apply to an area. The implementation of a Code for low-rise housing therefore may result in the existing controls of the *Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021* and the *Georges River Development Control Plan 2021* not applying.
20. At this stage, these reforms are a discussion paper rather than a proposed policy and feedback is being sought on the current vision from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. Notwithstanding this, Council raises significant concerns that aspects of the proposed reforms will increase system complexity, reduce transparency for the community, and shift substantial burden onto strategic planning processes without appropriate resourcing or safeguards.
21. Council officers have prepared a Submission (**Attachment 2**) which raises the following key concerns:
 - Increased Planning System Complexity;
 - Increased Burden on Strategic Planning;
 - Role of LEPs and Declaration of Targeted Assessment Development;
 - Inappropriate Application of Targeted Assessment;
 - Impact on Local Character;;
 - Purpose and Function of the "Single Code";
 - Flood Risk Classification; and
 - Additional Environmental Matters to be Included in the Code.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

22. While Council will collect a prescribed fee for CDC Variations, the extent of any additional revenue cannot be accurately quantified at this stage, as it is dependent on the future volume of applications.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

23. Strategic Risk 1: Financial Sustainability identified. The submission notes that the proposed reforms will increase assessment workload, resourcing requirements, and administrative complexity without clear cost recovery mechanisms. Council will need to ensure adequate resourcing, fee structures, and funding arrangements are in place to manage additional operational and assessment demands.
24. Strategic Risk 6: Reputation identified. The submission identifies that reduced transparency, limited community engagement, and the expansion of complying development and targeted assessment pathways may diminish public confidence in the planning system. Council has emphasised the importance of maintaining clear assessment processes, community visibility, and consistent decision-making to protect trust in planning outcomes.
25. Strategic Risk 7: Ineffective governance identified. The submission raises concerns that the proposed frameworks introduce increased complexity, reduced statutory safeguards, and greater reliance on discretionary assessment processes without equivalent oversight mechanisms. Council will need to ensure that governance, compliance, and assessment frameworks remain robust, transparent, and consistent with legislative requirements.
26. Strategic Risk 9: Housing Infrastructure identified. The submission highlights that the proposed reforms may facilitate development outcomes that are not aligned with infrastructure capacity, local character, or strategic planning frameworks. Council raises concerns that increased density and expanded complying development and targeted assessment pathways may undermine coordinated infrastructure delivery and built form outcomes. Council will need to ensure that future housing reforms are appropriately aligned with infrastructure planning, local context, and service capacity.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

27. No community engagement is required as the public exhibition is being carried out by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

FILE REFERENCE

D26/138841

ATTACHMENTS

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Attachment 1 | Proposed Variations and Changes to Complying Development Explanation of Intended Effect - Georges River Council Submission - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 2 | Low-Rise Housing Reforms and Targeted Assessment Discussion Paper - Georges River Council Submission - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 3 | Variations and changes to complying development - Explanation of Intended Effect - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 4 | Low-rise housing reforms and targeted assessment - Discussion paper - <i>published in separate document</i> |

Item: ENV025-26 Endorsement of Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse Planning Proposal for finalisation and adoption of amendments to Generic Plans of Management - Sportsgrounds and General Community Use

Author: Senior Strategic Planner

Directorate: Environment and Planning

Matter Type: Committee Reports

ENV025-26

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council forward the Planning Proposal No.2025/0003 (Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse) enclosed in **Attachment 1** to the NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for finalisation in accordance with Section 3.36 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.
- (b) That Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Generic Plans of Management for sportsgrounds and general community use enclosed in **Attachments 2 and 3**.
- (c) That the adopted Plans of Management come into effect on the date the associated Local Environmental Plan amendment for Planning Proposal No.2025/0003 is made (gazetted).
- (d) That Council authorise the Director Environment and Planning to make minor administrative or editorial amendments in the finalisation of Planning Proposal No.2025/0003 (Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse), and the amendments to the Generic Plans of Management, provided such changes do not alter the intent of the proposal or the plans.
- (e) That Council endorse the outcomes of the public hearing, including the independent facilitator's recommendations.
- (f) That Council note submissions received during the public exhibition
- (g) That all submitters be notified of Council's decision.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report outlines the outcomes of the public exhibition of Planning Proposal PP2025/0003 and the draft amendments to the Generic Plans of Management (PoM) for Sportsgrounds and General Community Use relating to the Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse at 57 Lorraine Street, Mortdale. It also considers submissions received and seeks Council's endorsement to finalise the Planning Proposal and adopt the amended PoMs.
2. The Planning Proposal seeks to amend the Georges River Local Environmental Plan (GRLEP) 2021 by including a function centre use as an additional permitted use applying specifically to the existing clubhouse building. The Planning Proposal Report is available in **Attachment 1** (the associated appendices are available on Council's [yoursay website](#)).
3. The draft PoM amendments (**Attachments 2 and 3**) propose to recategorise the clubhouse and immediate surrounds from 'sportsground' to 'general community use' and enable the additional use with Council consent.
4. The Planning Proposal establishes land use permissibility under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, while the Plans of Management regulate the use and operation of the land as community land under the *Local Government Act 1993*. Both frameworks must be satisfied for the proposed use to occur.

5. Public exhibition was undertaken from 2 February to 16 March 2026 (43 days), resulting in 22 unique submissions. 14 submissions supported the proposal, primarily citing improved community access and better utilisation of the facility. Eight submissions raised objections or concerns, primarily relating to amenity impacts, traffic and parking, zoning consistency, environmental considerations and governance.
6. A public hearing on the proposed recategorisation was held on 2 March 2026 and chaired by an independent facilitator, with six community members in attendance. The public hearing report recommends that Council note the submissions, proceed with the recategorisation to 'general community use', and address relevant issues through the development application process.
7. Having regard to the submissions and public hearing outcomes, no changes to the Planning Proposal or draft PoMs are proposed. The issues raised are considered capable of being addressed through the development application process.
8. It is recommended that the Planning Proposal proceed to finalisation and that the amended Plans of Management be adopted.

BACKGROUND

9. The Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse at 57 Lorraine Street, Mortdale is community land owned and managed by Council, with the clubhouse located on part of Lot 1 DP176469. Refer to Figure 1.

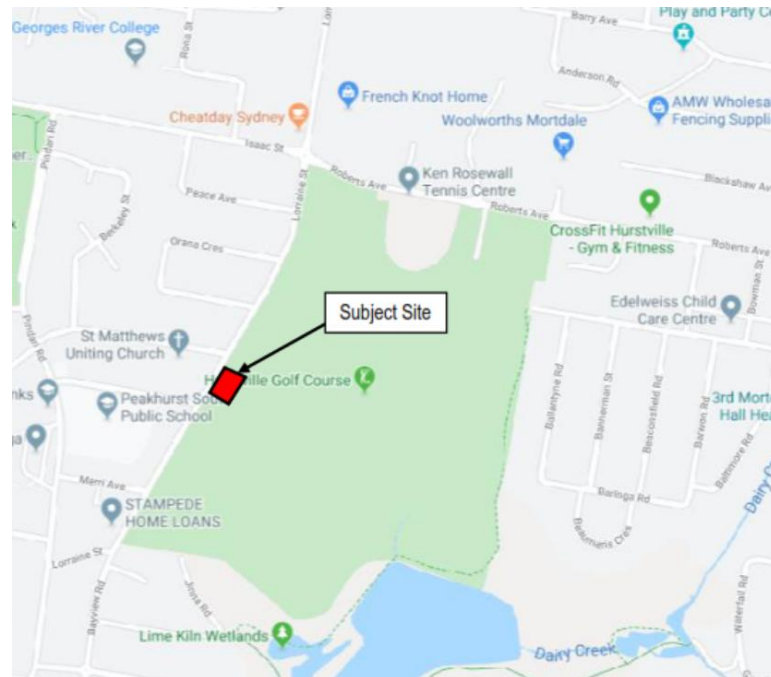


Figure 1 - Hurstville Golf Course

10. The construction and use of the current clubhouse building was approved in December 2020 (DA2020/0115) and is currently restricted to uses ancillary to the golf course, limiting its availability for broader community use, including private functions and events. Refer to Figures 2 and 3.



Figure 2 - Aerial of Clubhouse

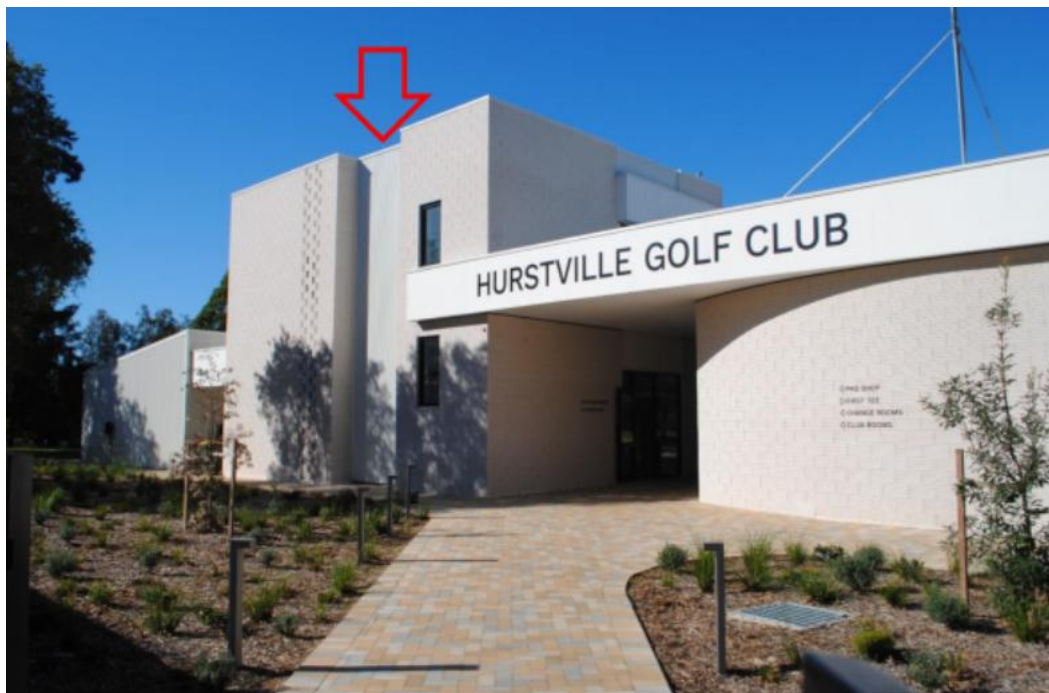


Figure 3 - Front of the Clubhouse
(red arrow indicates the location of the function room on the first floor)

11. On 24 March 2024, Council considered the *Optimising Community Access and Facility Use Plan*, which identified actions to improve utilisation of Council-owned facilities, including the Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse. One of the identified actions was to pursue a Planning Proposal and subsequent development application to enable the use of the clubhouse as a function centre.

Planning Proposal

12. At its meeting on 26 May 2025, Council endorsed the preparation and exhibition of Planning Proposal PP2025/0003 to amend the *Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021 (GRLEP 2021)* to permit a function centre as an additional use at the Clubhouse.

13. The subject site is zoned RE1 – Public Recreation under the GRLEP, where function centres are currently a prohibited use. Accordingly, the Planning Proposal seeks to amend the GRLEP 2021 by inserting “function centre” as an additional permitted use under Schedule 1 for the Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse site.
14. The intended outcomes of the Planning Proposal are:
 - to allow the use of the Clubhouse to be used as a function centre by the wider community,
 - to support the long-term viability of the facility as multi-purpose venue, and
 - to implement the recommendations of Council’s *Optimising Community Access and Facility Use Plan*.
15. It is not considered appropriate to provide “function centre” as an additional permitted use to the entire portion of Lot 1 of DP176469 which has an area of approximately 29.4 hectares. Council is seeking the additional use to be restricted to the Golf Clubhouse building and surrounds only which has an approximate area of 2,250 sqm. Refer to Figure 4 for the proposed extent.



Figure 4. Aerial image of the Clubhouse.

The red outline indicates the extent of the additional permitted use of ‘function centre’

16. At its meeting on 28 July 2025, Council considered the Planning Proposal and resolved to forward Planning Proposal PP2025/0003 to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for a Gateway Determination under section 3.34 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. A Gateway Determination was issued by DPHI on 12 September 2025, outlining conditions for public exhibition and agency consultation. Refer to **Attachment 4** for gateway determination.
17. The Gateway Determination required several amendments to the Planning Proposal prior to community consultation, an exhibition period for a minimum of 20 working days; and consultation with state agencies. DPHI did not authorise Council to be the local planning authority, as the Planning Proposal affects Council-owned land.

Generic Plans of Management

18. As the land is classified as community land, amendments to the Generic Plans of Management are also required. At its meeting on 8 December 2025, Council endorsed draft amendments to recategorise the clubhouse and surrounding area from 'sportsground' to 'general community use' and to identify a function centre as a permissible use with consent. Council resolved to publicly exhibit the PoM amendments concurrently with the Planning Proposal and hold a public hearing. (Refer to **Figure 5** for the proposed land category map)

ENV025-26



Figure 5. Map showing proposed land category of Hurstville Golf Course

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

19. The Planning Proposal and draft amendments to the PoMs were publicly exhibited for a period of 43 days between 2 February 2026 and 16 March 2026.
20. In accordance with statutory and Council engagement requirements, the exhibition included publication of the documents on Council's 'Your Say' website, a notice in The Georges and Sutherland Shire Leader newspaper advising of the public exhibition and public hearing, notification letters to 130 adjoining landowners and residents, and the availability of hard copy materials at Council's customer service centres in Hurstville and Kogarah.

SUBMISSIONS

21. A total of 25 submissions were received during the exhibition period, comprising of 22 unique submissions. 14 submissions supported the proposal, focused on improved community access and more effective use of the existing Council facility. Eight submissions objected or raised concerns, primarily relating to amenity, traffic and parking, zoning, environmental considerations and governance matters.
22. The table below provides a summary of key issues and Council responses. A summary table of all submissions and responses is attached to this report (**Attachment 5**).

Table 1. Summary of Key Issues and Council Response

Issue	Summary of Matters Raised	Council Response
Zoning and Permissibility	Submissions questioned whether the proposal is consistent with the objectives of the RE1 Public Recreation zone and raised concerns regarding the introduction of commercial uses on public land.	The proposal limits the additional function centre use to the existing clubhouse building and does not introduce broader commercial use across the site. The proposal remains consistent with the objectives of the RE1 zone and the applicable planning framework.
Precedent and Intensification	Concerns were raised that the proposal may set a precedent for further commercialisation or intensification of uses on public recreation land.	The site is classified as community land and is regulated under the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> . Any future changes to land use or intensity would require separate statutory approvals, including amendments to the Plan of Management. The proposal does not establish a precedent for broader commercial use.
Noise, Traffic, Parking and Amenity	Submissions raised concerns regarding potential impacts on residential amenity, including noise, increased traffic and parking demand.	These matters would be subject to detailed assessment at the development application stage. Any approval would include appropriate conditions of consent such as acoustic controls, traffic and parking management measures, and other mitigation requirements.
Operating Hours and Intensity of	Concerns were raised regarding potential late-night operations, event	The hours of operation, frequency and scale of events can be regulated through conditions of consent and associated

Issue	Summary of Matters Raised	Council Response
Use	frequency and scale of use.	management plans to ensure impacts are appropriately managed.
Safety, Security and Management	Issues were raised regarding safety, security, and potential anti-social behaviour associated with functions and alcohol service.	These matters would be managed through development consent conditions, operational management plans and relevant regulatory frameworks, including liquor licensing requirements where applicable.
Accessibility and Waste Management	Submissions raised concerns regarding accessibility, including disabled parking, as well as waste management and servicing impacts.	These matters would be addressed through detailed design, compliance with relevant standards and the preparation of waste management plans at the development application stage.
Environmental Impacts	Concerns were raised regarding potential impacts on biodiversity, foreshore areas and environmental values.	The proposal relates to a change of use within an existing building and does not involve expansion into undeveloped areas. Environmental impacts would be assessed at the development application stage, with mitigation measures applied where required.
Governance and Compliance	Submissions questioned Council's ability to manage, monitor and enforce compliance with any future approval.	Any future approval would be subject to enforceable conditions of consent, management plans and ongoing regulatory oversight. Council retains compliance and enforcement powers to monitor operations and address any breaches.
Community Access and Public Benefit	A number of submissions supported the proposal, citing improved community access and the provision of additional function space.	The proposal facilitates broader use of an existing Council facility, supporting improved community access and flexibility of use in accordance with community needs.
Under-utilisation of Facility	Submissions identified that the existing facility is under-utilised and supported its activation.	The proposal supports increased utilisation of an existing community asset, consistent with Council's strategic objectives for effective asset management.
Economic Considerations	Submissions raised both support and concerns regarding financial sustainability and perceived commercial motivation.	The proposal has been assessed on planning grounds. Any commercial activity is ancillary and supports the ongoing operation and accessibility of the facility, consistent with the community land framework.
Catering, Alcohol and Facility Upgrades	Submissions raised matters relating to food and beverage services, alcohol and potential upgrades to	These matters would require separate approvals and would be assessed and managed through the development

Issue	Summary of Matters Raised	Council Response
	the facility.	application process and relevant regulatory requirements.

23. In considering the matters raised during public exhibition, it is noted that the amenity-related issues identified by submitters, including noise, traffic, parking, operating hours, lighting, safety and management arrangements, are matters that are appropriately assessed in detail at the development application stage. Any future development application would be required to be supported by technical studies and management plans, and Council would have the ability to impose conditions of consent to regulate hours of operation, event frequency, noise controls, traffic and parking management, security measures and ongoing operational management to ensure that potential impacts on surrounding land uses are minimised and acceptable.

Public authority submissions

24. Two submissions were received from public authorities, as required by gateway determination conditions, being the NSW Rural Fire Service and the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water. No objections were raised in the submissions. (Refer to **Attachment 6**).

PUBLIC HEARING

25. A public hearing was held on 2 March 2026 in accordance with section 40A of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act) to consider the proposed recategorisation of community land. The public hearing was publicly notified in conjunction with the exhibition of the Planning Proposal and draft amendments to PoMs.
26. The public hearing was chaired by an independent facilitator, as required under section 47G of the LG Act. Six community members attended the public hearing.
27. The public hearing related specifically to the proposed recategorisation of the clubhouse and surrounds, while the Planning Proposal seeks to amend the LEP to permit a function centre use. While these processes are distinct, submissions commonly addressed both matters and raised similar issues, particularly in relation to amenity impacts such as noise, traffic and parking. Additional concerns were also raised regarding the broader range of uses permissible under the ‘general community use’ category and the ongoing management of impacts on surrounding residents.
28. The independent facilitator’s report (**Attachment 7**) recommends that Council:
- note the submissions received in relation to the recategorisation;
 - proceed with the recategorisation of the clubhouse and surrounds to ‘general community use’; and
 - address community concerns relating to amenity, including noise, operating hours, traffic, parking, lighting and security, through conditions of consent at the development application stage.



Figure 6. This is Figure 11 referenced in the Public Hearing Report

Assessment and Conclusion

29. The Planning Proposal has been assessed having regard to its strategic merit, site-specific considerations, and the submissions received during public.
30. The proposal:
 - is consistent with Council's strategic objectives to improve use of community facilities;
 - is limited to an existing building and does not increase built form;
 - maintains the primary public recreation function of the broader site; and
 - aligns with established planning practice for similar facilities.
31. The issues raised in submissions are not uncommon for proposals of this nature and are considered capable of being addressed through the detailed assessment at the development application stage, supported by technical studies and enforceable conditions to manage potential impacts and ensure acceptable outcomes for the surrounding community.
32. The proposed recategorisation of the land to 'general community use' is considered appropriate, as it aligns with the intended use of the clubhouse as a community-oriented facility and provides a suitable statutory framework for a broader range of permissible uses. The recategorisation applies only to the clubhouse and its immediate surrounds and does not alter the categorisation of the broader golf course.
33. Accordingly, the Planning Proposal for Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse (**Attachment 1**) demonstrates both strategic and site-specific merit and is suitable to proceed to finalisation.
34. It is recommended that Council adopt the amended Generic PoMs (**Attachments 2 and 3**) to take effect from the date on which the associated LEP amendment is gazetted. The proposed use as a function centre cannot lawfully occur until it is authorised under both the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Next Steps

35. Should Council resolve to proceed with the Planning Proposal and adopt the amended Generic PoMs for sportsgrounds and general community use, the next steps will be as follows:
- Submitters will be advised of Council's resolution.
 - The Planning Proposal will be forwarded to the DPHI for finalisation.
 - The adopted PoMs will come into effect upon gazettal of the LEP amendment.
 - Notice of Council's decision will be published within 28 days after the decision is made.

Indicative Timeframe

36. Subject to Council endorsement of the amended PP for forwarding to the DPHI for finalisation, the anticipated next steps are included below:

Stage	Timeframe
Report to council	June 2026
Submission to DPHI for finalisation	July 2026
Gazettal of LEP amendment	October 2026
Plan of Management comes into effect (upon Gazettal of LEP amendment)	October 2026

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

37. No direct budget impact for this report.
38. The proposal may assist in supporting the long-term sustainability and utilisation of the facility through broader community use

RISK IMPLICATIONS

39. Strategic Risk 1 – Financial Sustainability: The expansion of the permitted uses of the clubhouse may improve revenue for the club and ultimately Council.
40. Strategic Risk 3 – Assets and Infrastructure: The inclusion of additional uses will ensure that the clubhouse building can be used by the wider community and not just the Golf Club. The clubhouse will be able to be used for events, functions, conferences, and reception centres.
41. Strategic Risk 6 – Reputation: The clubhouse was built at a cost of \$3.3m from grants. This proposal supports community expectations for the use of publicly funding infrastructure.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

42. The Planning Proposal and draft amendment to the Generic PoMs for Sportsgrounds and General Community Use for Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse were on public exhibition between 2 February 2026 and 16 March 2026 for a period exceeding 20 working days, being a total of 43 days (31 working days).

43. A Public Hearing was held on 12 February 2026 regarding the proposed recategorisation of the Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse and surrounds.
44. Community engagement was conducted including:
- Newspaper advertisement in The Leader;
 - Community engagement project on Council's YourSay website;
 - Notices in Council offices and libraries;
 - 130 addressed letters to adjoining landowners and residents;
 - Letters to State Government agencies identified in the Gateway Determination.

FILE REFERENCE

D26/108820

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Planning Proposal Report - Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse - For Finalisation - *published in separate document*
- Attachment 2 Generic Plan of Management - Sportsgrounds - Amendment 2 - *published in separate document*
- Attachment 3 Generic Plan of Management - General Community Use - Amendment 2 - *published in separate document*
- Attachment 4 Gateway Determination - *published in separate document*
- Attachment 5 Summary Table - Public Submissions and Council Responses - Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse PP and PoM - *published in separate document*
- Attachment 6 Public Authority Submissions - *published in separate document*
- Attachment 7 Public Hearing Report - Recategorisation of Hurstville Golf Course Clubhouse - *published in separate document*

Item: ENV026-26 Biodiversity & Foreshore Scenic Protection Area Planning Proposal and GRDCP Amendment No.7 - Outcomes of Public Exhibition

Author: Coordinator Strategic Planner

Directorate: Environment and Planning

Matter Type: Committee Reports

ENV026-26

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council note submissions received during the public exhibition of the Biodiversity, Character & Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA) Planning Proposal (PP2024/0002) to amend the *Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021* (GRLEP) and the supporting controls in Amendment No.7 to the *Georges River Development Control Plan 2021* (GRDCP).
- (b) That Council endorse the Planning Proposal, unamended, (refer **Attachment 2**) to be forwarded to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for finalisation and plan-making in accordance with Section 3.36 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.
- (c) That Council amend the exhibited draft Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP in response to issues raised by submissions received during public exhibition as detailed in **Attachment 3**.
- (d) That Council adopt Amendment No.7 of the GRDCP as amended in response to submissions pursuant to Section 3.43 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and Clause 14 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*.
- (e) That Council give public notice of the decision to approve the amended GRDCP, on its website within 28 days in accordance with Clause 20 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*.
- (f) That the adopted GRDCP become effective when the amendment to the GRLEP is gazetted.
- (g) That the DPHI be given a copy of the amended GRDCP in accordance with Clause 20 the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* after it becomes effective.
- (h) That Council authorise the Director Environment and Planning to make minor editorial amendments to the updated Planning Proposal and Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP as required throughout the finalisation process.
- (i) That all persons who made a submission to the Planning Proposal and GRDCP Amendment No.7 be advised of Council's decision.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report advises on the outcomes of the public exhibition of a planning proposal which seeks to amend the *Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021* (GRLEP) in relation to biodiversity, character and Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA) matters, known as the Biodiversity, Character & FSPA Planning Proposal (No. PP2024/0002).
2. This report also advises on the outcomes of the public exhibition of the supporting amendment to the *Georges River Development Control Plan 2021* (GRDCP), known as Amendment No.7.

3. The Planning Proposal and the supporting Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP were placed on public exhibition from 23 February to 30 March 2026 (inclusive). Two (2) submissions from public authorities and 183 community submissions were received and are summarised in **Attachment 1**. The majority of community submissions (59%) supported the full suite of proposed changes. Key themes raised by the community submissions include:
 - Strong support for biodiversity protection and tree canopy retention,
 - Support for stronger development controls in foreshore and environmentally sensitive areas,
 - Support for the protection of foreshore scenic values and local character,
 - Objections to reducing floor space and dual occupancy development potential,
 - Discussion of the proposal's inconsistency with the intent of the NSW Government's housing reforms,
 - Concerns about inequity for individual properties being burdened by multiple new controls, and
 - Calls for improved compliance and enforcement of illegal tree removals.
4. There are no recommended changes to the Planning Proposal in response to the submissions received. The Planning Proposal Report (see **Attachment 2**) has been updated to reflect the outcomes of the public exhibition and agency consultation.
5. Some post-exhibition amendments are recommended to Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP in response to submissions received as outlined in **Table 1** of this report.
6. Should Council support the recommendations proposed by this report, the updated Planning Proposal Report will be forwarded to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for finalisation and gazettal. Council is not the plan-making authority for this Planning Proposal.
7. Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP will become effective upon gazettal of the Planning Proposal.

BACKGROUND

Overview of Planning Proposal

8. Council resolved on 25 March 2024 (refer **ENV008-24**) to prepare the Biodiversity, Character & Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA) Planning Proposal (No. PP2024/0002) for the purpose of implementing the recommendations of the *Georges River Biodiversity Study 2021* (Biodiversity Study) and the *Foreshore Scenic Character Study 2021* (Foreshore Study) in accordance with the approval conditions of the Local Housing Strategy.
9. Subsequently, Council at its Meeting held 22 July 2024 resolved to forward the Planning Proposal to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) for a Gateway Determination under Section 3.34 of the EP&A Act.
10. In November 2024, the subject Planning Proposal was consolidated with the Additional and Diverse Housing Planning Proposal in response to the request of the DPHI for ease of assessment. It should be noted that the Additional and Diverse Housing Planning Proposal has since been withdrawn and is no longer active.
11. In response to the impacts of the Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy introduced by the NSW Government, Council at its meeting held 26 May 2025 resolved to resubmit the

subject Biodiversity, Character and FSPA Planning Proposal as a standalone proposal (refer **CCL040-25**) comprising of the following components:

- **Biodiversity:** Introduce new biodiversity objectives, planning provision and mapping overlay to preserve and protect areas of moderate and high biodiversity value across the LGA as identified by the Biodiversity Study,
- **Local Character:** Amend the zone objective relating to local character in the R2 Low Density Residential and R3 Medium Density Residential zones to ensure a high standard of urban design and built form is promoted.
- **Foreshore Scenic Protection Area:** Replace the existing Foreshore Scenic Protection Area (FSPA) planning provision and amend the mapped extent to ensure the role of the FSPA focuses on foreshore scenic character as identified by the Foreshore Study,
- **Design Excellence:** Amend Clause 6.10 Design Excellence to consider visual amenity and visual impacts when viewed from the foreshore and waterway of the Georges River and local character,
- **Lot Size:**
 - Retain existing lot size requirements within areas proposed to be removed from the existing FSPA as follows:
 - Subdivision lot size: 700sqm
 - Dual occupancy lot size: 1,000sqm
 - Increase lot size requirements as follows for areas located within the local character areas of Garden Suburban Naturalistic, Bush Suburban, Rivers Edge Naturalistic, Rivers Edge Semi Naturalistic and Rivers Edge Contemporary as identified by the *Foreshore Study*:
 - Increase subdivision lot size from 450sqm to 700sqm
 - Increase dual occupancy lot size from 650sqm to 1,000sqm
 - Insert objectives to ensure that lots in the FSPA are of sufficient size to protect natural values, in particular areas containing terrestrial biodiversity,
- **Floor Space Ratio:** Reduce the maximum permissible Floor Space Ratio (FSR) for R2 Low Density Residential zoned land from 0.55:1 for dwelling houses and 0.6:1 for dual occupancies to 0.5:1 for all development typologies for land located within the existing FSPA and within the local character areas of Garden Suburban Naturalistic, Bush Suburban, Rivers Edge Naturalistic, Rivers Edge Semi Naturalistic and Rivers Edge Contemporary as identified by the *Foreshore Study*,
- **Landscaping:**
 - Amend the landscaped area planning provisions through the insertion of new objectives to:
 - Protect, maintain and improve the diversity and condition of native vegetation and habitats across the Local Government Area (LGA),
 - Encourage the recovery of threatened species and their communities, populations and habitats across the LGA,
 - Retain and strengthen the green and leafy character of the LGA, including trees in the private domain that contribute to local character and visual amenity,

- Increase the minimum landscaped area requirement for dwelling houses and dual occupancies by 5% to 30% and 35% respectively for land zoned R2 Low Density Residential located within the existing FSPA and within the local character areas of Garden Suburban Naturalistic, Bush Suburban, Rivers Edge Naturalistic, Rivers Edge Semi Naturalistic and Rivers Edge Contemporary as identified by the *Foreshore Study*, and
 - Introduce a minimum 20% landscaped area requirement for multi dwelling housing, terraces and manor houses across the LGA in response to the NSW Government's *Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy*.
12. The resubmitted Planning Proposal is the subject of this report. The Gateway Determination for this Planning Proposal was originally issued by the DPHI on 9 October 2025 which required Council to address a number of conditions prior to public exhibition. The conditions include some administrative changes and further justification of the Planning Proposal's inconsistency with the Housing SEPP and some section 9.1 Ministerial Directions.
 13. Due to the notable support received for the retention of larger lot sizes during the pre-exhibition community consultation carried out in 2022/2023, Council officers requested the opportunity for the community to be formally re-consulted on the larger lot size proposal.
 14. In response, an Alteration to the Gateway Determination was issued by the DPHI on 14 January 2026. This enabled the Planning Proposal to proceed to public exhibition prior to addressing Conditions relating to the retention of larger lot size controls.
 15. All attachments to the Planning Proposal are provided on Council's website: <https://www.georgesriver.nsw.gov.au/Development/Planning-Controls/Planning-Proposals/Planning-Proposal-for-Biodiversity-Character-and-the-Foreshore-Scenic-Protection-Area>

Overview of DCP Amendment

16. To support the changes to the GRLEP proposed by the Planning Proposal, an amendment to the *Georges River Development Control Plan 2021* (GRDCP) was prepared, known as draft Amendment No.7 comprising of the following key changes:
 - Introduce detailed biodiversity controls to clearly outline the requirements for development on land identified within the GRLEP Terrestrial Biodiversity areas,
 - Replace the existing Green Web control with a LGA-wide network of Green Corridors to protect existing habitat corridors and facilitate more opportunities for connectivity where there is little existing vegetation,
 - Introduce new provisions and revise existing controls to better enhance the protection of the foreshore scenic character, including the introduction of detailed character statements for the foreshore localities, and
 - Refine existing Views Impacts controls to better manage the impacts of large-scale developments (such as residential flat buildings) on public views and visual amenity in general.
17. At its meeting held 8 December 2025 (refer **CCL122-25**), Council endorsed the concurrent exhibition of Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP alongside the Planning Proposal.

OUTCOMES OF PUBLIC EXHIBITION

18. The Planning Proposal and the supporting Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP were placed on public exhibition from 23 February to 30 March 2026 (inclusive) for a total of 36 days.
19. The public exhibition included the following engagement activities:

- Formal consultation requests to relevant public authorities and government agencies as per the Gateway Determination,
- Letters sent to affected landowners advising of the public exhibition,
- Advertisement in the St George and Sutherland Shire Leader Newspaper,
- Dedicated page on Council's Your Say website,
- Feature on the Your Say Newsletter,
- Media release to journalists and published on Council's website,
- Inclusion in the Community eNews,
- Social media posts on Facebook and Instagram,
- Coverage on the 2NBC FM radio station including an interview with the Mayor,
- Physical copies of the Planning Proposal, draft Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP and supporting documentation in Council's Customer Service Centres and libraries, and
- Availability of telephone, email and one-on-one meetings with planning officers to respond to enquiries.

Public Authority Submissions

20. Prior to the commencement of community consultation, the Planning Proposal was referred to the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) in accordance with Condition No.1 of the Gateway Determination and S9.1 Ministerial Direction - 4.3 Planning for Bushfire Protection. However, no response was provided by the RFS.
21. In accordance with Condition No.4 of the Gateway Determination, the following public authorities and government agencies were consulted:
 - NSW Crown Lands
 - NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
22. The response from Crown Lands is provided in **Attachment 4**. No objections were raised to the Planning Proposal.
23. The response from the DCCEEW is provided in **Attachment 5**. No objections were raised to the Planning Proposal. A summary of the DCCEEW submission and Council's response is provided in **Table 1** below.
24. No changes to the Planning Proposal are recommended in response to submissions received from the above public authorities.
25. One amendment is recommended to the exhibited GRDCP Amendment No.7 as outlined below and reflected in **Attachment 3**.

Table 1 – Council's response to issues raised by DCCEEW

Issues Raised by DCCEEW	Council Response
Flooding	
The Planning Proposal is consistent with Ministerial Direction 4.1 – Flooding.	Noted, the Planning Proposal Report has been updated to reflect the consistency.
Biodiversity Mapping and Evidence Base	
Recommends that the Georges River Biodiversity Study Volumes 1 and 2 be updated to utilise the State Vegetation Type Map (SVTM), noting the current mapping relies on a superseded dataset. The update should also identify and incorporate any new Threatened Ecological Community (TEC)	The Biodiversity Study was prepared in 2021 using the most recent dataset available at the time. There is no budget allocated within the current FY25/26 or in the draft FY26/27 to prepare an update to the Biodiversity Study. Future budget bids will be considered, seeking funding to update the biodiversity dataset.

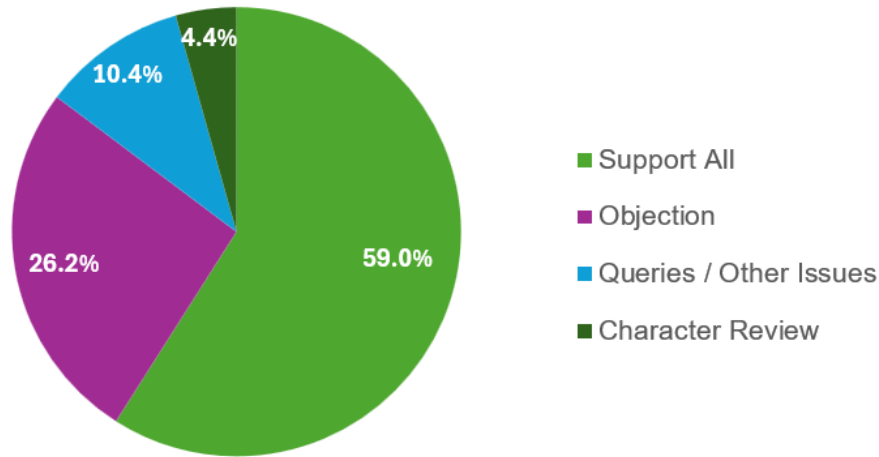
Issues Raised by DCCEEW	Council Response
<p>associations introduced through the SVTM. The existing <i>Terrestrial Biodiversity Map Methodology (V2)</i> used to develop the Terrestrial Biodiversity overlay is considered fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Council staff will explore alternative funding pathways like grant funding whenever opportunities arise.</p> <p>No amendments required to the Planning Proposal.</p>
<p>Biodiversity Offsets Scheme (BOS)</p>	
<p>The Planning Proposal limits the application of the BOS to land mapped on the NSW Biodiversity Values Map, but the BOS can also be triggered on land not mapped where the area-clearing threshold is exceeded or a test of significance identifies likely significant impacts on threatened species, ecological communities, or their habitat. The Planning Proposal should be updated to reflect all BOS triggers under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>.</p>	<p>The Planning Proposal Report has been updated to provide further clarification on all the BOS triggers under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i>.</p>
<p>Planning Controls</p>	
<p>Amendments to the GRLEP (including Clause 6.19) to place a stronger emphasis on vegetation retention across all strata (not solely mapped biodiversity lands),</p>	<p>The Planning Proposal seeks to insert three new objectives into <i>Clause 6.12 Landscaped areas in certain residential and conservation zones</i> of the GRLEP to ensure vegetation, especially native vegetation and habits, are protected while simultaneously strengthening the ‘green and leafy’ character across the entire LGA and not solely on areas with identified Terrestrial Biodiversity. No amendments required to the Planning Proposal.</p> <p>The proposed DCP controls require all land identified on the Terrestrial Biodiversity and Green Corridor mapping to retain existing environmental. The DCP also proposes to introduce requirements for developments to provide new planting in a form and configuration that maintains and enhances core habitat and vegetated linkages. No amendments required to the DCP.</p>
<p>Amendments to the GRLEP (including Clause 6.19) to include clear management measures where vegetation impacts are unavoidable, such as requirements for vegetation management plans to guide revegetation and ongoing management,</p>	<p>The GRLEP currently has <i>Clause 6.5 Riparian land and waterways</i> in effect which identifies a buffer of 40m from the mean high water mark as “sensitive land”. Considerations of local native riparian vegetation are present within the Clause.</p> <p>However, the GRDCP is lacking specific references to the requirement for vegetation management plans (VMP) to be prepared for controlled activities on waterfront land in accordance with the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i> (WM Act). Controlled activities include erecting a building and removing vegetation from waterfront land.</p> <p>Accordingly, the following addition is recommended to the GRDCP via a new subheading under <u>3.10 Water Management of Part 3 General Considerations</u> (addition shown in green text):</p> <p><u>Vegetation Management Plan</u> 12. Where development is proposed on “sensitive land” as identified by Clause 6.5 Riparian land and waterways of the <i>GRLEP 2021</i>, a Vegetation Management Plan must be submitted with the Development Application and must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i> and associated NSW Government guidelines.</p>
<p>Amendments to the GRDCP to include</p>	<p>Council's <i>Tree Management Policy</i> was revised in 2024 to</p>

Issues Raised by DCCEEW	Council Response
<p>supplementary controls to ensure tree retention outside the FSPA, Terrestrial Biodiversity Map and Green Corridor Map areas.</p>	<p>emphasise the enhancement of the urban tree canopy through practicable tree retention and revegetation. Where trees are approved for removal, a consistent 2:1 replacement ratio (two replacement trees are to be provided for each tree removed) is enforced by the Policy to ensure there will always be a net increase in tree canopy.</p> <p>To support the implementation of the revised Tree Management Policy, the GRDCP was amended (known as Amendment No.6) to strengthen tree protection considerations during the development assessment process and to enforce the provision of at least one tree in the front setback across the entire R2 Low Density Residential zone.</p> <p>No amendments required to the DCP.</p>
<p>DCCEEW supports updates to the DCP requiring new landscaping to use indigenous plant species that enhance habitat connectivity.</p>	<p>Noted, support is acknowledged. No amendments required to the Planning Proposal or DCP.</p>

Community Submissions

26. An overview of the community participation statistics is summarised as follows:
 - Over 2,200 visits to the Your Say page
 - 15 individuals booked one-on-one appointments with Council staff
 - 476 downloads of documents available on the Your Say page
27. A total of 183 unique submissions were received from the community, including two (2) submissions from current Councillors and one (1) submission from the Member for Oatley. Duplicate submissions lodged by the same individual across multiple channels have not been counted.
28. Most submissions supported the suite of proposed changes in its entirety. The breakdown is provided as follows and in visual format in **Figure 1**:
 - 108 submissions expressed clear support for all aspects of the proposed controls (equating to 59%)
 - 48 submissions objected to one or more aspects of the proposed controls (equating to 26.2%)
 - 19 submissions are questions seeking clarification or raise issues beyond the scope of the exhibited changes (equating to 10.4%)
 - 8 submissions requested a review of the character areas identified by the Foreshore Study (4.4%) with no objections to other changes proposed

Figure 1 – Breakdown of submissions by support / objection



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29. All community submissions have been summarised to ensure anonymity and individual responses are provided in **Attachment 1**. Key themes raised by the community submissions include:

- Strong support for biodiversity protection and tree canopy retention,
- Support for stronger development controls in foreshore and environmentally sensitive areas,
- Support for the protection of foreshore scenic values and local character,
- Objections to reducing floor space and dual occupancy development potential,
- Discussion of the proposal’s inconsistency with the intent of the NSW Government’s housing reforms,
- Requests for review of the Foreshore Study’s character areas,
- Concerns about inequity for individual properties being burdened by multiple new controls, and
- Calls for improved compliance and enforcement of illegal tree removals.

30. In summary, **Table 2** below provides an overview of the recurring issues raised by the community submissions and Council’s response. No changes to the Planning Proposal are recommended.

Table 2 – Summary of Recurring Issues and Council’s Response

Key Theme	Recurring Issue Raised	Council’s Response
Prohibition of development	<i>Request for removal of property from the Terrestrial Biodiversity mapping and the Green Corridor mapping due to prohibition of development rights within these areas.</i>	The proposed Terrestrial Biodiversity and Green Corridor controls do not impact on development permissibility, and neither do they function as a 'no build zone'. The presence of terrestrial biodiversity on a site triggers the consideration of new developments and their impacts on biodiversity through the help of a qualified ecologist via a Flora and Assessment Report. There are also no changes proposed to existing land use zones. All existing development permissible within the R2 Low Density Residential zone remains unchanged. The exhibited controls are considered necessary to meet Council’s biodiversity and canopy objectives and are supported by adopted strategies and studies. No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.
Prohibition of	<i>Request for financial</i>	The proposed controls do not seek to prohibit any

Key Theme	Recurring Issue Raised	Council's Response
development	<i>compensation due to restrictions on development rights leading to lower property values.</i>	<p>development that is currently permissible. The proposed planning provisions seek to regulate built form and landscape outcomes on private land to ensure a balance is achieved between new development and the retention of landscape character features such as tree canopy and vegetation in the foreshore localities. While the proposal may limit some intensification opportunities, it does not prevent reasonable development or alter land ownership or legal boundaries. Property values are primarily determined by market demand due to factors including the amenity of an area. The proposed controls seek to enhance the amenity of future developments by ensuring the built environment is complimented by the natural setting across the LGA's foreshore localities.</p> <p>As the proposal does not extinguish development rights, no financial compensation is warranted, and no amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.</p>
Limitation of housing supply, affordability and diversity	<i>Increased minimum lot sizes, reduced FSR and expanded overlays will reduce housing supply, limit dual occupancies and granny flats, restrict multi-generational living, reduce affordability, and push young families and downsizers out of the area, particularly during a housing shortage.</i>	<p>The Planning Proposal does not seek to restrict housing delivery across the LGA but to balance residential development with environmental capacity in foreshore and biodiversity-sensitive areas. Housing capacity analysis within the Planning Proposal Report demonstrates that potential reductions in local yield are offset by development enabled through State planning pathways, including the Low and Mid-Rise Housing (LMR) Policy, as well as the existing and emerging high density areas with good access to transport and services. The proposal maintains opportunities for a range of housing types while ensuring that development in sensitive locations does not undermine long-term environmental and landscape values. Multi-generational living arrangements such as secondary dwellings remain permissible.</p> <p>No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.</p>
Inconsistency with State Housing Reforms	<i>Not reducing the dual occupancy lot size around train stations, particularly Oatley, conflicts with the Housing SEPP, LMR Policy, Transit-Oriented Development principles and the National Housing Accord. Some properties narrowly miss the existing 1,000sqm thresholds and argues this is unjustified, arbitrary, inconsistent with surrounding development, and unnecessarily restrict dual occupancies.</i>	<p>The Planning Proposal does not override, restrict or disable any State Environmental Planning Policy. It does not remove housing permissibility but applies local development standards to manage development intensity in locations with identified environmental and scenic constraints. Housing capacity analysis within the Planning Proposal Report demonstrates that potential reductions in local yield are offset by development enabled through the LMR Policy.</p> <p>Minimum lot sizes are applied as clear and consistent development standards to manage cumulative impacts on the natural environment including landscape character, tree canopy and biodiversity. The Planning Proposal explains that differentiated lot sizes are used where environmental sensitivity and development capacity vary. The Planning Proposal responds to the strong community support for larger lot sizes to remain unchanged.</p> <p>While individual properties may be affected differently, Clause 4.6 of the GRLEP allows reasonable variations to provide an appropriate degree of flexibility in applying certain development standards during the development assessment process.</p> <p>No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.</p>
Floor Space Ratio	<i>Oppose reducing the maximum</i>	The Planning Proposal identifies that existing height and

Key Theme	Recurring Issue Raised	Council's Response
(FSR) Reductions	<i>permissible FSR, particularly within the FSPA. Argues existing controls are sufficient, comparative analysis with neighbouring councils is flawed, and reduced FSR may incentivise subdivision rather than reduce bulk.</i>	<p>setback controls alone have not adequately managed bulk and visual dominance in foreshore areas. The sliding-scale approach for larger lots is an existing provision within the GRLEP. The minor amendment to update the sliding-scale to reflect the overall reduction in FSR is intended to manage cumulative built-form impacts and protect scenic values identified in the Foreshore Scenic Character Study. The controls apply alongside minimum subdivision lot sizes to discourage inappropriate outcomes.</p> <p>The proposed reduction to FSR equates to a 9% reduction in the floor space of a new house – from 385sqm to 350sqm (i.e. 35sqm reduction) on a typical lot in the foreshore locality. For reference, development permitted by the LMR Policy has less than 150sqm floor space per dwelling. The reduced FSR will still allow a generously-sized family home to be constructed on a typical lot.</p> <p>No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.</p>
FSPA Extent	<i>Oppose reductions to the FSPA, arguing protections should be retained, made stronger or expanded.</i>	<p>The Planning Proposal refines the FSPA to focus on land with demonstrated scenic sensitivity based on updated character assessment conducted by the Foreshore Study. This represents a reduction in overall area while strengthening clarity of application by revising Clause 6.6 Foreshore scenic protection area of the GRLEP to focus solely on scenic character.</p> <p>Additionally, new GRDCP provisions are proposed to better enhance the protection of the foreshore scenic character, including the introduction of detailed character statements for the foreshore localities.</p> <p>No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.</p>
FSPA Extent	<i>Requesting removal from the Rivers Edge character areas on the basis that the dwellings are no longer visible from the river, and therefore should be removed from the FSPA.</i>	<p>The Foreshore Study reviewed character areas based on collective landscape structure, development patterns and common physical features. It is recognised that individual properties may experience varying degrees of visibility, vegetation coverage and site conditions. However, planning controls of this nature must operate consistently to achieve coherent landscape and scenic protection outcomes. Lot-by-lot application of foreshore or character controls would undermine the strategic intent of these overlays and create fragmented results across the LGA.</p> <p>Additionally, all developments on the foreshore must consider their impacts on the scenic amenity of the River, irrespective of whether they are included or excluded from the FSPA, as required by the exhibited amendments to Part 6.5 of the DCP.</p> <p>No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.</p>
Biodiversity Study and Mapping Accuracy	<i>Challenging the scientific basis of biodiversity mapping and 40-metre buffers, citing outdated studies, reliance on desktop analysis, inclusion of non-native vegetation and lack of individual property-by-property assessment.</i>	<p>The Biodiversity Study was undertaken by qualified ecologists from Total Earth Care and comprised of a desktop assessment which reviewed numerous existing data sources and literature to develop a comprehensive understanding of existing and historical biodiversity values in the LGA. Field surveys were undertaken in 27 Council managed parks and reserves and across 29km of street tree corridors to assess various biodiversity values such as species diversity, conservation significance and habitat connectivity. Additionally, various community and stakeholder consultation activities provided further information and data which supported the outcomes of the</p>

Key Theme	Recurring Issue Raised	Council's Response
		<p>desktop assessment and field surveys. The outcomes of the Biodiversity Study have been evaluated and translated into the proposed Terrestrial Biodiversity mapping overlay, with the methodology provided as Attachment 17 to the Planning Proposal. It is impractical and cost-prohibitive for Council to engage ecologists to conduct individual surveys of all properties across the entire LGA.</p> <p>The presence of terrestrial biodiversity on a property does not prohibit redevelopment or residential intensification.</p> <p>No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.</p>
Enforcement	<p><i>Stricter controls are ineffective without improved enforcement and that Council should prioritise maintenance of Crown land, waterways and public reserves, and compliance action against illegal tree removals.</i></p>	<p>Compliance, enforcement and public domain management are addressed through separate statutory and operational programs and are not replaced by the proposed planning controls. Council's Tree Management Policy outlines the requirements for tree works and the Policy remains unchanged. Council's compliance officers investigate instances of tree vandalism and encourage the general community to report all suspected cases of tree vandalism.</p> <p>The Planning Proposal responds to community concern by providing clearer assessment benchmarks to improve future development outcomes with the intent of balancing new development with environmental protection.</p> <p>No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls.</p>
Overdevelopment	<p><i>Oppose the proposal due to concerns the changes will lead to more development and the loss of biodiversity.</i></p>	<p>Council acknowledges concerns regarding past development outcomes, enforcement issues and perceptions of limited transparency. The exhibited Planning Proposal responds directly to long-standing community concern that existing controls are not sufficiently clear or effective in managing cumulative impacts from redevelopment, resulting in perceptions of overdevelopment.</p> <p>The proposal consolidates and clarifies multiple planning objectives into a clearer framework that separates biodiversity protection and foreshore scenic character into their own respective considerations, rather than relying on a single broad control. It is also informed by extensive community feedback received throughout a 24-week pre-exhibition engagement program held across 2022 and 2023.</p> <p>No amendments are proposed to the exhibited controls as the intent of these submissions are consistent with the proposed changes.</p>
Transparency of consultation	<p><i>The exhibited materials are very complex and there is no clarity regarding assessment and exemptions.</i></p>	<p>The complexity of the NSW planning system is acknowledged and the suite of changes being proposed is challenging for non-planning professionals to understand, thereby causing submitters to misunderstand the proposed controls as being a blanket prohibition of all development.</p> <p>In response, individual meetings with Council's strategic planners were offered throughout the consultation period. This service was taken up by 15 residents who had received tailored explanations of how their property will be impacted by the proposed changes.</p>

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

31. No changes to the proposed items within Planning Proposal are recommended as result of the public exhibition and consideration of all submissions.
32. One amendment is recommended to the exhibited Amendment No.7 (see **Attachment 3**) to the GRDCP to strengthen consideration of riparian vegetation in support of *Clause 6.5 Riparian land and waterways* of the GRLEP.
33. It is recommended that Council endorse the Planning Proposal (see **Attachment 2**) to be forwarded to the DPHI for finalisation (gazettal) with minor updates to address the public exhibition process undertaken.
34. Amendment No.7 to the GRDCP will become effective upon gazettal of the Planning Proposal.
35. All persons who made a submission to the Planning Proposal and GRDCP Amendment will be advised of Council's decision.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

36. Within budget allocation.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

37. Strategic Risk 5 – Climate Change identified. The Planning Proposal and proposed GRDCP amendment directly responds to this Strategic Risk by strengthening protection of existing biodiversity, establishing a network of green corridors across the LGA and enhancing the protection of foreshore areas which contributes to climate resilience by maintaining natural buffers against sea level rise.
38. Strategic Risk 9 – Housing Infrastructure identified. The Planning Proposal and proposed GRDCP amendment directly responds to this Strategic Risk by balancing redevelopment with strengthened environmental protection to ensure new homes are supported by adequate landscaping and tree canopy.

FILE REFERENCE

D26/111001

ATTACHMENTS

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Attachment 1 | Summary and Response to Community Submissions - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 2 | Updated Planning Proposal PP2024/0002 Report - Biodiversity, Character & FSPA dated June 2026 (with tracked changes) - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 3 | GRDCP Part 3 General Planning Considerations Amendment No.7 (amended for adoption) - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 4 | Public Authority Submission - Crown Lands - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 5 | Public Authority Submission - DCCEEW - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 6 | GRDCP Part 1 Introduction Amendment No.7 (for adoption) - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 7 | GRDCP Part 6.5 Foreshore Locality Controls Amendment No.7 (for adoption) - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 8 | GRDCP Glossary Amendment No.7 (for adoption) - <i>published in separate document</i> |
| Attachment 9 | GRDCP Appendix 1 Green Corridor Map Amendment No.7 (for adoption) - <i>published in separate document</i> |

Item: ENV027-26 **Georges River Heritage Study Scoping Report**

Author: Strategic Planner

Directorate: Environment and Planning

Matter Type: Committee Reports

ENV027-26

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Council note the proposed scope, methodology, timeframes and resourcing required to undertake a broader heritage study and determine its position from one of the following options:
- (i) That Council receive and note the report. **OR**
 - (ii) That Council proceed with the thematic history review as the first stage of a broader heritage study by amending the Draft 2026/27 Budget to include \$100,000. **OR**
 - (iii) That Council proceed with the thematic history review as the first stage of a broader heritage study by using existing budget allocations from 2026/27.
- (b) That Council note future resourcing and funding needs for subsequent stages form part of Council's annual delivery planning and budget deliberations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report is in response to MM001-26 which requests the General Manager to prepare a report outlining the scope, methodology, timeframes and resourcing required to undertake a broader heritage study for the Georges River Local Government Area.
2. Based on existing known gaps in Council's heritage framework, it is recommended that the heritage study be undertaken in a staged approach and include, at a minimum:
 - (a) Review and update thematic history for Georges River (both European and Aboriginal heritage),
 - (b) Review of existing heritage items from the former Kogarah LGA (a recent review for Hurstville occurred in 2020),
 - (c) Identification of potential new heritage items across the whole Georges River LGA (to be informed by the updated thematic history), and
 - (d) Aboriginal heritage study.
3. The report provides the requested information illustrating how the project should be undertaken in a staged implementation framework, alongside the estimated financial commitment,
4. Council must now determine the extent, if any, to which it wishes to pursue this broader heritage study, with the following options in mind:
 - **Option 1** – receive and note only, essentially deferring consideration of funding and implementation to subsequent years,
 - **Option 2** – allocate additional funds of \$100,000 in the 2026/27 Budget to progress the review of thematic history, requiring an amendment to the Draft Budget 2026/27 or
 - **Option 3** – commence the thematic history review utilising the existing operational budget within the Strategic Planning budget for 2026/27, noting that this will likely require some reprioritisation within the Strategic Planning work program or additional funding sought through the quarterly budget process.

BACKGROUND

5. At its meeting on 23 February 2026, Council resolved (MM001-26):

That Council:

- (a) *Endorse the commencement of a broader heritage study to identify properties within the Georges River Local Government Area that may warrant further heritage assessment and potential inclusion on the heritage register.*
 - (b) *Request that the General Manager prepare a report to Council outlining the scope, methodology, timeframes and resourcing required to undertake the broader heritage study.*
 - (c) *Note that the findings of the heritage study will be reported to Council for consideration of any future amendments to heritage listings or planning controls.*
6. It is generally recommended that councils should review and update their heritage study and thematic history every 8-10 years (*Recommendations for local council heritage management*, Office of Environment and Heritage, 2013). This may identify gaps and potential heritage items that have been previously overlooked or items that have gained significance since the heritage study was completed.
7. Heritage is broadly defined as the places and objects we have inherited from past generation which we desire to keep and pass on to future generations. It includes landscapes, buildings, structures, relics, objects, places and works. Heritage must meet at least one of the seven (7) criteria for heritage significance:
- (a) Historic Significance: Important in the course/pattern of history.
 - (b) Associational Significance: Strong association with important persons or groups.
 - (c) Aesthetic/Technical Significance: High degree of creative or technical achievement.
 - (d) Social Significance: Strong association with a particular community/cultural group.
 - (e) Research/Scientific Potential: Potential to yield information to understand history.
 - (f) Rarity: Uncommon, rare, or endangered aspects.
 - (g) Representativeness: Demonstrates the principal characteristics of a class of places/environments.
8. A heritage study typically comprises:
- a historical analysis of the area, community or organisation, usually by using historic themes;
 - investigative research and field work;
 - an analysis of significance and a survey of items and areas identified during the study, to assess their condition;
 - inventory sheets of significant items; and
 - management and promotional recommendations.
9. Undertaking a broader heritage study aims to proactively identify properties with potential heritage value, ensuring they can be properly assessed and, where appropriate, protected before they are lost.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

10. Undertaking a broader heritage study is consistent with the following:
11. Georges River Council Community Strategic Plan

- (a) Pillar 1 Our Community – We all enjoy a safe and healthy life connected by a diverse and vibrant cultural community with a strong sense of belonging and heritage.
 - (b) Activity 1.7A – Protect and enhance heritage and local character by retaining and conserving heritage items within the Georges River Local Government Area.
12. Local Strategic Planning Statement 2040
- (a) Local Planning Priority P11 – Aboriginal and other heritage is protected and promoted.
13. South District Plan
- (a) Planning Priority S6 – Creating and renewing great places and local centres, and respecting the District’s heritage.
 - (b) Objective 13 – Environmental heritage is identified conserved and enhanced.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

14. A review of heritage items identified within the *Hurstville Local Environmental Plan 2012* was completed in 2020 and the findings were integrated into the *Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021*. No review has been conducted for the former Kogarah LGA in more than 15 years since the Kogarah Heritage Review 2010 by Truman, Zaniol & Associates, nor has there been a broader review of potential new heritage items across the Georges River LGA.
15. Based on existing known gaps in Council’s heritage framework, the comprehensive heritage study should include, at a minimum:
- (a) Review and update thematic history for Georges River (both European and Aboriginal heritage),
 - (b) Review of existing heritage items from the former Kogarah LGA,
 - (c) Identification of potential new heritage items across the whole Georges River LGA (to be informed by the updated thematic history), and
 - (d) Aboriginal heritage study.
16. It is to be noted that the updated thematic history would need to be completed first, to inform items (c) and (d). Item (b) could commence concurrently with item (a), subject to availability of funding and resourcing.
17. A review of comprehensive heritage studies recently completed or underway by other councils, including Hornsby, Liverpool and Parramatta, has identified other components such as a Heritage Interpretation Strategy, Archaeological Heritage Study, Landscape Heritage Study, and Heritage Community Engagement Strategy. These would add significant expense and are not recommended to form the scope of this Georges River Heritage Study.
18. The proposed scope within each component of the heritage review is outlined below.

a) Review and Update Thematic history

19. A thematic history is typically prepared when a comprehensive heritage study is being undertaken for an area, to provide a framework for investigating and identifying new heritage items as part of a broader heritage study. A thematic history provides a broad historical context for understanding the patterns and forces that shaped an area’s historical narrative and physical fabric, including both Aboriginal and European heritage.
20. The thematic history for the former Kogarah LGA was completed in 1994 as part of the original Kogarah Heritage Study. The thematic history for the former Hurstville LGA was completed in 1988 as part of the Municipality of Hurstville Heritage Study, and was

updated in 2013 as part of the Hurstville Community Based Heritage Study. Both have exceeded the review frequency of every 8-10 years as recommended by the Office of Environment and Heritage.

21. A review of the existing thematic histories is required to identify any new local themes relevant to the combined Georges River community today, with regard to the broader Australian and NSW State Heritage Themes. It will be used to inform potential heritage listings aligned with these themes.
22. This will require the services of a heritage consultant and/or professional historian, and will involve formal community consultation on the draft thematic history. The indicative cost of this component is approximately \$100,000.

b) Review of existing heritage items from the former Kogarah LGA

23. Council previously resolved to review the existing heritage items in Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage of the GRLEP that were transferred from the former Kogarah LGA at its meeting on 23 October 2023 (ENV037-23), subject to a successful budget bid. No budget has been allocated to date.
24. A review of the existing heritage items in the GRLEP 2021 transferred from the former Hurstville LGA was completed between 2018-2020 by Conroy Heritage Planning. These are considered to be accurate and complete and not in need of further review.
25. Many of the State Heritage Inventory (SHI) forms for heritage items in the former Kogarah LGA contain insufficient information on the significance of the heritage item and recommendations for future management. These are important for the ongoing management of the heritage item and are used by Council to assess the impact of proposed changes on the significance of heritage items. The SHI sheets will need to be reviewed and updated, to include an accurate and complete description of the item and Statement of Significance. This will require the services of a heritage consultant to research each individual item, identify its curtilage and analyse its heritage significance against the NSW Heritage Council's Criteria for local heritage significance.
26. The scope of this review would be limited to reviewing the existing heritage items within Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage of the GRLEP 2021 that are within the former Kogarah LGA. This would include whether it should be retained or removed as a heritage item and whether the item name, address, property description or significance is required to be amended in the GRLEP 2021.
27. Similar work completed by other councils have estimated this to cost between \$750-\$1,000 per item. Given that approximately 164 items are in need of review, an indicative budget of \$150,000 has been applied for the purpose of this report.

c) Identification of potential new heritage items LGA wide

28. This stage of a broader heritage study would involve identifying potential new heritage items and potential new heritage conservation areas that are not already listed in the GRLEP 2021 across the whole Georges River LGA. Nominations would be made by both a heritage consultant and be open to the wider community.
29. Nominations would be guided by the updated thematic history that reflects the history and values of the Georges River community today. Priority for listing of new heritage items will be given to existing gaps and underrepresented heritage based on the updated thematic history.
30. The opportunity to identify heritage items in the former Hurstville LGA has not occurred since the Hurstville Community Based Heritage Study 2012, which resulted in 31 new heritage items, and removal of 2 existing heritage items from Schedule 5 Environmental

Heritage. The opportunity to identify new heritage items in the former Kogarah LGA has not occurred since the original 1994 Kogarah Heritage Study.

31. Since the commencement of the GRLEP 2021, two Interim Heritage Orders (IHOs) have been made by Council to list additional properties within the Georges River LGA as local heritage items:
 - (a) 'Glenlee' at 80 Boronia Parade, Lugarno, within the former Hurstville LGA; and
 - (b) 'Bayview' at 28 Carlton Crescent, Kogarah Bay, which is located within the former Kogarah LGA.
32. The provisions of the *Heritage Act 1977* allow IHOs to be made as a mechanism to investigate and protect potential places and items that are under threat and are likely to be of cultural heritage significance. Whilst effective, the use of IHOs represents a reactionary approach rather than a proactive one where community input into a broader heritage study is sought in an orderly manner.
33. It is estimated that each new nomination would cost \$3,500 to be researched and investigated in accordance with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's guidelines '*Assessing heritage significance: Guidelines for assessing places and objects against the Heritage Council of NSW criteria*' (2025) and the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's guidelines '*Investigating heritage significance*' (2022). This does not include unplanned staffing costs associated with coordinating expert advice and reporting to Council at various points.
34. This stage would also involve extensive consultation with property owners, and reporting to Council for resolution to proceed with new heritage listings in the *Georges River Local Environmental Plan 2021*.
35. Any proposal to introduce a new heritage item or heritage conservation area into legislation would require a separate Planning Proposal (PP) process, to be endorsed by Council and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI), and formal public exhibition processes.

d) Aboriginal Heritage Study and Management Strategy

36. A broader heritage study should also incorporate Aboriginal heritage, not just post-colonial/European heritage. This would align with:
 - (a) Planning Priority 11 of Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) for Aboriginal and other heritage to be protected and promoted,
 - (b) Objective (d) of Clause 5.10 of the *Georges River LEP 2021* to conserve Aboriginal objects and Aboriginal places of heritage significance,
 - (c) Previous Council resolution (NM060-21) of 26 July 2021 to undertake an Aboriginal Heritage Study and Management Strategy for Georges River, and
 - (d) Action 1.6.2 of the Georges River Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy 2025-2030, adopted by Council on 24 February 2025, to Engage a consultant to undertake an Aboriginal Heritage Study and Management Strategy for the Georges River area in consultation with Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Traditional Owners and Knowledge Holders.
37. Councils play a key role in implementing Aboriginal heritage management procedures as a consent authority, landowner and as a land manager. In order for Council to meet its Aboriginal heritage protection obligations more effectively, detailed research is required to update Aboriginal heritage records and distil existing requirements into a locally-tailored suite of management processes.

38. A separate Aboriginal heritage study would support the implementation of Aboriginal heritage legislation in the Georges River LGA by assisting landowners, applicants and developers to understand their risk of harm, their legislative obligations, and to clarify the level of assessment required with any development application for development or potential disturbance.
39. Currently, Council has no publicly available mapping which assists applicants to determine whether they need to consider the impacts of their development on Aboriginal heritage. A requirement for an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Assessment is only identified by staff once a DA is lodged with Council. This creates delays in development assessment and is a source of frustration for applicants who are required to provide additional documentation causing cost and time delays. Furthermore, consideration of Aboriginal Heritage impacts should be considered at the design inception stage to be properly considered and mitigated, not left to the development assessment stage.
40. The Aboriginal heritage study would require collaboration and consultation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Traditional Owners and Knowledge Holders. Council's Community Capacity Building Officer (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Portfolio) would be critical to assisting with this aspect of this study.
41. The Aboriginal heritage study should commence after the completion of the updated thematic history. The estimated budget for the study would be \$200,000.

TIMEFRAMES AND RESOURCING

42. Indicative timeframes and costs for completed the recommended scope of the broader heritage study are provided below.

Heritage Study component	Estimated timeframe	Target year(s)	Estimated cost
Review of thematic history (both European and Aboriginal heritage)	1 year	2026/27 – 2027/28	\$100,000
Review of existing heritage items from the former Kogarah LGA	1 year	2027/28 – 2028/29	\$150,000
Identification of potential new heritage items LGA wide	1 year	2027/28 – 2028/29	\$150,000 (indicative, dependant on number of items identified)
Aboriginal Heritage Study and Management Strategy	2 years	2027/28 – 2029/30	\$200,000
Implementation of new heritage items through a separate Planning Proposal process	1.5 years	2028/29 – 2029/30	\$30,000 (allowance for three stakeholder consultation and engagement sessions)
		Total	\$630,000

43. The identification of potential new heritage items LGA wide and Aboriginal Heritage Study are dependent on an updated thematic history in order to guide new nominations. These components cannot commence until the thematic history is finalised.
44. The identification of potential new heritage items and associated heritage inventory sheets currently have an indicative budget. Once studies are finalised and additional nominations

are received, the budget may require review depending on the number of new items identified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

45. This report presents a total indicative program cost of approximately \$630,000, staged over multiple financial years. No funding has currently been assigned in the Draft 2026/27 Budget for any of the Heritage Study components outlined in Paragraph 41. Any component that is approved will need to be added to the operating budget in line with the proposed timing of each component of the program.

46. The following options are presented for consideration:

- **Option 1** – Council receives the report and defers any commitment to funding or program delivery.

This has no immediate budget impact, however this will result in further delays to addressing known gaps in the heritage framework, including outdated thematic histories and unreviewed items.

- **Option 2** – Council allocates new funding to progress all or selected components of the broader heritage study, commencing with the review of thematic history in the 2026/27 financial year.

This enables a proactive, comprehensive and evidence-based heritage framework to be established, however the initial funding of approximately \$100,000 requires an amendment to the Draft 2026/27 Budget to accommodate this additional expenditure.

- **Option 3** – Council reallocates funding from the existing Strategic Planning operational budget to deliver the review of thematic history.

This enables the heritage study to commence without increasing the expenditure forecasted by the Draft 2026/27 Budget. However, reprioritisation within the Strategic Planning work program is likely required.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

47. Should Council not support the proposed broader heritage study, there is a risk that Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage of the GRLEP 2021 may not capture all items of potential heritage significance in the LGA. This may result in the need for more IHOs in the future as an ad-hoc mechanism for protecting places of heritage significance.

48. As many of the SHI sheets carried over from the former Kogarah LGA have not been reviewed, the information contained is minimal in many cases and may not reflect the current significance of the item or provide up to date recommendations for future management, leading to uncertainty by owners and Council when considering any change to the heritage item.

49. There is a risk that DPHI will be reluctant to support any heritage protection provisions that theoretically limit future housing supply capacity. It is noted that DPHI's involvement will be limited to the later stages of the overall project. As the project has yet to commence, it is difficult to know the scale of the proposed changes that would be implemented through GRLEP 2021 changes. Nonetheless, updates to existing items and what would likely be a relatively modest increase in local heritage items will be defensible against concerns from DPHI.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

50. A comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement strategy will need to be prepared to guide the engagement with property owners and the community, including

Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, Traditional Owners and Knowledge Holders for the Aboriginal heritage study.

51. Should the broader heritage study project progress as per the scope outlined in this report, the community will be provided with the opportunity to nominate potential heritage items in the LGA for inclusion on the Heritage Map and Schedule 5 Environmental Heritage of the GRLEP 2021.
52. A community engagement expert will be required to assist Council with facilitating an information session for owners of potential heritage items.
53. Community engagement will be tailored for each stage of the broader heritage study, and will include but not limited to:
 - (a) Dedicated Your Say project page
 - (b) Advertise in local newspapers and on social media
 - (c) Formal public exhibition period for draft documents
 - (d) Writing to affected property owners and key stakeholders.

FILE REFERENCE

D26/106368

ATTACHMENTS

Nil