

THEME 2 :

Natural environment

Challenges and Opportunities

We highly value our local environment. The extent of bushland and biodiversity is unique for an area situated so close to the Sydney CBD.

Ku-ring-gai has a number of particularly significant environmental assets that require special care and attention. They include more than 150 bushland reserves, nationally significant ecological communities such as the remnant Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest, a number of threatened flora and fauna and three surrounding national parks. The area's natural attributes are enjoyed by those who live, work and play here.

They are a major contributor to the health and wellbeing of the Ku-ring-gai community and continue to draw new residents to the area.

PROTECTING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Council and the community have a joint responsibility to conserve and maintain these unique features of our area, not just for the benefit of our local population, but for the part it plays in keeping our planet healthy.

Over recent years Council and the community developed and adopted a comprehensive series of new and updated environmental policies and controls to protect the natural environment, manage the impacts of development and regulate against damage from illegal activities.

These policies and their implementation remain industry best practice. Concurrent with this work, Council also played a lead advocacy role in responding to proposed government changes to environmental legislation and controls. Staff will continue to monitor and analyse the ongoing changes to environmental protection legislation and controls and their implications for Ku-ring-gai.

ENHANCING OUR TREE CANOPY AND GREEN CORRIDORS

The established tree canopy in Ku-ring-gai is a defining characteristic and essential to the 'look and feel' of Ku-ring-gai. Our street trees are also an important part of this open space landscape of Ku-ring-gai. They provide shade and aesthetic value, relief from heat stress, habitat for fauna and create corridors for their movement. Good management of our street trees will need to continue to protect and enhance wildlife habitats.

Riparian corridor ecology is also becoming an increasingly prominent issue for the Northern Sydney region and wider Sydney Metropolitan area as development occurs. Land use plans which define Ku-ring-gai's riparian corridors are now in place and will help to ensure their ongoing protection and connection to adjoining national parks and local government areas.



ENVIRONMENTAL LEVY PROGRAMS

Council has been fortunate to have majority community support for a special environmental levy, in place since 2005, which funds the annual delivery of approximately \$2.5 million of environmental initiatives within the local government area.

These long term initiatives continue to improve Ku-ring-gai's native bushland and waterways, protect our biodiversity and conservation values and reduce energy and water usage. Since its inception the levy has also successfully leveraged an additional \$9.9 million through state and federal government grants.

Over 5,000 residents participated in community environmental programs and initiatives in 2016 and 2017. Some initiatives, such as the Climate Wise Communities and our Wild Things programs, have received both national and international recognition for their innovation and positive results.

The environmental levy is due to expire in June 2019. Council has resolved to make application to state government for the permanent continuation of the levy at the amount currently paid by Ku-ring-gai ratepayers.

ACTIVE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Many of Council's bushland reserves support low-impact recreation and high community values and are cared for by active volunteer groups. Council's community volunteer program delivers one of the largest per capita environmental civic leadership programs in NSW with nearly 700 volunteers participating annually in our Bushcare, Streetcare and Parkcare programs.

It is vital that our community's appreciation and knowledge of the environment and challenges to its preservation are passed on to younger generations and newer residents of the area. We need to continue actively encouraging 'whole of community' participation in environmental activities and the transfer of knowledge to a broader audience.

REDUCING OUR CONSUMPTION OF RESOURCES

Council's local programs, policies and strategies are aimed at influencing sustainable behaviour throughout the Ku-ring-gai area.

This includes reducing Council's own energy and water consumption and as a consequence saving money for ratepayers. Council will continue to encourage residents and business to reduce their own use of energy and water, greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants.

Education programs and initiatives to assist our local community to reduce waste and minimise the amount of waste sent to landfill have taken on even greater importance as state and federal governments address the future of recycling in Australia, given the reduction in recycling materials that can be exported. Similar to other environmental and sustainability priorities this will require Council, residents and business working together to develop practical and sustainable responses to this issue.

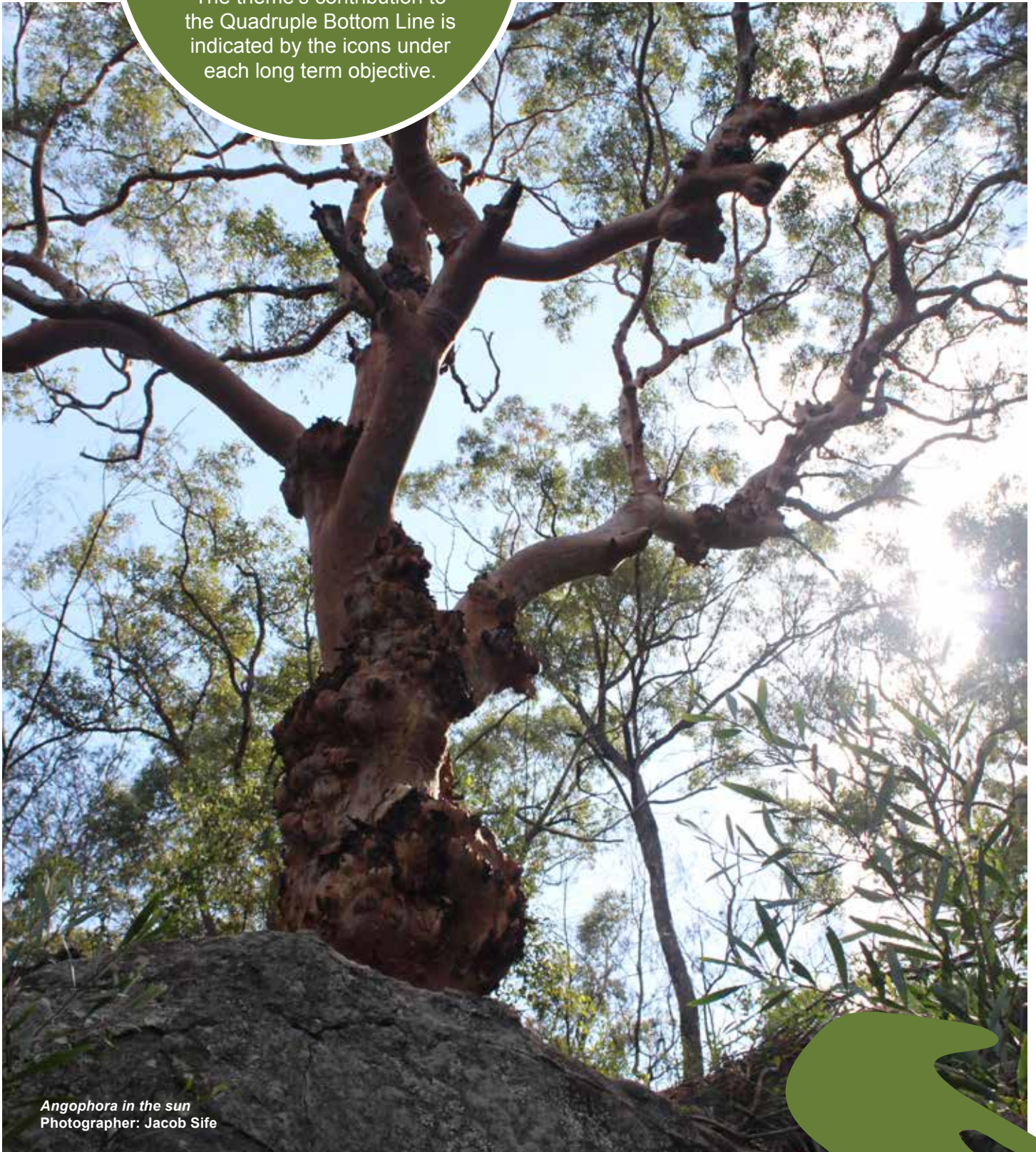


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HOW WE WILL ADDRESS THIS THEME

This theme identifies the community's aspirations for its future and how Council and other stakeholders will contribute towards their achievement. The theme's contribution to the Quadruple Bottom Line is indicated by the icons under each long term objective.



Angophora in the sun
Photographer: Jacob Sife



	Long Term Objective	Council role	Other key stakeholders
Issue: N1 Appreciating Ku-ring-gai's unique natural environment   	N1.1 A community empowered with knowledge, learning and information that benefits the environment.	Lead, facilitate and educate	Office of Environment and Heritage, local community and environmental groups, local schools, residents
Issue: N2 Natural Areas  	N2.1 Our bushland is rich with native flora and fauna.	Lead and deliver	Office of Environment and Heritage, Dept Planning and Environment, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Bushcare, local community and environmental groups, residents
Issue: N3 Natural Waterways  	N3.1 Our natural waterways and riparian areas are enhanced and protected.	Lead and deliver	Office of Environment and Heritage, Dept Planning and Environment, Sydney Water, NSW Local Land Services (Greater Sydney), universities, residents
Issue: N4 Climate Change   	N4.1 A community addressing and responding to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.	Lead, deliver and facilitate	Office of Environment and Heritage, emergency management agencies, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Local Emergency Management Committee, Federal Department of Environment and Energy, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, universities, residents
Issue: N5 Sustainable Resource Management   	N5.1 A community progressively reducing its consumption of resources and leading in recycling and reuse.	Lead and facilitate	Office of Environment and Heritage, Northern Sydney Region of Councils, Federal Department of Environment and Energy, NSW Environmental Protection Authority, universities, utilities, residents



MONITORING OUR PROGRESS

These indicators measure our progress towards the achievement of our long term achievements.

Number of residents involved in community environmental programs per year.

Baseline: In 2016/17, 5348 residents were involved in community environmental programs per year.

Source: Council participation records

INCREASING TREND 

Number of residents at an individual or household level who carried out actions to benefit the environment as a result of participation in Council programs per year.

Baseline: In 2016/17, 2843 residents carried out actions to benefit the environment per year.

Source: Council participation records

INCREASING TREND 

Resident satisfaction with the protection of natural areas and bushland.

Baseline: In 2017, 94% of residents were somewhat satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied.

Source: Ku-ring-gai Council Community Satisfaction Research

INCREASING TREND 

Resident satisfaction with the condition of waterways and creeks.

Baseline: In 2017, 89% of residents were somewhat satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied.

Source: Ku-ring-gai Council Community Satisfaction Research

INCREASING TREND 

Number of residents involved in climate change adaptation activities per year.

Baseline: In 2016/2017, there were 294 participants in climate change adaptation activities.

Source: Council participation records

INCREASING TREND 

Resident satisfaction with Council initiatives to reduce energy use.

Baseline: In 2017, 77% of residents were somewhat satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied.

Source: Ku-ring-gai Council Community Satisfaction Research

INCREASING TREND 

Resident satisfaction with Council initiatives to reduce water use.

Baseline: In 2017, 81% of residents were somewhat satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied.

Source: Ku-ring-gai Council Community Satisfaction Research

INCREASING TREND 

Percentage of household waste diverted from landfill.

Baseline: In 2011/2012, 60% of total household waste was diverted from landfill.

Source: Council records

MAINTAIN OR INCREASING TREND 

Kilograms of waste generated per resident per year.

Baseline: In 2016/2017, 208.19 kg of waste was generated per resident per year.

Source: Council records

DECREASING TREND 

Resident satisfaction with Council initiatives to reduce waste and improve recycling.

Baseline: In 2017, 91% of residents were somewhat satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied.

Source: Ku-ring-gai Council Community Satisfaction Research

INCREASING TREND 