

# Environmental Program 2020

**COUNCIL NAME**

City of Canada Bay

**WEB ADDRESS**[canadabay.nsw.gov.au](http://canadabay.nsw.gov.au)**SIZE**20 km<sup>2</sup>**POPULATION**

95,159

## Overview

Council's Environmental Year in Review outlines the cross organisational achievements, progressing the community's and Council's environmental goals set in the community strategic plan and supported by many of Council's environmental strategies and plans. In the last year Council has adopted a new Environmental Strategy which included development of the Urban Tree Canopy Strategy, Biodiversity Strategy, Emissions Reduction Action Plan and Local Movement Strategy.

## Background

Canada Bay has been one of the fastest growing local government areas for a number of years now and this plan sets out Council's responses to the challenges particularly around key issues such as emissions, trees, biodiversity, water and waste. With three new metro stations and population growth expected to increase by over 19,000 people by 2026, at an average annual growth rate of 1.91%. In a relatively small Council area, density is increasing and a rapid change in the mix of housing is occurring with 50% of housing stock now 50% multi-unit developments in 2020, up from 40% in 2016.

## Implementation

Council undertook a review of the Environmental Strategy 2014 and its targets. The review included all existing environmental plans and strategies plus identifying gaps which required further work. This led to the development of a new environment strategy with measurable targets and baselines.

Technical background studies provided forecast modelling for key areas to ensure the strategy was sustainable, data driven and practical to implement. This was essential for the emissions plan that includes both operational and community emissions. The review highlighted how tough it was to meet the previous strategy's emission target and more work was required to ensure that there was a feasible pathway to achieve the strong emissions targets. Analysis showed that Council's ability to influence community emissions was low but Council wanted to ensure action in the areas that could be influenced through advocacy, community programs and Council policy.

The implementation process was driven through a project plan which outlined our objectives, timelines, key stakeholders and deliverables. The cost was \$120,000 including all technical studies and design work. Key steps included:

- Internal Engagement including the establishment of a cross-Council internal working group who developed the targets, actions and baselines and are now driving implementation.
- Community Engagement via surveying the community to test people's values and priorities on key environmental issues and the community's appetite for emissions targets. This was further refined through focus groups who workshopped opportunities to tackle emissions, improve biodiversity and tree canopy, reduce waste to landfill and continue to improve waterway health.
- Review and gap identification, including a deep dive to understand how Council was tracking against the previous targets. Moving forward, it was critical to establish useful baselines that could be replicated.
- Technical experts were engaged to forecast modelling on various scenarios and actions to ensure that targets were achievable.

The new Environmental Strategy includes inputs from the Eastern District plan, Green Grid Priorities, Sydney Metro West Strategy, Local Ecological Sustainable Development principles and the UN Sustainable Development goals. The documents are all cross functional, each with

a costed and accountable action plan that involves staff across all departments. The actions in the Strategies and Plans are assigned to specific Council teams, ensuring responsibility is embedded throughout departments. Each staff member has a work plan built around the Operational Plan. Actions and achievements are reported through quarterly reporting and the new environmental working group will ensure that the document is embedded cross organisationally through integrated planning and reporting. All job descriptions have a commitment to sustainability as part of their role description and sustainability is part of the induction process.



## Outcomes

Operationally, Council has implemented projects which resulted in a 35% emission reduction. This includes:

- A Power Purchase agreement which procures 20% of electricity from the Moree Solar Farm.
- Three new community solar installations.
- A net zero emissions action plan adopted.
- 29 hybrid cars with 8 more on order with a further 10% decrease in fuel consumption in 2019.

As well as adopting a community emissions reduction action plan, Council implemented:

- A pilot apartments program which received over 20 applications. Three building upgrades have resulted in cost savings per year of over \$3,000 and estimated savings of 20,000kW.
- The 2019 “Our Energy Future” campaign held 6 workshops with 300 residents. The project resulted in 523 quote requests and 42 solar PV and battery installations, with savings totalling 204.35kW.
- Solar My School engaged 3 schools installing 155 kW of solar panels.
- The COVID Energy Savings program resulted in 196 resident’s consultations, 16 quote requests and 5 installations.

Other key program achievements include;

- The development and adoption of a biodiversity and urban canopy strategy;
- Planted 646 trees and 4,020 native shrubs, ground covers and grasses in parks and streets. A further 800 trees are planned.
- Bug’s Life educational video viewed over 9,600 times. Schools and childcare centres used content as classroom activity.
- Canada Close-Up Photo Competition received 453 submissions.
- The online home composting tutorial gained over 1900 views with 128 households receiving a compost bin or worm farm to date.
- Recyclesmart has seen 20 collections since its June launch targeting textiles, soft plastics and e-waste home collections.
- Delivered smart city sensor project for litter bins with over 600 overflows addressed.
- Delivered 12 recycling and repair workshops.
- 80% increase in visitors to Community Recycling facility.

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- A community e-waste event recovered over 18,000kg, and over 1000kg of business e-waste
  - Hosted 22 sustainability workshops with over 880 attendees.
  - Environmental event participation of over 816 people.

### Key Learnings

The strategy development process provided several key learnings. The key ones being that:

- cross functional buy-in and accountability are crucial,
- data and data consistency is required to ensure a long term measurable approach is gained,
- resourcing, planning and timeframes are critical to a whole of organisation approach, and
- the community plays an integral role in the success of the strategy as many of the targets are out of Council's control.

The silo effect within Council was evident in this process, particularly where reviewing progress so far. It is evident that various teams and departments have other priorities and therefore putting forward actions into the operational plans each year was not always front of mind.

### Contact

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**This project was the 2020 winner of the Local Sustainability Award at the LGNSW Excellence in the Environment Awards**