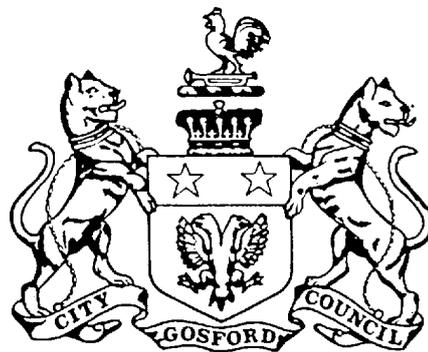




BIODIVERSITY MANAGEMENT



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COMMUNITY GROWTH - CULTURE

POLICY OBJECTIVES

To conserve biodiversity in the Gosford Local Government area. This objective is to be achieved through applying the principles of ecological sustainability and minimising adverse impacts on endangered ecological communities, endangered populations and threatened species where they are known to occur in the local government area. The conservation of biodiversity is also to be achieved by the forming of active partnerships between the community, government authorities and Council to manage this natural heritage for present and future generations.

DEFINITIONS

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life forms, the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form. It is usually considered at three levels: genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030, Australian Government DoSEWPaC).

Ecological Sustainability means the following statements of principle (as per the definition of ecologically sustainable development in the Local Government Amendment (ESD) Act 1997):

Ecological sustainability requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. Ecological sustainability can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

- (a) the precautionary principle - namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. In the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:
 - (i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and
 - (ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options,
- (b) Inter-generational equity - namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations,
- (c) conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity - namely, that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration,

- (d) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms - namely, that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, such as:
- (i) polluter pays - that is, those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance or abatement,
 - (ii) the users of goods and services should pay prices based on the full life cycle of costs of providing goods and services, including the use of natural resources and assets and the ultimate disposal of any waste,
 - (iii) environmental goals, having been established, should be pursued in the most cost effective way, by establishing incentive structures including market mechanisms, that enable those best placed to maximise benefits or minimise costs to develop their own solutions and responses to environmental problems.

Threatened species, endangered populations and endangered ecological communities are listed in the schedules of the Threatened Species Conservation Act, the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 or the NSW Fisheries Management Act.

POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with these objectives Council will:

- Develop and implement biodiversity delivery programs as part of Council's Biodiversity Strategy.
- Exercise and promote the principles of Ecological Sustainability in all Council undertakings and activities in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.
- Actively support, exercise and promote the principles of Ecological Sustainability and incorporate biodiversity considerations in the assessment of all rezonings and development applications (Local Government Act 1993).
- Appropriately assess, in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, the potential impacts of its activities to ensure that its actions do not impact adversely on significant vegetation, important habitat zones and wildlife corridors, threatened species habitat and other environmentally sensitive areas within the Gosford local government area
- When assessing development proposals and rezonings ensure that ecological processes and ecosystem functioning are not impacted adversely by any proposed development or activity, in accordance with D1.04 Environmental Assessment Policy and the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.
- Ensure that development assessments, rezonings and maintenance activities consider the requirements of approved recovery plans and threatened species assessment and protection in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

- Incorporate environmental monitoring as a condition of consent where applicable to ensure that biodiversity objectives are achieved, and ensure that monitoring is undertaken and the results reported to Council in accordance with the conditions of consent.
- Incorporate biodiversity principles where appropriate into its policies, planning controls and plans of management.
- Identify and map native vegetation, endangered ecological communities and threatened species within the Gosford local government area to be used by Council for environmental assessment.
- Manage its parks and reserves to ensure that biodiversity is conserved.
- Where possible, lands of significant environmental value currently in private ownership may be voluntarily acquired and incorporated into Council's natural reserve system for the purposes of biodiversity conservation.
- Assess the condition of significant vegetation communities, important habitat zones, wildlife corridors and other environmentally sensitive lands in Council owned and managed lands and prioritise funding for their management and remediation.
- Through Council's ecological research grants program encourage research into biodiversity in the Gosford local government area with the aims of developing a better understanding of ecological processes, native species or communities and identifying actions that would assist the management of biodiversity.
- Provide opportunities for to educate, engage and support the community to encourage biodiversity conservation across land tenures, including private land.
- Where possible aim to work in partnership with community groups, business groups and government agencies to implement programs aimed at conserving biodiversity.
- Identify, in collaboration with relevant government agencies and experts in the field, and prioritise the management of threats to biodiversity.
- Where appropriate coordinate and take a lead role in efforts to implement programs for biodiversity conservation.
- Develop and implement strategies for biodiversity-sympathetic fire regimes.
- Consider the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and where possible develop management strategies to address these impacts.

BIODIVERSITY PRINCIPLES

In undertaking these actions Council will apply the following principles:

- Biodiversity conservation is a key role for Council and part of its core business (Local Government Act 1993).
- Council will apply a precautionary approach where there is a chance that a plan or activity may lead to irreversible adverse consequences for biodiversity.
- Biodiversity is best conserved in situ (i.e. where it occurs) and relocation of species and tradeoffs are not generally considered appropriate conservation outcomes. However, when conservation in situ is not possible, compensatory habitat offsetting strategies and/or species translocations may be considered. Any such proposal will require prior approval of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.
- Biodiversity conservation objectives must consider and balance broader environmental, social and economic considerations (and vice versa).
- Maintenance and enhancement of existing biodiversity is a key priority (i.e. with an aim to have no net loss of biodiversity).
- Highest priority should be given to the conservation and recovery of threatened species, populations and communities.
- Wherever possible reducing fragmentation of remnant vegetation and protection of corridor linkages should be major goals.
- When restoring ecosystems, the aim will be to represent those ecological communities and systems that originally existing at that site.

(Minute No 25/2001 – 6 February 2001)

(Minute No 214/2005 - 8 March 2005 - Review of Policies)

(Minute No 311/2009 - 5 May 2009 - Review of Policies)

(Min No 2013/388 - 16 July 2013 - Review of Policies)