

Resolution of Council

25 August 2025

Item 13.5

Protecting the City's Powerful Owl Population

Moved by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor Ellsmore –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) World Owl Day was observed on the 4 August 2025;
- (ii) the Sydney Basin is home to a variety of native owls, including Australia's largest species, the Powerful Owl;
- (iii) the Powerful Owl is an obligate carnivore, meaning it exclusively relies on meat for its diet, primarily consuming medium-to-large tree-dwelling mammals. In addition, the Powerful Owl have been observed to prey on rats and mice in urban areas;
- (iv) advocacy groups, such as Animal Liberation and BirdLife Australia, have long campaigned for the conservation of threatened animal species in Australia, including the Powerful Owl;

(B) Council further note:

- (i) due to the urban adaptation of the Powerful Owls diet, populations in cities are exposed to lethal secondary poisoning of Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) which are commonly applied across public and private land;
- (ii) an Australian study by Deakin University and the University of Melbourne conducted in 2023 found that SGARs were detected in 92% of nocturnal avian predators, such as the Powerful Owl, in major Australian cities such as Melbourne and Sydney;

- (iii) SGARs work by causing prolonged internal bleeding in animals which consume them, with the poison accumulating in animal tissue and inadvertently endangering other animals throughout the food chain;
 - (iv) SGARs have been heavily regulated, and in many instances banned, by the European Union, recognising the threat they pose to wildlife and ecosystem health;
 - (v) SGARs are being phased out by Albury City Council and Port Macquarie Hastings and have been eliminated by Camden Council; and
 - (vi) the City advises the types of poisons its contractors can use to control rodent populations, and currently permit the following SGAR products:
 - (a) Ditrac Rodenticide;
 - (b) Generation First Strike;
 - (c) Maki Block;
 - (d) Storm Secure; and
 - (e) Talon Rodenticide Wax Blocks; and
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to investigate ways and report back to Council as soon as practicable as to how the City can restrict or limit its use of SGARs to protect the Powerful Owl and other vulnerable species, including but not limited to:
- (i) improving communication between the City's waste management services and those employed by the City who are responsible for managing rodent populations;
 - (ii) exploring Council's contractor arrangements and options, including contract agreement, policies, and tender language, to develop environmentally friendly rodent controls that restrict or limit the use of SGARs wherever possible; and
 - (iii) trialling alternative rodenticides that pose less risks to the City's wildlife wherever possible.

Carried unanimously.

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