

Item 3.4

Enhancing Street Cleaning and Urgent Action on Waste in NSW

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

Our changing city

The residential population of the City of Sydney is expected to grow by 27% by 2041, increasing the population from 244,000 to 310,000 people. There are also more people moving into the Green Square Urban Renewal area as developments are completed.

More people are enjoying our streets, parks and open spaces, especially during successful programs like Sydney Streets, while on-street dining has been embraced by many.

In June 2019 Council declared a climate emergency. We are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, and by 2050, urban heating is predicted to increase temperatures between 1.5 and 3 degrees.

We see trees and green spaces as essential infrastructure. Effective and extensive canopy cover can help reduce temperatures on the ground by up to 10 degrees. That's why we have planted more than 17,000 street trees across our local area since 2005, increasing canopy cover in the City by the equivalent of 80 Sydney Cricket Grounds. More trees create more leaf-drop, which requires more frequent street sweeping and cleaning.

We are also planning to establish Special Entertainment Precincts, building on the growing night life in areas such as King Street in Newtown and Crown Street in Surry Hills. These areas will need more intensive and frequent cleaning.

The City's street cleaning and sweeping services, work scheduling and staffing levels need to adapt to meet the expectations of our community.

This is in keeping with the recommendation to purchase more cleansing equipment and trucks so the City can increase public domain cleansing services, as outlined in the Quarter 1 Review which will be voted on by Council at this meeting.

Waste processing infrastructure

Following the first Sydney Mayoral Summit on Waste, in June 2023 Council unanimously supported my Lord Mayoral Minute - Collective Action on Waste that asked the NSW Government to set the waste levy at an appropriate level, reinvest 100% of the revenue into waste infrastructure and improve approval processes and licensing procedures for new waste processing facilities and landfill sites.

Since then, all 33 Councils of Greater Sydney through Resilient Sydney and their regional organisations have worked with the NSW Environment Protection Authority to address this crisis.

On 1 November 2024, the NSW Environment Minister Penny Sharpe and NSW Environment Protection Authority CEO Tony Chappel hosted the NSW Circular Economy Summit in Sydney.

Minister Sharpe acknowledged that Greater Sydney is on the brink of a waste crisis, and that without new waste and recycling solutions, and some quick decisions and choices, landfill space is predicted to run out by 2030.

It is important that the NSW Government has acknowledged the severity of the waste crisis and has committed to:

- plan and develop critical waste infrastructure;
- finalise the review of the waste levy and rolling out a NSW Reuse and Repair Strategy;
- legislate mandates to phase-in food organics and garden organics waste collection for businesses and households;
- increase recycling rates by taking certain plastics out of circulation; and
- take action to prevent contamination through product stewardship schemes for batteries and a review of settings around asbestos.

The NSW Environmental Protection Agency must urgently finalise the NSW Waste Infrastructure Plan, which has been in development for over a year. A clear plan, developed in consultation with key stakeholders including Councils must provide certainty to attract the investment for desperately needed waste facilities.

In September 2024, the Australian Government launched the Great Unwaste, a nationwide campaign to reduce food waste and help households have a positive impact on the planet, and their pockets.

We must capitalise on this momentum by continuing to advocate to the Australian and NSW Governments and work with our new Environment and Climate Change Advisory Panel to develop waste prevention initiatives to change community behaviour and address the larger underlying issues of overconsumption and our throw away mentality.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note that:

- (i) the population of the City of Sydney has nearly doubled since 2004 is expected to grow by 27% by 2041, and tree planting and night life activity has increased, which means we need to increase the City's street cleaning and sweeping services to meet the needs and expectations of our community; and
- (ii) at tonight's meeting, Council will vote on a recommendation to bring forward \$4.7M of funds into the 2024/25 and \$3.6M forward into the 2025/26 Plant and Equipment budget to purchase more cleansing plant and equipment to enable an increased public domain cleansing program;

- (B) Council further note that:
- (i) without new waste and recycling solutions, landfill space in NSW is predicted to run out by 2030; and
 - (ii) at the NSW Circular Economy Summit in Sydney on 1 November 2024, the NSW Government acknowledged the severity of the waste crisis and its responsibility to address it, including through a Waste Infrastructure Plan for NSW;
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) allocate the additional staff and operational resources needed to improve our street cleaning and sweeping services to the draft 2025/26 Operating Budget;
 - (ii) continue to work with the NSW Government, other Greater Sydney Councils, and the waste and recycling industry to achieve adequate and sustainable waste processing infrastructure in NSW to meet future needs; and
 - (iii) consult with the City's new Environmental and Climate Change Advisory Panel to develop and implement programs and initiatives to help the community prevent and reduce waste; and
- (D) the Lord Mayor be requested to:
- (i) write to Resilient Sydney and the four Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils offering to host a second Sydney Mayoral Summit on Waste in a City venue; and
 - (ii) write to the NSW Minister for the Environment to invite the Minister to the Summit and ask the NSW Government to:
 - (a) urgently finalise the NSW Waste Infrastructure Plan, and
 - (b) establish a whole of government Waste Infrastructure Crisis Management Team, with representatives from Local Government and the waste and recycling industry, to expedite desperately needed waste infrastructure in NSW.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor