

Item 13.5

Notices of Motion

Protecting the City's Powerful Owl Population

By Councillor Thompson

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) World Owl Day was observed on 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; and
- (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 Owl's 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) 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;
- (iii) 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

- (iv) wildlife ecologist, Dr Viyanna Leo and her team successfully reduced invasive rodent populations at North Head Sanctuary in Sydney through the reintroduction of the environmentally beneficial Australian Bush Rat, which served as an effective biological control capable of outcompeting introduced rat species; 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 eliminate or limit its use of SGARs to protect the Powerful Owl and other vulnerable species, including but not limited to:
- (i) reintroducing native, environmentally friendly rat species to outcompete invasive rat species as a form of biological control, as demonstrated at North Head Sanctuary in Sydney;
 - (ii) improving communication between the City's waste management services and those employed by the City who are responsible for managing rodent populations;
 - (iii) exploring Council's contractor arrangements and options, including contract agreement, policies, and tender language, to develop environmentally friendly rodent controls that eliminate the use of SGARs; and
 - (iv) trialling alternative rodenticides that pose less risks to the City's wildlife wherever possible.

X113760