



**Burwood Council's
Green Action Plan 2012**

**Closing the GAP
Towards a Green Vision for Burwood**

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Mayoral Message



A message from
John Faker, Mayor of
Burwood

As Mayor of Burwood I have always sought to make our area one that can be proud of its environmental credentials and vision. As we look to better energy efficiency and a more effective waste management system, I have asked Council to update this Green Action Plan to guide us into the future.

Burwood Council's environmental vision is realised in the following pages and we proudly present it for public inspection and discussion. It demonstrates how our activities in the local area can deliver a positive environmental impact.

I am a father of a young family and I understand that resources can be scarce and that everybody is feeling the pressures of change. On a larger scale, Burwood doesn't have the convenience of unlimited space or unlimited natural resources and these concerns are at the heart of this document.

Nevertheless, this Green Action Plan is designed to fully engage the community for the future and will be achieved by what we all collectively put in.

It is my vision to make a cleaner, safer and greener Burwood for all of our children.

I look forward to your comments.

Introduction

Burwood Local Government Area (LGA) is the heart of the inner west. It covers an area of 7.26 square kilometres and is strategically located midway between the major centres of Sydney City and Parramatta.

It has been identified as a Major Regional Centre by the New South Wales Government and is set to grow significantly in the next 25 years taking advantage of the areas strong local economy and excellent transport infrastructure.

The Burwood Local Government Area has a population of approximately 32,000 people and is predominantly urban in character with a strong commercial centre.

Towards a Green Vision

An important element in the growth and development of Burwood is to ensure that Council and the community recognise the significance of protecting and maintaining a sustainable environment.

Recognising its community leadership role in environmental management, Burwood Council carefully considers the environmental impacts associated with any of the activities resulting from any new policy, program or plan it formulates and develops.

Further, Council is committed to developing and fostering a range of corporate and community “green” actions and initiatives that embrace the following environmental aims:

- Increasing community awareness, particularly in relation to the reduction of greenhouses gas emissions, efficient water usage and energy efficiency
- Enhancing, preserving and maintaining our local environment
- Participating in national and local environmental campaigns aimed at environmental protection and improvement.

By working with the community in taking ownership of the philosophy that *every little action helps* Council aims to “close the GAP” towards achieving a Green Vision for Burwood through the delivery of an action based guide.

Council’s Green Action Plan (GAP)

The **Green Action Plan (GAP)** is a Council initiative that contributes to reducing the impacts of environmental issues particularly the effects of Greenhouse gas emissions and Climate Change in the local area.

The GAP brings together all of Council’s “green” actions into one accessible document. It provides the platform for the community to review what Council is doing, take action and provide feedback on current programs and initiatives.

The GAP objectives are to:

- Provide an outline of issues facing the greenhouse effect and climate change issue and the need to reduce the impact and manage the local environment.
- Present the projects, programs and actions undertaken by Council in reducing adverse impacts on the local environment within the LGA.

The GAP will be reviewed every twelve months to allow for the inclusion of new initiatives and programs which Council may be promoting or has adopted.

Greenhouse Effect & Climate Change

The issue of Climate Change is at the forefront of environmental concerns not just locally but on a global level as well.

The greenhouse effect describes how natural gases in the earth's atmosphere reduce the amount of heat escaping from the earth into the atmosphere. The greater the amount of these gases, the more the earth heats up. These natural gases have a 'blanket effect' on the earth, allowing the sun's rays in to warm the earth's surface, but they also prevent much of the heat escaping (Refer below to Figure).

Increases in the earth's temperature can occur naturally resulting from climatic fluctuations due to solar cycles and changes in the sun's radiation. The increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide) in the atmosphere results from human activity and these additional gases allow the sun's energy to reach the earth's surface but prevent heat from escaping. Resulting in the earth to slowly heat up, this is known as the enhanced greenhouse effect and causes global warming and climate change.

The enhanced greenhouse effect (global warming) is caused primarily by the following:

- Release of carbon dioxide (biggest contributor to enhanced greenhouse effect 70%) from:
 - the burning of fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas to create energy to make electricity and to produce fuel for transport; and,
 - the clearing and burning of vegetation.

- Release of methane (contributes 20%) from:
 - decomposition of waste in landfills
 - digestive processes of cattle and sheep
 - escape of natural gas
 - cultivation of rice and other agricultural processes

- Release of nitrous oxides (contributes 10%) from:
 - removing and burning of vegetation
 - emissions from some industrial processes
 - agricultural processes (e.g. using nitrogenous fertilisers)

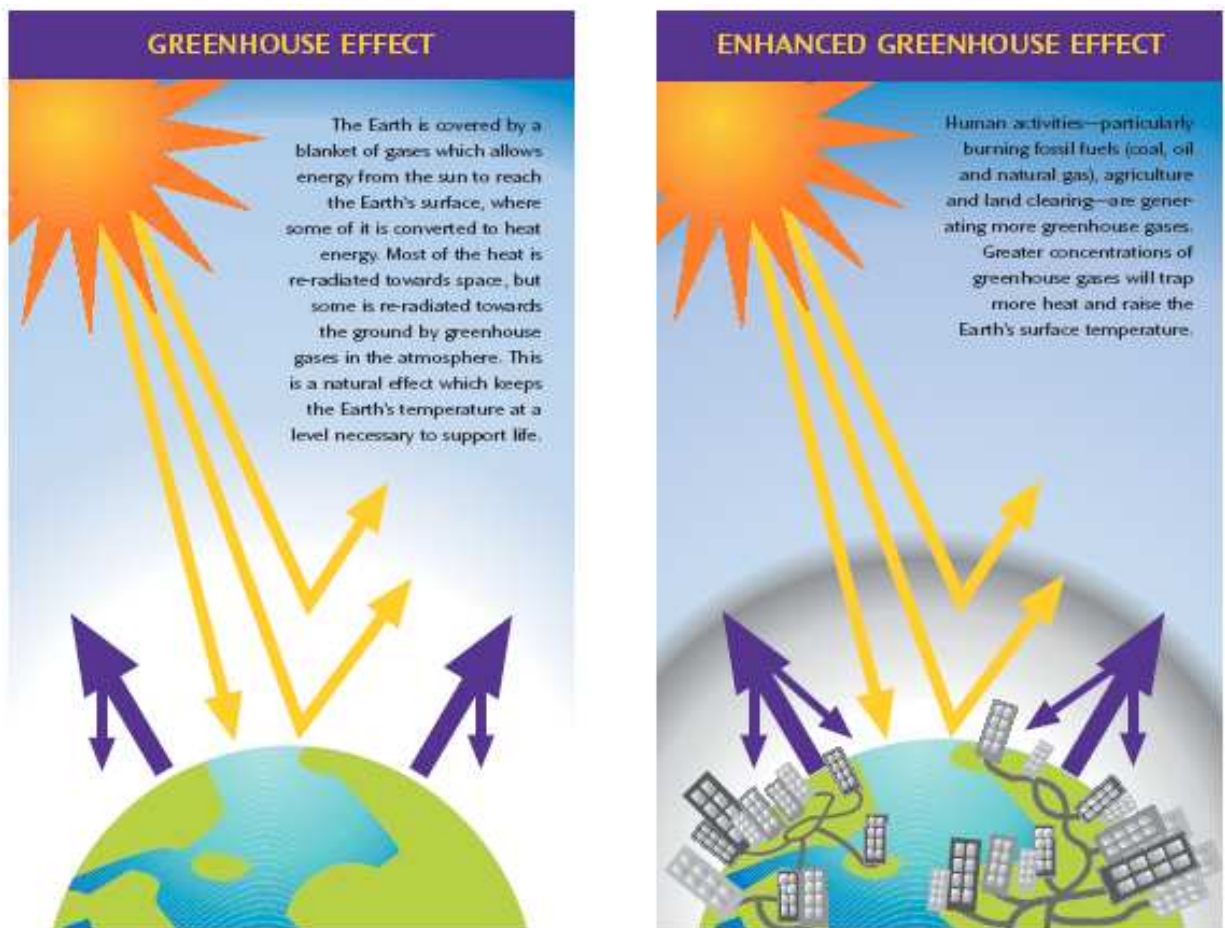


Figure 1: The Greenhouse and Enhanced Greenhouse Effect (Australian Greenhouse Office Climate Change Q & A, 2005)

Burwood's role in environmental sustainability

In order to bring the “local into the global” arena, Council joined the Cities for Climate Protection™ Australia Program in 2006 so that it could work towards reducing green house gas emissions and implementing environmental sustainability initiatives.

The Environment and Sustainability Committee

Council established a community based Environment and Sustainability Committee in November of 2008 with primary functions and objectives being:

- a. To provide advice to the Council on the implementation of Council's Green Action Plan (GAP) and producing the Sustainability Action Plan (SAP);
- b. To carry out and annual review of the implementation of the GAP and SAP;
- c. To evaluate and where possible, improve the efficiency of the existing programs in an ongoing capacity;
- d. To identify ways to educate the community and raise awareness of environmental and sustainability issues;
- e. To make recommendations to Council on environmental and sustainability strategies and issues.

The Committee has worked with the Council in developing a series of individual action plans and programs aimed at reducing the Council's carbon footprint and addressing sustainability issues across all areas of the environment. The plans are described in the Green Action Plan

Council previously prepared an annual State of the Environment Report to provide a report card on Council's environmental actions. This reporting method has now been changed by legislation with environmental actions and

plans now incorporated into the delivery plan and quarterly operational reports. There are also requirements for some of the plans to be reviewed and reported to the Office of Environment and Heritage as part of the Waste and Sustainability Improvement Payment (WaSIP) Program.

Council's Corporate Green Action Plan

Council has adopted and implemented a series of additional initiatives, plans and programs since the green action plan was originally adopted. The new initiatives, plans and programs include the following:

Environmental Scorekeeping

Council has engaged the services of an independent external company to provide an environmental scorekeeping service for Council. The company provides a managed data collection service for Council capturing information in relation to energy and water usage as well as fuel consumption and waste disposal activities.

The information can then be analysed and reported in such a manner that it shows how Council is performing in relation to reducing its environmental footprint and further is able to give an indication as to how Council is performing when compared with other similar sized organisations.

Council is provided with regular and timely reports which can be used as management tools to improve Councils environmental performance.

Waste and Sustainability Improvement Payment (WaSIP) Program

The Waste and Sustainability Improvement Payment Program is a program where the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) makes annual payments to Councils provided they comply with specific environmental and sustainability projects that are identified by the OEH. The funds that are distributed are from the waste levy that Council's pay for each tonne of waste that is delivered to registered landfill sites.

Sustainable Choice – Purchasing for Sustainability

Council has joined the Sustainable Choice program which is a sustainable procurement program for NSW Local Government. Sustainable Choice aims to increase the level of sustainable purchasing within the local government sector. Council has established a Committee to advance the cause of sustainable purchasing and Council also has environmental considerations and requirements when preparing and requesting contract tenders.

Sustainable Event Management Plan

Council has developed and adopted a Sustainable Event Management Plan. The Plan applies to all Council hosted events and events held in the Burwood LGA. The plan outlines requirements and expectation as to how events will be conducted and staged taking into consideration environmental and sustainability considerations.

Fleet Management Program

Council currently maintains a fleet of 38 light passenger vehicles which excludes the Community Services and Library Vans and the depot commercial vehicles and trucks.

Of the 38 passenger vehicles 26 are 4 cylinder and 12 are 6 cylinder vehicles.

Council conducted a review of its Motor Vehicle Policy in late 2011 with new Motor Vehicle Management Guidelines approved in November 2011.

As part of this review the list of vehicles that staff could choose from was also updated. Fuel efficient 6 cylinder vehicles and more 4 cylinder and diesel vehicles were included to the list so as to reduce fuel consumption.

Also, only vehicles listed on the NSW State Govt contract No. 653 are included and the Green Vehicle Guide was used to determine the vehicles environmental score which is based on measures to improve fuel consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Vehicles on the State Government Contract were selected on set criteria that meet the NSW Government's policy requirements. The criteria categories were: Fit for Purpose, Safety, Environmental Performance, Value of money, Australian made, Luxury tax limit.

Council has also applied for an Expression of Interest to add an All Electric Holden Commodore to the fleet.

Energy Savings Initiatives

Energy, specifically electricity consumption is the greatest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the Burwood Council LGA. Council is exploring options to become more energy efficient in daily operations and has already implemented initiatives to reduce the amount of energy consumed.

Planet Footprint has identified that 52.6% of emissions for Burwood Council are from energy.

During the 2011-12 reporting period Council implemented the following energy saving outcomes:

- ***Enfield Aquatic Centre***
 - Pool blankets were purchased in July 2011 to assist in reducing pollutants entering the pools, reducing chemical costs and usage, water evaporation and to assist in retaining heat thus reducing the energy output of the boiler and heat pump water heating system
 - The heating system has been reconfigured to work purely on an automated program which allows it to turn off once a set

point has been reached. In the past this mechanism was controlled by staff and there was potential to leave the heat on longer than necessary therefore wasting energy

- The Pool Manager is currently investigating options to improve the energy output of the heat pump which will include reducing the cold air flow into the intake and thus make the system more energy efficient
 - Shower timers have been installed in both the men's and women's change rooms to decrease shower times and excessive use of the hot water. Signage has also been erected to educate pool patrons to keep showers to a minimum
 - Whirly birds have been recently installed to reduce condensation in the change rooms. This will significantly reduce chemical usage in cleaning mould and also reduce energy used by the mechanical air exchange unit.
- ***Council Offices in Elsie Street***
 - Approximately 350 x T5 fluorescent light units have been installed to reduce energy consumption.

During the 2012-13 reporting year, Council will be conducting an energy audit of its main facilities with a view to further reducing energy consumption.

Solar Lighting



Council has installed solar lighting at Flockhart Park, Enfield and is currently investigating solar lighting for Henley Park.

Water Savings Action Plan

Council continues to implement its water savings action plan. Council has promoted government programs and initiatives offering rebates for water and energy savings in and around the home. The NSW Home Saver program (Part of the NSW Climate Change Fund) finished on 30 September 2011 with 899 rebates issued to residents in the Burwood LGA for the duration of the program. Rebates were issued for the following devices and features:

- Rainwater tanks
- Hot water systems
- Ceiling insulation
- Washing machines
- Dual flush toilets

Office Recycling

Council has in place recycling services at its major places of business. These include:

- Council Chambers
- Council Depot
- Burwood Library
- Enfield Pool and
- Wood stock House

The materials recycled include paper, cardboard, drink containers (glass, aluminium and paperboard) and toner cartridges.

Council's Community Green Action Plan

There are numerous programs and initiatives where Council is working with the Community to assist the residents of Burwood Council in reducing their impact on our environment.

The Built Environment

Council, through its Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plans (DCP) sets controls on new developments to ensure that environmental best practice features are applied in order to preserve and improve the environment.

Burwood Council has recently finalised its comprehensive LEP and DCP for the Burwood Local Government Area which places an emphasis on environmental management and Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) principles to be integrated into the development, and construction of new developments.

BASIX

BASIX is a NSW Government initiative to ensure homes being built are energy and water efficient. Each Development Application submitted for a residential dwelling or alterations and additions to existing residential properties must include a BASIX certificate.

BASIX is an online assessment tool allowing the operator to select from a range of options to ensure the NSW Government targets of a reduction in

greenhouse gas emissions compared with an existing dwelling are met. A certificate is issued upon completion of a BASIX assessment.

Details and further information on BASIX can be found at www.basix.nsw.gov.au

The Greening of Burwood

Council is committed to the Greening of Burwood through a range of policies and plans. It is acknowledged that the planting of trees contributes to a healthy community.

The instruments that Council has in place to promote the Greening of Burwood include:

- The Street Tree Management Strategy
- The Tree preservation order Policy
- The Landscaping Code and
- Best Practice Manual for Trees and Tree Roots.

Council adopted a 'Tree Vandalism Zero Tolerance Policy' in March of 2008. Council has rigidly enforced the Policy and has successfully prosecuted offenders through the Courts.

Sustainability Action Plan

The Treading Lightly sustainability program is an ongoing program whereby Council facilitates free workshops providing the community with the knowledge, skills and practical resources to reduce their impact on our planet.

Some of the workshop topics include:

- Organic Gardening – Pest & Disease Control
- Balcony Gardening

- Composting / Worm-farming
- Living with Less Chemicals
- Backyard Veggies
- Growing Herbs at Home

Council also provides some of the workshops in languages other than English to accommodate the linguistically diverse community.

Strategic Waste Action Plan

Council has prepared and adopted the Strategic Waste Action Plan to promote and encourage the diversion of waste from landfill sites. Decomposition of waste in landfill sites is a major generator of green house gases.

Council has several programs in place to assist in the diversion of resources which would otherwise be disposed of as waste to landfill sites. The programs include:

- A fortnightly comprehensive dry recycling service for items such as paper, cardboard, drink containers, glass containers, metal containers, plastic containers and aluminium cans.
- A fortnightly garden organics collection for materials such as lawn and grass clippings, small twigs and branches, leaves and flowers.
- Council provides 2 clean up services to every residence each year. The material that is collected is taken to a sorting facility where the useful material is removed for reuse or recycling.
- Two electronic waste (e-waste) collection days a year to recover electronic waste from the general waste stream.
- Council is a partner of the Love Food Hate Waste program which is coordinated by the Office of Environment and Heritage. The program provides information, advice and education in relation to the planning

purchasing and storing of household food. It aims to reduce the amount of food that is thrown away through poor household practices and planning. Council promotes the website and also issues media releases and information through the Mayoral Column from time to time.

- Council promotes the fridge buy back scheme for the removal of old working but inefficient fridges from households. The refrigerant or gas which is a green house gas is captured and recycled and the metal components are recycled.
- Council promotes the 'clean out' campaign sponsored by the NSW EPA. This is a service where residents can drop off chemicals and other items such as paint, oils, poisons, pesticides, gas bottles and fire extinguishers. The materials are disposed of using safe and sustainable methods.
- Council is a partner of the mobile muster telephone recycling scheme for mobile phones. A collection point is located at Council's Customer Service centre for mobile phones to be dropped off and recycled.
- Council continues to offer a free battery recycling program for residents. A collection point is located at Council's Customer Services for small batteries such as cameras, torches, toys, tools and appliances.
- Council provides ongoing education to school children through school workshops about good waste and recycling practices to encourage sustainable waste management from a young age.

Litter and Illegal Dumping Prevention Plan

Council has developed and adopted a Litter and Illegal Dumping Prevention Plan during 2011. The plan focuses on prevention, education,

implementation and enforcement. The Plan was endorsed by Council and approved by the Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) during 2010-11.

Council, on a quarterly basis produces media releases to the local papers regarding Illegal Dumping & Littering, advising residents on how to correctly have unwanted items collected through the clean-up services, drop off locations and the like.

Council's website also outlines information on illegal dumping and litter prevention and the Dob in a Dumper campaign.

Public Transport

The Burwood LGA has an extensive public transport network comprising of both regular train and bus services. Train stations are located at Croydon, Burwood and Strathfield, with all stations allowing commuters to travel easily across the Sydney metropolitan area. Public buses are also an easy option permitting residents to travel into the Burwood LGA Town Centres as well as to the greater Sydney area. Burwood Council encourages public transport use by providing facilities such as modern bus shelters for all bus stops where possible in order to provide cover from the elements and seating for users.

There are many advantages to choosing public transport, the greatest advantage being the reduction in the number of vehicles on the roads and therefore a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Other advantages of travelling on public transport include avoiding sitting in peak hour traffic, financial savings due to petrol prices constantly rising as well as the advantage of keeping fit by walking or cycling to and from train stations or bus stops.

Bike Path Network

Council has a network of bicycle paths throughout its local government area to promote bicycle riding as a legitimate form of transport and also promote health and fitness to the community. The Burwood cycleway network links important nodes within the Burwood LGA such as Croydon, Burwood and Strathfield train stations, Wangal and Henley Parks, including the Enfield Swimming Pool, and the Cooks River Shared Path which extends from the Princess Highway in Tempe through to Homebush Bay and Olympic Park.

Bike racks are provided along Burwood Council's cycleway network at locations where users can securely park their bicycle, encouraging residents to choose cycling for trips to their favourite destinations.

Council works with adjoining local government areas to ensure its bicycle network is coordinated and provides a practical connection to other cycle ways that connect to the greater Sydney metropolitan area.

Conclusion

The Green Action Plan seeks to deliver Council's commitment to the environment, through effective corporate and community actions. The document also conveys Council's interests in regard to:

- Enhancing, preserving and maintaining our local environment;
- Contributing to regional and national actions; and
- Increasing awareness and the importance of the community's contribution to reducing greenhouses gas emissions.

An important aspect in this Green Action Plan is the raising of the community's awareness. The community's response to Council's efforts and their ownership of 'every little action helps' is vital to ensure the Green Vision is a success.

The community based Environment and Sustainability Committee provides the key link between the Council and the community in developing, proposing and promoting environmental initiatives. The Committee has been active in developing many of the previously mentioned initiatives which have been successfully implemented.

It is important that regular updates of the various plans and programs are reported to Council to ensure that the Council and the community are kept informed and can take advantage or participate in the environmental initiatives that are in place or are available.

Council has the responsibility to work with and guide the community to improved environmental outcomes.

Council will continue to work with the community in investigating and considering initiatives and opportunities for the enhancement of the environment.

References

- Australian Greenhouse Office (2005) *Climate Change Science Q&A*, Department of the Environment & Heritage, Australian Government, Canberra.
- Environment and Sustainability Committee Constitution and Business Plan - Burwood Council November 2008
- Burwood Council (2007) Draft DCP Part No. 36 – Burwood Town Centre.
- ICLEI (www.iclei.org).