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CITY OF RYDE TO EXPLORE RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGETS UP TO 60% BY 2030

The City of Ryde will commission a report to determine how to transition towards greater renewable energy sources to power Council's facilities, in an effort towards lowering its greenhouse gas emissions.

At its ordinary meeting this week, Council resolved to investigate how a Renewable Energy Target could be mandated by June 2030, to ensure at least 60 per cent of electricity usage for which the City of Ryde is responsible for is delivered from renewable energy sources.

If determined that this is indeed possible, the increase in renewable energy would be derived from energy sources such as solar power, wind power and hydro power, and not sourced from electricity that is generated utilising coal.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said the report would investigate a range of areas including how it could achieve the 60 per cent target, the feasibility of setting such a target and the financial impact it would have, if any, on Council.

"Since a new Council was elected in 2017, we have led the way in improving the environment and delivering real action on climate change for the benefit of the local community both today and for generations to come," Cllr Laxale said.

"The Ryde community has told us that they want Council to take a leading role on environmental issues – such as tackling climate change – and exploring ways to increase the amount of energy we source from renewables achieves that community need.

"As outlined in our current 10 year Community Strategic Plan, 85 per cent of community members told us they were supportive of the City of Ryde becoming a natural and sustainable city, with environmental issues listed as the third most important priority in our community."

Cllr Laxale said Council would approach any Renewable Energy Target in a fiscally responsible way.

"There are some members on Council dragging their heels, claiming that investing in renewables and protecting the environment for future generations will increase costs, but this has shown to be a fallacy," Cllr Laxale said.

"These same people said the same thing when Council became one of the first local government authorities in Australia to divest its term portfolio from fossil fuel aligned financial institutions. Since this decision was made, Council's investment portfolio has performed strongly, with returns well above the benchmark."

The report into the Renewable Energy Target comes as the City of Ryde released new figures showing it reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 10 per cent in 2017/18 compared to emissions in 2016/17.

In July 2018, the City of Ryde completed the installation of a new solar power system at Eastwood Hall, which will offset an estimated quarter of the building's annual consumption, while a solar harvesting system has also been introduced at North Ryde Library reducing consumption by over half.

In addition, the largest solar harvesting power station in the area has recently been installed at the Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre (RALC). This project has seen the installation of 826 solar panels on the RALC's roof, which will generate more than 300 kilowatts and save close to 660 equivalent tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year.

The City of Ryde has also become one of the first local government authorities in Australia to phase out single-use plastics and also joined the Cities Power Partnership, which is Australia's largest network of local councils tackling climate action.

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