MM18/19 ZERO LITTER TO RIVER BY 2030 FOR THE CITY OF RYDE - Mayor, Councillor Jerome Laxale

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The City of Ryde is committed to protecting the health of local waterways and downstream ocean by setting a 'zero litter to river' target by 2030. This target is aimed to be achieved by a range of initiatives across the city to reduce littering and its potential conveyance to downstream waterways during rainfall events.

Our rivers, oceans and waterways provide many benefits, including the air we breathe, climate regulation, food, recreation, and amenity. However, the amount of plastic in them is at crisis levels and needs immediate action.

Each year, at least eight million tonnes of plastics flow into the ocean – which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck every minute. If no action is taken, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050 – and, by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans by weight[1].

80% of plastic pollution in our ocean comes from land-based sources flowing through drains to our waterways and oceans via stormwater runoff. Urban stormwater runoff often also contains harmful levels of other less visible (but extremely damaging) pollutants, such as suspended solids, heavy metals, nutrients and bacteria. Stormwater is recognised as the key source of pollution in our urban waterways[2] and the vast majority of marine debris entering Australian waters is land-based and generated locally[3,4].

Existing Initiatives

The City of Ryde is actively working with members of our local community to address littering to help protect of our local flora and fauna and reduce the discharge of litter to our rivers and downstream waterways. To reduce the incidences of littering, the City of Ryde has taken several steps to educate the local community and encourage people to do the right thing and not litter.

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1 Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2017, *The New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future & Catalyzing Action*, https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/publications/NPEC-Hybrid_English_22-11-17_Digital.pdf

2 Melbourne Water, 2016, *Management of the ecological impacts of urban land and activities on waterways – Issues Paper: understanding the science*, https://www.clearwatervic.com.au/user-data/resource-files/2016_08-waterways-issues-paper-pub.pdf

3 Dr Britta Denise Hardesty, CSIRO, *Committee Hansard*, 26 February 2016, p. 1, https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id:%22committees/commsen/439759d8-696a-4708-b877-eaf069b0776f/0001%22;src1=sm1

4 Britta Denise Hardesty and Chris Wilcox, CSIRO, *Understanding the types, sources and at-sea distribution of marine debris in Australian waters*, https://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/pages/8ff786ed-42cf-4a50-866e-13a4d231422b/files/marine-debris-sources.pdf

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This includes the following:

- Installing public place recycling bins in highly transited areas
- Installing cigarette butt bins and decals directing smokers to bins
- Beautifying areas so that they are less likely to attract litter
- Installation and management of container deposit schemes
- Development and promotion of anti-littering murals, to remind people to do the right thing
- Development and distribution of educational material to combat littering
- Enforcement (including issuing warnings and fines for littering)

The City is also a key stakeholder in the development and implementation of the Master Plan for the Parramatta River to make the Parramatta River swimmable again by 2025[5].

Many 'Gross pollutant traps' (GPTs) are also owned and managed by the City of Ryde to provide stormwater treatment, with the remainder privately owned. These GPTs are similar to underground garbage bins that intercept 'gross pollutants' (defined as debris items larger than five millimetres, such as cigarette butts) within the stormwater drainage network during rainfall events. GPTs subsequently help prevent the discharge of pollution into downstream waterways, and can be large underground chambers or small 'gully baskets' (inserted into stormwater gully pits). Whilst GPTs are highly effective at removing gross pollutants, they also remove other pollutants such as sediment, heavy metals and bacteria.

Refer to photos below

'Zero litter to River' for the City of Ryde

The City of Ryde should set a goal of 'zero litter to river' by 2030. In technical terms, this means that, by 2030, there will be zero (or at least minimal) discharge of any 'gross pollutant' to any waterway (creek, river or harbour) during any rainfall event up to a 3-month rainfall (98.17% annual exceedance probability[6]) event.

Achieving this target will involve the following principal actions:

- Identify a sustainable source of funding for the appropriate implementation and management of principal and supplementary actions
- Rectification of selected existing stormwater treatment assets
- Installation of new stormwater treatment assets

[5] http://www.ourlivingriver.com.au/
[6] Explanation of rainfall probability terminology – http://www.bom.gov.au/water/designRainfalls/#sec1q5

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- Appropriate management of new and existing stormwater treatment assets.
- Develop appropriate policies to regulate privately owned and installed stormwater assets in the City of Ryde

Council's existing litter reduction strategies should also be continued (and, where appropriate enhanced) to assist in achieving the aforementioned target and reduce the 'workload' for existing and new stormwater treatment assets.

A zero waste to river target will prevent over 1500 tonnes of gross pollutants (over 25,000 standard 'wheelie bins' of pollution) entering downstream waterways and the ocean every year. A target will greatly assist in protecting the health of our waterways and oceans – and ultimately all of us.

Example photos of accumulated pollution inside a gross pollutant trap and gully basket are provided in Figure 2.

Figure 1 *Photo of pollution removed from eight gully baskets installed in a Western Sydney street for five (5) months*

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Figure 2 Example photos of pollution accumulated in a gross pollutant trap and gully basket

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That the City of Ryde endorses a 'Zero Litter to River' target across the entire LGA by 30 June 2030.

(b) That the General Manager, in consultation with Stormwater NSW, industry and environmental groups, prepare a report to be brought back to Council, prior to the 2020/2021 budget process, to demonstrate the best alternatives for how this target can be achieved including timeframes and budgets.

ATTACHMENTS
There are no attachments for this report.

Report Prepared By:

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Mayor