



BUSINESS PAPER

WORKSHOP MEETING

**Wednesday 29 June 2022
at 6:30pm**



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AGENDA AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Statement by the Chairperson:

"We recognise our Shire's rich cultural and religious diversity and we acknowledge and pay respect to the beliefs of all members of our community, regardless of creed or faith."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Statement by the Chairperson:

"Council recognises the Traditional Owners of the lands of Hornsby Shire, the Darug and GuriNgai peoples, and pays respect to their Ancestors and Elders past and present and to their Heritage. We acknowledge and uphold their intrinsic connections and continuing relationships to Country."

VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETING

Statement by the Chairperson:

"I advise all present that tonight's meeting is being video streamed live via Council's website and also audio recorded for the purposes of providing a record of public comment at the meeting, supporting the democratic process, broadening knowledge and participation in community affairs, and demonstrating Council's commitment to openness and accountability. The audio and video recordings of the non-confidential parts of the meeting will be made available on Council's website once the Minutes have been finalised. All speakers are requested to ensure their comments are relevant to the issue at hand and to refrain from making personal comments or criticisms. No other persons are permitted to record the Meeting, unless specifically authorised by Council to do so."

APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE

POLITICAL DONATIONS DISCLOSURE

Statement by the Chairperson:

"In accordance with Section 10.4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, any person or organisation who has made a relevant planning application or a submission in respect of a relevant planning application which is on tonight's agenda, and who has made a reportable political donation or gift to a Councillor or employee of the Council, must make a Political Donations Disclosure Statement."

If a Councillor or employee has received a reportable political donation or gift from a person or organisation who has made a relevant planning application or a submission in respect of a relevant planning application which is on tonight's agenda, they must declare a non-pecuniary conflict of interests to the meeting, disclose the nature of the interest and manage the conflict of interests in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct."

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors are reminded of their Oath or Affirmation of Office made under section 233A of the Act and their obligations under the Council's Code of Conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

Clause 4.16 and 4.17 of Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors requires that a councillor or a member of a Council committee who has a pecuniary interest in a matter which is before the Council or committee and who is present at a meeting of the Council or committee at which the matter is being considered must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting as soon as practicable. The disclosure is also to be submitted in writing (on the form titled "Declaration of Interest").

4.16 A councillor who has a pecuniary interest in any matter with which the council is concerned, and who is present at a meeting of the council or committee at which the matter is being considered, must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting as soon as practicable.

4.17 The councillor must not be present at, or in sight of, the meeting of the council or committee:

- a) at any time during which the matter is being considered or discussed by the council or committee, or*
- b) at any time during which the council or committee is voting on any question in relation to the matter.*

Clause 5.10 and 5.11 of Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors requires that a councillor or a member of a Council committee who has a non pecuniary interest in a matter which is before the Council or committee and who is present at a meeting of the Council or committee at which the matter is being considered must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting as soon as practicable. The disclosure is also to be submitted in writing (on the form titled "Declaration of Interest").

5.10 Significant non-pecuniary conflict of interests must be managed in one of two ways:

- a) by not participating in consideration of, or decision making in relation to, the matter in which you have the significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest and the matter being allocated to another person for consideration or determination, or*
- b) if the significant non-pecuniary conflict of interest arises in relation to a matter under consideration at a council or committee meeting, by managing the conflict of interest as if you had a pecuniary interest in the matter by complying with clauses 4.16 and 4.17.*

5.11 If you determine that you have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter that is not significant and does not require further action, when disclosing the interest you must also explain in writing why you consider that the non-pecuniary conflict of interest is not significant and does not require further action in the circumstances.

PETITIONS**PRESENTATIONS****RESCISSION MOTIONS****MAYORAL MINUTES****ITEMS PASSED BY EXCEPTION / CALL FOR SPEAKERS ON AGENDA ITEMS**Note:

Persons wishing to address Council on matters which are on the Agenda are permitted to speak, prior to the item being discussed, and their names will be recorded in the Minutes in respect of that particular item.

Persons wishing to address Council on **non agenda matters**, are permitted to speak after all items on the agenda in respect of which there is a speaker from the public have been finalised by Council. Their names will be recorded in the Minutes under the heading "Public Forum for Non Agenda Items".

GENERAL BUSINESS

- *Items for which there is a Public Forum Speaker*
- *Public Forum for non agenda items*
- *Balance of General Business items*

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER**Page Number 1**

Item 1 GM21/22 ADOPTION OF COUNCIL'S 2022-2026 DELIVERY PROGRAM INCLUDING THE OPERATIONAL PLAN 2022/23 (INCORPORATING THE BUDGET, RATING STRUCTURE AND FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2022/23)

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. Council note the responses provided in Table 1A to the public submissions received during the exhibition of the draft 2022-2026 Delivery Program and 2022/23 Operational Plan.
2. Subject to incorporation of the recommendations detailed in the Budget section, Table 1A and Table 1B attachments and marked up in Attachment 1 of General Manager's Report No. GM21/22, Council adopt the 2022-2026 Delivery Program and 2022/23 Operational Plan.
3. Council make and levy the 2022/23 Ordinary Rates on all rateable land in the Shire in accordance with Table 2 of General Manager's Report No. GM21/22.

4. Council make and levy the 2022/23 Catchments Remediation Rate on all rateable land in the Shire in accordance with either Table 3 of General Manager's Report No. GM21/22.
5. Council write to those who have made submissions in respect of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan thanking them for their feedback.

CORPORATE SUPPORT DIVISION

Nil

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DIVISION

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Item 2 CE10/22 APPROVAL FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the attendance of Dr Ana Rubio at the 59th Estuarine Coastal and Science Association Conference to present three papers on Council's management of the Lower Hawkesbury Estuary.

PLANNING AND COMPLIANCE DIVISION

Nil

INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAJOR PROJECTS DIVISION

Nil

PUBLIC FORUM – NON AGENDA ITEMS

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

MAYOR'S NOTES

NOTICES OF MOTION

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

MATTERS OF URGENCY

1 ADOPTION OF COUNCIL'S 2022-2026 DELIVERY PROGRAM INCLUDING THE OPERATIONAL PLAN 2022/23 (INCORPORATING THE BUDGET, RATING STRUCTURE AND FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2022/23)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Council's 2022-2026 Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2022/23 were adopted for public exhibition at the 13 April 2022 General Meeting. The draft documents were publicly exhibited from 14 April to 16 May 2022 and 66 submissions were received. Each submission was reviewed by Council staff and presented to Councillors at a briefing on 25 May 2022.
- Table 1A summarises all the submissions received and the staff feedback on each. Table 1B summarises administrative changes requested by internal Divisions of Council. It is proposed that the recommendations detailed in the Budget Section and the attached Tables 1A and 1B (further shown in the marked-up document in Attachment 1) be adopted by Council.
- Council's application to IPART for a permanent Additional Special Variation (ASV) to General Rates Income (i.e. from 0.7% to 2.28% for 2022/23) has been approved.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. Council note the responses provided in Table 1A to the public submissions received during the exhibition of the draft 2022-2026 Delivery Program and 2022/23 Operational Plan.
2. Subject to incorporation of the recommendations detailed in the Budget section, Table 1A and Table 1B attachments and marked up in Attachment 1 of General Manager's Report No. GM21/22, Council adopt the 2022-2026 Delivery Program and 2022/23 Operational Plan.
3. Council make and levy the 2022/23 Ordinary Rates on all rateable land in the Shire in accordance with Table 2 of General Manager's Report No. GM21/22.
4. Council make and levy the 2022/23 Catchments Remediation Rate on all rateable land in the Shire in accordance with either Table 3 of General Manager's Report No. GM21/22.
5. Council write to those who have made submissions in respect of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan thanking them for their feedback.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to provide Council with information and recommendations regarding the submissions received in the public exhibition of the 2022-2026 Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2022/23 (which incorporates the Budget, Fees and Charges and Rating Structure for 2022/23).

BACKGROUND

By 30 June in the year following local government elections, all councils are required to develop a ten-year Community Strategic Plan, a four-year Delivery Program and a one-year Operational Plan, as well as a Resourcing Strategy aligned to an integrated planning and reporting (IP&R) framework mandated by the Office of Local Government. The purpose is to identify the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the area and the resources required to move to the preferred future. The IP&R framework allows NSW councils to draw their various plans together, to understand how they interact and inform each other, to get the maximum benefit by planning holistically for the future. The Delivery Program and Operational Plan are required to be reviewed on an annual basis.

Your Vision | Your Future 2032, Hornsby Shire's Community Strategic Plan (CSP), a ten-year vision developed collaboratively with the community and our highest level plan, was endorsed on 8 June 2022. As well as identifying the main priorities and aspirations for the future of Hornsby Shire, it sets the strategic direction for where the people of Hornsby Shire want to be in 2032. Every project led by Council is guided by the Community Strategic Plan, however working towards the vision for 2032 is the responsibility of many partners including state agencies, community groups and private enterprise.

While there is a direct link from the CSP to the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, they must be informed and supported by long-term financial, asset and workforce planning undertaken to form the Resourcing Strategy.

The draft 2022-2026 Delivery Program including the Operational Plan 2022/23, Council's response to the Community Strategic Plan and its commitment to the community for its term of office, outlines Council's plan of action to address the community's long-term objectives.

At the General Meeting held on 13 April 2022, Council considered General Manager's Report No. GM13/22 and resolved that:

1. *Council adopt for public exhibition the draft 2022-2026 Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2022/23 which includes the draft Budget, Fees and Charges and Rating Structure for 2022/23 and make available for public comment from 14 April to 16 May 2022.*
2. *Council note the rating information contained in the draft 2022-2026 Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2022/26 aligns with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal's (IPART's) rate increase approval for NSW councils (i.e. a 0.7% rate increase for 2022/23).*
3. *In line with recently published IPART Guidelines, Council apply for a permanent Additional Special Variation (ASV) to General Income (i.e. from 0.7% to 2.28% for 2022/23) on the following basis:*
 - a) *The additional general income to be received by Council for the 2022/23 financial year as a result of such an ASV would be \$1.1 million.*
 - b) *The additional income is required to ensure the financial sustainability of Council's services and projects as detailed in General Manager's Report No. GM13/22 and Council's Long Term Financial Plan.*

- c) *Council has considered the impact of an ASV on ratepayers and the community in 2022/23 and future years and considers such impact to be reasonable in the circumstances.*
4. *Following public exhibition, and before 30 June 2022, a report be prepared which outlines any submissions received and recommends the adoption of the 2022-2026 Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2022/23, including Budget, Fees and Charges and Rating Structure which takes into account IPART's decision in respect of Council's ASV application.*

It is noted that at the 11 May 2022 General Meeting, Council received and noted the Asset Management Strategy and Workforce Plan and placed the 2022/23 – 2031/32 Long Term Financial Plan on public exhibition.

DISCUSSION

Consultation on the Documents

During the exhibition period from 14 April 2022 to 16 May 2022, the draft 2022-2026 Delivery Program including the draft Operational Plan 2022/23 and Fees and Charges 2022/23 were on display at Council's four libraries and Council Chambers reception area and were available electronically on the 'Have Your Say' page of Council's website. Advertisements advising of its availability were placed in the Council Column of four local newspapers, in a special e-newsletter sent to stakeholders (community and sporting organisations, schools, businesses, NSW Government agencies, Local Members of Parliament etc) (24,000 people), on the digital footbridge, in the weekly community engagement e-newsletter, on social media and in the May monthly e-newsletter sent to almost 28,000 subscribers.

Submissions

Sixty-six submissions were received during the formal exhibition period. Submissions have been categorised as below.

Relating to	Issues	Number of submissions received
Cobah Road, Arcadia	Include project in Local Roads Improvement (LRI) program to address safety issues	33
Crawford Road, Mount Kuring-gai	Project included in 2021-2022 Delivery Program and Operational Plan for construction in 2022/23. In the 2022-2026 Delivery Program pushed back to 2023/24	9
Western part of A Ward neglected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road maintenance • Bigger share of capital funding • Wisemans Ferry (roads/drainage, car park, play area, amenities) • Galston Village Public Domain taking too long • Maintenance of sidewalks around Dural 	8

Relating to	Issues	Number of submissions received
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory solar panels and hot water tanks on new units Take climate change seriously Hornsby Rifle Range noise and impact assessment Council's fleet vehicles and buildings, adequate charging infrastructure and education on benefits More trees in neighbourhoods 	5
Capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More spent on footpaths Improve bus shelters Brooklyn Wharf upgrade no longer in DPOP Malton Road, Beecroft Local Road improvement moved from 2022/23 to 2025/26 Village Green Beecroft outdated 	5
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic issues with increased housing Childcare centres imposed on residents Bushland and weed management around M2 Road and pedestrian safety Transparency of expenditure by locality and increases to Fees and Charges Car parking charges at Fagan Park Access to Dead Horse Bay Beach 	6

A summary of each submission is included in the attached Table 1A, with Staff recommendations / feedback shown in *italics*. Table 1B (attached) contains a summary of administrative changes requested by internal Divisions of Council. During the exhibition period there were further minor administrative changes made to improve clarity of the information contained in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan document.

The proposed final 2022-2026 Delivery Program including the Operational Plan 2022/23 (Attachment 1) shows recommended changes noted in red text. Attachment 2 is the proposed final Fees and Charges 2022/23.

Capital Projects

Council has prioritisation criteria in place for developing the capital works program for local roads which is a weighting system across many categories such as traffic volume, drainage, condition and strength, maintenance matters, kerb and gutter, resident requests, cost estimates. Recently, forecasting has been made more difficult due to increasing material costs, labour shortages and supply issues and Council reviewed its forward programs to forecast more realistically during the public exhibition period.

Amendments are proposed to the 2022/23 Local Road Improvement Program which include the postponement of Yirra Road, Mount Colah to 2023/24, and the inclusion of Stage one of Cobah Road, Arcadia in 2022/23.

The exhibited forward Local Roads Improvement Program was also reviewed resulting in the deletion of several projects. The remaining projects will be spread over the three-year period 2023/2026. Full details of the changes are included in Table 1B (attached).

Many of the Key Initiatives in the 2022-2026 Delivery Program are identified in strategies and technical documents that have been recently adopted by Council. These include:

- Sustainable Hornsby 2040 strategies (incorporating Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2021, Water Sensitive Hornsby Strategy 2021, Climate Wise Hornsby Plan 2021, Urban Forest Strategy 2021 and Waste Matters Strategy 2020)
- Hornsby Heritage Action Plan 2019
- Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020
- Local Housing Strategy 2020
- Community and Cultural Facilities Strategic Plan 2021
- Play Plan 2021
- Off Leash Dog Park Strategy 2021
- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy 2021
- Employment Land Use Study 2021
- Public Domain Guidelines 2021
- Car Parking Management Study 2020
- Walking and Cycling Plan 2021

One hundred and twelve of the 173 Key Initiatives included have been identified through these recently adopted strategies and technical documents.

Rates Structure

As noted in General Manager's Report No. GM13/22 considered by Council at the 13 April 2022 General Meeting, the Minister for Local Government, in response to financial sustainability concerns raised by the local government sector in respect of IPART's announcement of a historically-low rate peg of 0.7%, provided a one-off opportunity for councils to apply for an Additional Special Variation (ASV) for the 2022/23 financial year.

An application demonstrating Council's financial need for this one-off ASV was subsequently submitted to IPART and sought an increase of 2.28% (instead of 0.7%), noting that a 2.28% increase

was in line with projections contained in Council's previously adopted Long Term Financial Plan. On the 20 June 2022, IPART advised Council that its application for an increase of 2.28% had been approved. It would be fiscally responsible for Council to apply the 2.28% increase to Ordinary and Catchments Remediation rates in response to the budget challenges previously identified in General Manager's Report GM13/22.

The Ordinary and Catchments Remediation Rates tables (Tables 2 and Table 3 below) are based on a 2.28% rate increase and have been updated to reflect adjustments due to re-categorisation of properties and supplementary rates received since exhibition. This has affected the 'Rate in the \$ (based on land value)', '% of Total Rate', 'Yield \$' columns and the overall totals, increasing the total rates to be levied to \$75,890,088.

Table 2 – Ordinary Rates - based on a 2.28% increase

Category	Rate in the \$ (based on land value)	Minimum Rate (\$)	Base Amount (\$)	Base Amount (%)	% of Total Rate	Yield (\$)
Residential	0.105264		\$595	49%	87.16%	62,996,080
Farmland	0.088385		\$595	29%	0.88%	636,028
Business	0.359841	\$625			6.75%	4,878,641
Business (Hornsby CBD)	0.487535	\$625			3.44%	2,486,303
Business (Shopping Centre)	1.460226				1.77%	1,279,289
Total						72,276,342

Table 3 – Catchments Remediation Rate - based on a 2.28% increase

(N.B. There are no minimum or base amounts in respect of this rate)

Category	Rate in the \$ (based on land value)	Yield (\$)
Residential	0.010346	3,149,735
Farmland	0.006249	31,801
Business	0.019381	243,933
Business (Hornsby CBD)	0.024582	124,313
Business (Shopping Centre)	0.073011	63,964
Total		3,613,746

Total Rates to be Levied on a 2.28% increase \$75,890,088.

Rate Reductions for Eligible Pensioners

Eligible pensioners across NSW are entitled to a \$250 reduction in the ordinary rates and domestic waste management services. Details regarding the pensioner rebate are available in the Rating Information section of the 2022-2026 Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2022/23.

CONSULTATION

Council engaged its community in discussing a preferred future for the Shire which resulted in Council's first Community Strategic Plan being adopted in 2010. At the 8 June 2022 General Meeting, Council endorsed Hornsby Shire's Community Strategic Plan 2032, *Your vision | Your future 2032*, after detailed and valued input by over 15,000 stakeholders. The 2022-2026 Delivery Program and Operational Plan 2022/23 (which incorporates the Budget, Fees and Charges and Rating Structure for 2022/23) respond to the Community Strategic Plan, *Your Vision | Your Future 2032*, as well as a significant number of new strategies and technical documents recently adopted by Council, and have been prepared after detailed discussions with relevant staff, consideration by Council and public exhibition of draft proposals from 14 April to 16 May 2022. Councillors received several briefings on the contents of the draft documents on 2 March, 23 March and 25 May 2022.

BUDGET

The publicly displayed draft Budget for 2022/23 included an estimated surplus of \$1.791 million and was developed in line with Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) parameters which had a focus on the continuance of current service levels.

Council's application for a one-off ASV has been approved with the surplus increasing by a further \$1.117 million (General Fund Rates) to a total projected surplus of \$2.908 million for the 2022/23 financial year. Such a projected surplus is essential to respond to budget shocks such as:

- Construction and supply chain issues resulting in significant cost escalation across capital projects which place pressure on existing budgets
- Natural disasters requiring a timely response from Council such as the severe weather events experienced in February and March of this year needing major pothole and drainage repairs. The amount required for these repairs have not been finalised, however, will be addressed at a quarterly budget review.
- Cost shifting from other tiers of government and statutory levies that exceed reasonable CPI based increases
- The finalisation of an external independent assessment of major asset classes being Roads, Drainage, Buildings and Open Space identifying in excess of \$3 million per annum needed to maintain these assets at a reasonable condition.
- Potential changes released in a draft report by IPART into the review of Domestic Waste Management Services that if approved may result in a significant financial impost on Council's budget estimated at \$2.3 million.
- Projected annual deficits identified in Council's revised Long Term Financial Plan

The potential budget shocks identified above demonstrate the need for prudent financial management over the 2022/23 financial year and the financial risk to a projected surplus in any one year.

It is noted that over the four-year period of the Delivery Program, there are forecast operating deficits when maintaining the normal continuance of services to the level that the community has come to expect. These operating deficits are prior to the consideration of an identified asset management gap as reported in Council's 2022/23 Revised Long Term Financial Plan and Asset Management Strategy 2022/23 (refer to Director's Report No. CS33/22 presented to the 11 May 2022 General Meeting).

As a consequence of the forecast decline in Council's financial position, a range of actions are recommended in the revised Long Term Financial Plan in an attempt to improve Council's future

financial sustainability. A Special Rate Variation (SRV) is recommended in the first instance because of the quantum of funds required to provide balanced budgets. Other funding initiatives such as the generation of additional income from increases to user fees and charges should also be explored and implemented wherever possible to potentially reduce the size of a special rate variation required.

It is noted that a number of briefings will be held with Councillors during the 2022/23 financial year to progress an SRV, to address the asset management funding gap, other strategic initiatives and declining financial capacity in future years. As a consequence, it was considered appropriate that the Delivery Program document attached to this Report note the decline in financial capacity over the four-year period and the need for Council to consider the submission of a SRV to ensure delivery of services and activities planned in a fiscally responsible manner into the future.

POLICY

The Delivery Program is Council's principal instruction to the organisation and the underlying annual Operational Plans allocate resources and contain the detail on what will be done to implement the Delivery Program.

CONCLUSION

The 2022-2026 Delivery Program including the Operational Plan 2022/23, incorporating the Budget and Fees and Charges for 2022/23, encompass the Key Initiatives and the levels of service to be provided to the community in a prudent and financially viable manner. Once adopted, the 2022-2026 Delivery Program including the Operational Plan 2022/23, and the Fees and Charges 2022/23 documents will be available electronically on Council's website and distributed in hard copy to Councillors and key staff.





RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

The officers responsible for the preparation of this Report are the Chief Financial Officer – Duncan Chell and the Acting Manager, Strategy and Place – Julie Ryland, who can be contacted on 9847 6822 and 9847 6773, respectively.

GLEN MAGUS
Director - Corporate Support
Corporate Support Division

STEVEN HEAD
General Manager
Office of the General Manager

Attachments:

1.  Attachment 1 - 2022-2026 Delivery Program including the Operational Plan 2022/23
2.  Attachment 2 - Fees & Charges 2022/23
3.  Table 1A - Public Submissions
4.  Table 1B - Staff submissions

File Reference: F2022/00059

Document Number: D08413662

2 APPROVAL FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Approval is sought for Dr Ana Rubio, Environmental Scientist – Estuaries to attend the 59th Estuarine Coastal and Science Association Conference in San Sebastian, Spain from the 5th to the 8th of September, 2022.
- Dr Rubio has authored three papers which will be presented at the conference. Acceptance of three presentations by an international panel of reviewers is a significant achievement which demonstrates Dr Rubio's and Council's leadership in estuary management.
- Upon return, Dr Rubio will prepare a report for Council summarising learnings from the conference, relevant projects that may be implemented and recommend potential changes to our current management of the Hawkesbury estuary. In addition, information sessions will be provided to Council staff and the six partner Councils involved in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Coastal Management Program and other interested community groups.
- As an employee of Council, Dr Rubio is well regarded by her colleagues and the community she serves. Attendance at the conference will recognise and show appreciation for her outstanding and long commitment to improving our waterways through capital works, research, education and planning initiatives she has implemented.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the attendance of Dr Ana Rubio at the 59th Estuarine Coastal and Science Association Conference to present three papers on Council's management of the Lower Hawkesbury Estuary.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek approval of Natural Resources' Environmental Scientist, Dr Ana Rubio to attend the international 59th Estuarine Coastal and Science Association conference in San Sebastian, Spain from 5 to 8 September 2022. This conference will bring together a global multi-disciplinary community of researchers, educators and practitioners to address issues of outstanding importance in the science (both natural and social) and management of estuaries. Through Dr Rubio's participation, Council will gain reputational and knowledge benefits and will further acknowledge the significant contributions of Dr Rubio in improving and protecting the Shires waterways.

BACKGROUND

Hornsby Shire Council is well known for its leadership in proactively managing the Lower Hawkesbury River and its associated waterways. Dr Ana Rubio has been a significant contributor to this success and reputational outcome for Council.

Over many years Dr Rubio has implemented innovative approaches to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Hawkesbury. Our success is due largely to Ana's professional network and keen pursuit to maintain current and relevant scientific knowledge to inform estuary management within the Shire. As an example of Dr Rubio's standing in the regional and international community, she was selected to present online to the International Resilient Cities Asia Pacific Conference 2022 on behalf of Resilient Sydney, a consortium of all metropolitan Councils, due to quality of the project (*Propagating mangroves to mitigate degradation from Environmental stresses*) and its international applicability.

Into the future, and to maintain Council's leadership, there are new and growing challenges that Council will need to address. In particular, the Hawkesbury estuary is already facing multiple pressures from human activities resulting in aquatic habitat and biodiversity loss, land use development and urbanisation, introduction of new invasive species, input of different types of pollutants in addition to the overarching effects of global change which is dramatically modifying the structure and functioning of estuarine systems. In order to address these challenges, there is a need to implement appropriate management measures that are rooted in the best scientific knowledge available. Attendance at this conference will aid and equip Council with the knowledge and networks to address these challenges.

DISCUSSION

Dr Ana Rubio has authored three papers which have been accepted for presentation at the conference. These papers address emerging issues and will show case the work of Council to an international audience and are titled;

- 'Supporting the Hawkesbury River oyster industry through a lens of a local council' (D08422773)
- 'Learnings from 20 years of estuarine management in the Hawkesbury estuary– an east coast Australian case study' (D08422775)
- 'Conceptualising Digital Twins as a potential tool to inform managers of estuaries.' (D08422776)

In presenting these papers and attending the conference both Council and the community will benefit from the information presented on the latest issues of outstanding importance in the science and

management of estuaries. At the conference, the following subjects will be of most relevance to Council and the Lower Hawkesbury estuary management program.

- Impact of extreme events on coastal systems
- Monitoring using latest technology on coastal ocean observing systems
- Understanding the effects of land use change and hydrological regulations
- Learning from decision support tools and approaches for sustainable marine and coastal spatial planning used elsewhere
- Assessing marine ecosystem services in particular mangroves, saltmarsh and seagrasses

Upon the return of the Environmental Scientists -Estuaries, a report will be prepared for Council summarising learnings from the conference, relevant projects that we might be able to implement and recommending potential changes to our current management of the Hawkesbury estuary. In addition, information sessions will be provided to the Natural Resources team and the 6 partner Councils involved in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Coastal Management Program and other interested community groups.

Attending this conference will be a rare opportunity to learn from challenges occurring in other estuaries around the world that will result in innovative management solutions to the Hawkesbury. The conference will also offer the unique opportunity to network with academic scientists, researchers, practitioners and educators worldwide. Further, affording Dr Rubio attendance at the conference would acknowledge her exceptional contribution to Council's estuary management program.

BUDGET

Item	Cost	Source
Conference registration cost	\$840 inc GST (early Registration prior 24th June, ECSA Members) \$1,320 inc GST (Late registration)	Conference website
Airfare Sydney-Madrid	\$2,500-\$3,200 return	Web searches (Qatar/Emirates)
Train Madrid-San Sebastian	\$150	Web searches
Accommodation – 4 nights	\$800	Web search (Booking.com)
Total	\$4,800 inc GST	

POLICY

This Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Council's Interstate and Overseas Travel Determination.

CONCLUSION

Council's endorsement is sought for Dr Ana Rubio, Environmental Scientist – Estuaries to attend the 59th Estuarine Coastal and Science Association Conference in San Sebastian, Spain from the 5th to the 8th of September, 2022. Dr Rubio has authored three papers which will be presented at the conference. Acceptance of three presentations by an international panel of reviewers is a significant

achievement which demonstrates Ana's and Council's leadership in estuary management. Upon return, Dr Rubio will prepare a report for Council summarising learnings from the conference, relevant projects that may be implemented and recommend potential changes to our current management of the Hawkesbury estuary. In addition, information sessions will be provided to Council staff and the six partner Councils involved in the Hawkesbury-Nepean Coastal Management Program and other interested community groups. As an employee of Council, Dr Rubio is well regarded by her colleagues and the community she serves. Attendance at the conference will recognise and show appreciation for her outstanding and long commitment to improving our waterways through capital works, research, education and planning initiatives she has implemented.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

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Attachments:

There are no attachments for this report.

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