

**Newcastle Greens Policy on
A protected and enhanced environment**
Protect what we have, reduce what we consume and act for the future



Newcastle Greens believe that by adopting a smarter approach to the management of waste, by looking after and rejuvenating our natural and productive environment, and by changing the way we use energy, the citizens of Newcastle can avoid the risk of:

- Ever-increasing levels of consumption coupled with ever-increasing quantities of waste, meaning an ever-increasing cost to Council and the community;
- A reduction of biodiversity, an increase of weeds and pest species, and damage to the eco-system (such as our edible marine life);
- A lack of food security, increased economic and environmental costs of food production, and a disconnected community; and
- Rising sea levels, more extreme weather events, and increased frequency of flooding.

Newcastle Greens believe that we have a shared responsibility for the stewardship of our inherited planet, and that we must leave it in a better state for future generations.

Taking action now will benefit the community by:

- Reducing the environmental, social and economic impacts of waste;
- Ensuring that our native and indigenous eco-system thrives and continues to sustain us;
- Making food more affordable and sustainable, at the same time as strengthening community connections; and
- Combating the local effects of human-induced climate change.

Newcastle Greens believe that the sooner we take collective action, the better prepared we will be for the challenges ahead.

Newcastle Greens will work to:

Support a 25% reduction in waste disposal to landfill each year, resulting in a 95% reduction in waste disposal over the next 10 years by:

- Ensuring that Council conducts regular waste audits in order to develop and maintain an integrated waste management strategy that follows world's best practice.
- Initiating Council support and rewards for local businesses and institutions that actively seek to reduce or eliminate waste associated with their products and services.
- Creating formal commercial Council agreements with organisers of community events (such as concerts) to ensure the collection and recycling of waste associated with the event.
- Achieving the introduction of a state-wide (or nation-wide) container deposit scheme.
- Reducing the use of PET and single use water bottles within the Local Government Area.
- Easing the responsibility of disposing of waste that is not currently taken in fortnightly Council kerbside collections.
- Ensuring a more active and effective role for Council in community waste education to promote waste reduction.
- Establishing and promoting Newcastle as a 'plastic bag free' city.

Make ecological sustainability central to planning and management such that our local and regional environment remains protected and productive by:

- Increasing the number of indigenous flora plantings in our streets, and developing an appropriate target for an urban forest policy for every suburb in the City.
- Protecting land with high conservation values in perpetuity and reducing environmentally unsound development practices.
- Rehabilitating bushland and addressing weeds and other feral species, in a way that supports community groups to maintain and restore natural areas.
- Creating and maintaining biological connections between areas such as Blackbutt Reserve and other remnant bushland areas.
- Restoring the natural waterways and improving their environmental management.
- Ensuring that Council uses pesticides responsibly and that weed management is consistent across the Lower Hunter including implementing the Regional Weeds Strategy.
- Establishing air quality monitoring including fine particulates at key positions and acting on the data provided.

Develop a policy and strategy to support community connections regarding food production and consumption by:

- Promoting and supporting start-up and ongoing maintenance of community gardens, for example by providing land, materials and information.
- Promoting and supporting the establishment of local food co-ops across the City.
- Encouraging the development of our streets as a potential food growing area and our parks as orchards.

Develop and implement a plan of action to deal with greenhouse gas emissions and the climate crisis this is causing by:

- Developing a risk management strategy that relates to greenhouse gas emissions that aims for the Council to be a zero carbon emitter and addresses:
- Monitoring of emissions from Council and the community and identifies the major culprits.
- Reduction of emissions through the efficient use of energy.
- Switching to alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind power
- Reviewing performances and calibrating strategies to meet carbon-cutting commitments.
- Investing in carbon offsets such as alternative energy sources, forests and other forms of carbon sequestration initiated both by Councils and by other organisations in the region.