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# Ordinary Council Meeting Supplementary Business Paper

Tuesday 22 October 2024



## **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING – SUPPLEMENTARY BUSINESS PAPER**

Notice is hereby given that an Ordinary Council meeting of Randwick City Council will be held in the Council Chamber, 1st Floor Randwick Town Hall, 90 Avoca St Randwick on Tuesday, 22 October 2024 at 7:00pm

### **Additional Mayoral Minutes**

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## Mayoral Minute No. MM49/24

**Subject: Council's response to the tar balls coastal pollution incident**

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### Motion:

That Council note and commend the work undertaken by Council staff over the past week to effectively manage the 'tar balls' coastal pollution incident.

### Background:

This past week our LGA has been the subject of a significant pollution incident as 'tar balls' have been found washed ashore along the length of the Randwick City coast. The incident has received significant metropolitan and national media coverage with Randwick Council in the spotlight as we investigated and developed an appropriate safe collection, removal and disposal procedure. Our community is rightfully very protective of our beautiful coastal marine environment and this pollution incident has been deeply concerning for everyone.

Randwick Council Lifeguards first identified thousands of small, ball-shaped debris washed onto Coogee Beach in the afternoon of Tuesday 15 October 2024.

Council staff acted quickly to close the beach as a precaution to protect public safety while samples were taken and sent for testing. The NSW Environment Protection Authority and Beach Watch was immediately notified. Council engaged an expert occupational hygienist and a specialist waste removal contractor.

Council staff worked closely with the NSW EPA to develop an appropriate procedure for the safe manual collection, handling and disposal of the pollution material, while awaiting test results to arrive. Preliminary test results from samples taken by Council's Environmental Health Officers were received on Wednesday afternoon confirming the presence of hydrocarbon. Hydrocarbons are the chief components of petroleum-based products and its presence confirmed that the material is likely a phenomena known as 'tar balls'. In the late afternoon, Council received the go-ahead from the NSW EPA to commence the removal of the debris on Coogee following an agreed safe work method statement developed in partnership with the EPA.

On Wednesday, ball-shaped debris was also found washed up on Gordon's Bay Beach and Council officers closed this beach. Council staff commenced discussions with the presidents of local Surf Life Saving clubs, NSW Surf Life Saving and the Eastern Beaches Local Area Command.

The cleanup continued on Thursday 17 October 2024 at Coogee Beach.

Proactive inspections by Council officers on Thursday identified more beaches affected by the debris and Council made the decision to close Clovelly Beach and the northern part of Maroubra Beach based upon the quantities being found and the unknown risk to the public.

Waverley Council announced they were closing Bondi, Tamara and Bronte Beaches on 17 October. Due to the expanding nature of the incident and additional debris being found, Transport for NSW Maritime held a media conference at Coogee Beach on Thursday 17 October 2024. They announced they were taking responsibility for coordination of the incident and were controlling the incident on behalf of NSW Government and other agencies. They stood up their State Maritime Incident Coordination Centre at Maritime Head Office in Rozelle and appointed an Incident Controller to coordinate the response.

At the media conference, the NSW EPA said the material is 'quite unusual' being very fibrous and different in texture. They said their laboratory testing confirmed, 'similar to Council's testing', that the material has a hydrocarbon base and that further chemical analysis was being undertaken to determine its origin and type. Following this media announcement, Council was in direct contact with the lead Incident Controller and staff attended briefings and shared information directly with the Incident Coordination Centre.

On Friday 18 October 2024, Council also closed Malabar Beach and the remainder of Maroubra Beach and South Maroubra beach due to debris found during early morning inspections. This brought to five beaches the total number of beaches closed. Council convened an urgent meeting with the presidents of Coogee, Maroubra, Clovelly and South Maroubra Surf Life Saving clubs as well as Eastern Suburbs Local Area Command and Surf Life Saving NSW to discuss different options for weekend management of the beaches should the incident continue.

Late on Friday 18 October 2024, Transport for NSW Maritime issued a media release releasing the results of testing and advice from NSW EPA. They advised that “Based on advice from the EPA, we can now confirm the balls are made up of fatty acids, chemicals consistent with those found in cleaning and cosmetic products, mixed with some fuel oil. They are not harmful when on the ground, but should not be touched or picked up. Based on health advice, the media release said the substance is ‘not highly toxic to humans’ and that the beaches are safe to reopen for the weekend. Following this advice, Council announced plans to reopen the beaches on the weekend.

Council crews continued to inspect the beaches at first light on Saturday and Sunday to locate any additional debris washed ashore and to arrange for its collection and disposal. The quantity of material found on the weekend was low and Council proceeded with the plan to reopen all beaches.

Status	Beach	Tar balls found	Trend
OPEN	<b>Coogee</b>		
	Wednesday	2,500	
	Thursday	1,000	Decrease
	Friday	125	Decrease
	Saturday	50	Decrease
	Sunday	80	Steady
OPEN	<b>Clovelly</b>		
	Thursday	800	
	Friday	100	Decrease
	Saturday	20	Decrease
	Sunday	35	Steady
OPEN	<b>North Maroubra</b>		
	Friday	2,000	
	Saturday	40	Decrease
	Sunday	50	Steady
OPEN	<b>South Maroubra</b>		
	Friday	1,000	
	Saturday	60	Decrease
	Sunday	50	Steady
OPEN	<b>Malabar</b>		
	Friday	800	
	Saturday	150	Decrease
	Sunday	185	Steady

Table: Numbers of ball-shaped debris identified by Council officers.

**Relevant media statements:**

- 15 Oct – Randwick Council  
[Coogee Beach closed after unknown debris found washed ashore](#)
- 16 Oct – Randwick Council  
[Clean up commences at Coogee and Gordons Bay beaches as mysterious debris identified](#)
- 17 Oct – Randwick Council  
[More Sydney beaches close after further ball-shaped debris discovered](#)
- 18 Oct – Randwick Council  
[All Randwick City beaches reopen for swimming in time for the weekend](#)

**Conclusion:**

The pollution incident at Coogee Beach was a challenging environmental issue.

Council staff acted upon the best advice available at the time to protect public safety and our precious marine environment. Council worked in partnership with the NSW Government and their various agencies including NSW Maritime, Transport for NSW, NSW Ports, NSW EPA and the Eastern Beaches Local Area Command.

The substantial metropolitan, national and international media coverage generated by this incident demonstrates the extraordinary public interest and focus our organisation was under last week.

I would like to sincerely thank and commend the many Council staff who worked on this issue for their considered and professional approach to managing such a complex and evolving situation.

**Attachment/s:**

Nil

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**Submitted by:** The Mayor, Cr Dylan Parker

**File Reference:** F2020/00216

## Mayoral Minute No. MM50/24

**Subject: Additional Financial Assistance and Donations - September - October 2024**

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### **Motion:**

That Council donate plants from Council's Nursery to the value of \$500 to be funded from the 2024-25 Contingency Fund to Coogee Public School P & C Trivia Night to raise funds for their centenary playground equipment upgrades. This amount is consistent with the previous year.

### **Background:**

#### **Plant donation to Coogee Public School P & C Trivia Night**

Please note this is a late request.

Coogee Public School will be having their annual trivia night on Friday 1 November 2024 to raise funds for their centenary playground equipment upgrades, which supports Childrens' learning with items that teachers would otherwise have to self-fund.

They are currently sourcing prizes for the trivia night and have requested a donation of plants from Council's Nursery towards their winning teams, raffle and silent auction.

### **Source of funding:**

The financial implications to Council will be \$500 funded from the 2024-25 Contingency Fund.

### **Attachment/s:**

Nil

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**Submitted by:** The Mayor, Cr D Parker

**File Reference:** F2024/06574



## Mayoral Minute No. MM51/24

**Subject:** Request for Financial Donation - La Perouse Men's Cultural Camp

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### Motion:

That Council donate \$4000.00 to the La Perouse United Men's Fishing Group to support the Men's Cultural Camp.

### Background:

The La Perouse United Men's Fishing Group is holding their annual La Perouse Men's camp at Bittangabee Bay on the NSW South coast. The camp runs from the 6<sup>th</sup> November to the 20<sup>th</sup> November this year, and will be attended by between 30 – 40 local men. This camp has been a tradition with the La Perouse Community dating back to the 1960's, with only the pandemic outbreak interrupting the annual succession of consecutive camps.

The camps bring the local men of La Perouse together for 2 weeks each year in a setting that is far removed from the busy urban setting of day-to-day life. The camp enables the men to get away to experience traditional cultural connection and is important for the wellbeing of local La Perouse Aboriginal men. The camp is primarily a cultural fishing camp, where the men can do and re-live some of the things that they were once able to do closer to home but can longer do due to the impacts of so many fishers, along with environmental issues.

In recent times there has been a notable drop off with some of the older men, who have been regulars for multiple decades. This is due to difficulties associated with their advanced ages including transporting camping items, setting up tents as well as the cost of food essentials, which have all put the camp a little out of reach for them. Over the last few months there has been feedback that if there was more accessible accommodation close to the camping area then they would be able to attend again.

A donation of \$4000.00 would go towards providing accessible accommodation for elders, as well as some food for the duration of the camp. There are approximately 9 elders ranging in age from late 60's to mid 80's. The camp attracts community aging from 17 to 60, who will be camping alongside the elders.

This is an important cultural activity worth supporting.

Due to the timing of this request it is being requested via the Mayor's Contingency Fund. The Director Community & Culture has advised that this would meet eligibility through the grants criteria should it have been submitted during an open grant round.

### Source of funding:

The financial implication to Council will be \$4000.00 funded from the 2024-25 Contingency Fund.

### Attachment/s:

Nil

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**Submitted by:** The Mayor, Cr Dylan Parker

**File Reference:** F2024/00143