

PROTECTION OF NARRABEEN LAGOON CATCHMENT

Name/s	Ward	Party/Group
Conny Harris Steve Baldwin Jayden Walsh	Narrabeen	Independent

1. Do you think that the protection of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment is a high priority for the region? How valuable is biodiversity in this area?

The protection of Narrabeen Lagoon and its catchment is of very high priority and significance for this region. The bushland in the catchment has revealed to be of extraordinary biodiversity and many areas have not ever been adequately surveyed. The area currently provide critical habitat, essential for threatened species such as the Eastern Pygmy Possum, Greater Sooty Owl and Giant Burrowing Frog, and core habitat, which allows our more common species like Swamp Wallabies, Long-nosed Bandicoots and less common species like Short-beaked Echidnas and Superb Lyrebirds to breed, forage for food and move across the whole Northern Beaches. Added to this is the value of the lagoon itself. It is our healthiest lagoon on the Northern Beaches, allows for swimming and fishing. - Both of these assets, the bush and the lagoon, are a huge attraction and their existence not only provides natural services, like cleaning water and filtering the air, they also attract many people to travel here and create and sustain businesses.

2. What measures can you as a Councillor take to ensure that the remaining bushland in the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment is protected from urban development?

Work to get the 'deferred lands' zoned as 'environmental protection' E2 (E3) and ensure other development in the catchment is appropriate and environmentally sustainable. Especially the Ingleside area requires careful monitoring, more and adequate biodiversity studies to ensure Threatened species will be protected and wildlife corridors will be adequate in retaining the movement of fauna from Ku-ring-gai Chase NP into the Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment.

3. In the last three years the Narrabeen Lagoon and some of the adjoining lands have been made a 'State Park' where Council is represented on the Management Committee. What would you do to expand the State Park and what would you do to ensure the State Park is managed with an adopted plan?

Continue the process already commenced by the administrator to look for additional parcels of land for inclusion and activate the tax deductible donation fund for buying back environmentally sensitive land to have money available. Regarding the plan of management, I believe council can only urge the State government to prepare this plan and offer help. As Dr Conny Harris is the environmental community representative on the Narrabeen Lagoon State Park Advisory Committee, we know discussions regarding this plan have commenced and the old plans prepared by the Crown are considered as foundation documents.

4. Do you think environmental protection should be retained as a key land use objective for non-urban land in Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment?'
100% agreement.

5. What do you think your Council could do to provide incentives for landowners to conserve natural bushland on their properties?

Offer advice or in selected cases on ground help with protection of bushland. Education about threatened, less common and frequently encountered native species as well as invasive weeds and exotic fauna species has been neglected in the last decade, we believe this needs to become more available again. Also to help landowners, who are prepared to commit to protection of their bushland assistance to get formalities sorted, which than if successful will lead to them getting a land tax release or reduction from the Government, On top of this an added rate reduction for conservation land could be implemented.

6. In what ways would you as a Councillor influence your council to arrange funding for bush regeneration in the catchment of Narrabeen Lagoon?

Firstly ask bush regenerators to invite Councillors to their patch and inspect and perhaps even participate in their work (very good for stressed minds!) - Move a motion to get funding for this allocated. Review progress of bush regeneration projects more frequently and have close ties to community members involved for feedback and be aware of needs and special cases e.g. post fire weed control.

7. There are a number of worthy volunteer community organizations like *Friends of Narrabeen Lagoon Catchment* that desire the support of Council. How would you propose Council work more effectively with *Friends* and other community groups?

Keep and extend existing services such as advice, insurance, training programs. A grant program to encourage community involvement would be extremely beneficial to the community. Extend weed eradication days to all of the Northern Beaches. Facilitate community input via Strategic Reference Groups and ensure that regular contact is maintained by Community groups and Councillors either through direct bimonthly meetings or phone conversations in order to actually hear the desired outcomes of community groups. Council could aim to have a yearly or biannual forums rather than just a Christmas feast for bush regenerators.

8. Illegal land clearing is a problem in the Northern Beaches – what actions would you pursue as a Councillor to provide more adequate penalties for offenders and more authority and resources to Council staff to prevent illegal land clearing and enforce compliance with laws, plans and conditions of consent?

Difficult question, as council is bound in its actions by State government. For example private certifiers are a great problem with their dependence on developers and their authority to allow and in retrospect consent to variations from proposed plans. Penalties again are set by State Government and certainly do not deter

developers to destroy their bushland illegally. So all Council can do is send rangers and ask destroyers to stop work, hope they will and lobby the State Government for changes regarding this legislation.

Finally we would like to add something: We would work to establish a working party with other stake holders (Department of Lands, NPWS, Metropolitan Aboriginal Lands Council, Rural Fire Service and Department of Sports - similar to State Park Committee - to coordinate management of the whole catchment in addition to the existing as certain tasks like 4WD and trail bike incursions require a coordinated approach.