

## **CLEANING AND GREENING**

*Local government used to be defined as being about 'roads, rates and rubbish'. From 1960 onwards a new social consciousness in Australian society saw that replaced by a focus on 'pollution, parks and (community) participation'.*

Late 1960s. Waverley and Woollahra Councils embark on a significant joint initiative to establish the first solid waste incinerator in Australia, the Waverley/Woollahra Process Plant, in an industrial area of Sydney. The combined Councils formed a separate incorporated body to manage the land acquisition, construction and operation of a 150,000 tonne per annum waste incineration complex for themselves and six other local government and commercial customers.

1962. Ninth annual Waverley Garden Lawn and Footpath competition is held. It is convened by Council with the aim of 'encouraging civic pride and the continued beautification of the municipality'. The Mayor made a personal appeal 'to all civic minded citizens in Waverley to not only enter the competition, but to endeavour to interest their neighbours and friends.'

1962. Council implements a £8,000 'face-lift' painting scheme for Bondi Pavilion, the sea front and Bondi Park. The scheme entails painting the seats, benches, outside building, promenade railings, the concrete light stanchions and the Pavilion building itself and the auditorium in a set palette of colours. These are: tropic sand, azure, melon, red, lagoon, shell, jacaranda, yellow, turquoise, Spanish olive.

1969. The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Waverley Garden, Lawn & Footpath Competition. Its aim was 'to foster civic pride and the embellishment and beautification of the Municipality'.

1986. The 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Waverley Garden, Lawn and Footpath competition is held. Categories: best residential front and rear garden, best display of massed annual plants, best kept gardens and lawns in a residence, best kept gardens and lawns in an institution or church, best contribution to a streetscape.

1986-1990. Bondi Park Redevelopment Proposal. In the 1920s Norfolk Island pines were part of the original planting scheme in Bondi Park and these trees were mature by the 1940s. The wide-spread use of non-biodegradable detergents by the 1950s and the resultant wind borne spray associated with these detergents (discharged into the ocean through the Bondi Sewage Outfall) caused the death of almost all the mature trees. Norfolk Island Pines are particularly sensitive to surfactant pollutants. By the 1970s only four of these original Norfolk Island pines remained. There was some regeneration of the trees in the 1980s due to the wide spread change to biodegradable detergent products.

1987. The first Greening of Waverley Competition is held. Categories: best small front garden, best garden, healthiest display of pot plants and indoor plants, best street display of lawns and gardens, best gardens and lawns in churches, schools, motels, service stations and hospitals, best residential horticultural display visible from the street and best massed display of annual plants visible from the street.

1988. The launch of the Waverley in Bloom Festival. Council decided that previous Waverley garden competitions did not have enough emphasis placed on the use of Australian native shrubs and flowers. New categories in the annual garden competition encourage thousands of home unit owners to be rewarded for their balcony displays.

1989. The Waverley Council Garden Competition is cancelled due to lack of entries.

1989. The NSW State government plans to build town houses on the site of Clementson Park at Bondi Junction. Council opposes this and continues its long fight to get control of the park.

Late 1980s. Waterloo local residents find the continued operation of Waverley/Woollahra Process Plant unacceptable. This was due to the significant change in land use near the incinerator, moving from industrial to residential as old sites were converted to small warehouse apartments or factory retail outlets. The two Councils agree to a major retrofit of the plant.

1990. Council attracts sponsorship from *The Eastern Herald* for the Waverley Council Garden Competition and sets up major prizes to breathe life back into it.

1990. After almost a decade of negotiations with the NSW State government, Council is offered a lease for the 8,000 hectare Clementson Park. The NSW Premier's Department offers a 40-year lease at \$500,000 to begin in January 1991. The terms of the contract limit the use of the park, which had previously been under the control of the Department of Education.

The park is limited to community purposes and to operation as a local park. The contract includes an option for a further 20 year-renewal at its expiration. Council intends to redesign and landscape the park and solve the drainage problems that plague it. Existing buildings in the park include a Senior Citizens Centre, disused Scout Hall and a childcare centre. All are demolished.

1990. Work starts on re-establishing a native rainforest in Bronte Gully, part of a 5-year plan guided by the Bronte Park Draft Plan of Management.

1990. Council threatens to sue the Water Board for illegally polluting Waverley's stormwater drains. The run-off from the drains was the major cause of beach pollution problems at Bondi. The Water Board's inadequate and broken sewer lines allowed sewage to spill into and contaminate Council's stormwater drains. It was an accepted practice for the Board to use the drains as a safety valve for overflow.

1991. Council's stormwater system was constructed 1850-1920. Gross pollutant traps for the stormwater system at Bondi Beach are constructed. Council runs the Stormwater Awareness Project to raise community awareness on water and ocean pollution. This is part of an ongoing water quality education process which began in Waverley in 1989 when the huge 'Turn Back the Tide' Concert took place at Bondi Beach.

As part of the Stormwater Awareness Project Council stencils the message 'this drain leads to Bondi Beach/Bronte Beach' next to storm drain inlets in suburban streets. Council explains to residents that while the stormwater catchments in Waverley are owned and maintained by the Council, it is difficult for Council to control what enters the stormwater system.

1992. Waverley Council Garden Competition is supported by the *Eastern Express* newspaper and has substantial prizes, including holidays. As well as the usual categories, there are new categories: School's Best Kept Grounds (using paid labour), School's Best Kept Grounds (labour by students), Best Kept Grounds of Hospitals, Churches, Motels and Service Stations.

1993. Council opens a community park in O'Donnell Reserve North Bondi. A community park means that Council will fit out the reserve with turf and seating, but local residents are to be involved with its upkeep by, for example, watering the plants and clearing up litter.

1993-1994. Council adopted a policy prohibiting the use of rainforest timber in developments valued at over \$500,000. Council supplies home compost bins to residents at cost price. Council introduces worm farms for the disposal of household waste; these are also suitable for small residences including flats and medium density housing. Kits can reduce household waste by more than 50 per cent and they prove to be very popular.

1993-1994. Waverley Council is the only local government area in Australia to collect all kinds of plastics for recycling.

1993-1994. Council adopts management plans for: Coastal Vegetation, Bronte Gully, Hugh Bamford Reserve and York Road Remnant Bushland. Council has a commitment to environmental management and undertakes to make State of the Environment reporting a requirement under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

1993-1994. Council believes Sydney's growing waste management needs can be helped through its Waverley/Woollahra Process Plant stating 'that incineration is one of the best ways to deal with rubbish'. It plans to improve the incinerator so it meets the highest international standards.

1994. Council demands the Water Board pay for the damage it caused when a burst water pipe led to one tonne of sand being dumped in a Bronte Creek.

1994-1997. Waverley and Woollahra Councils co-own the Waverley/Woollahra Process Plant. It continued to be controversial during this period. A concerted campaign from opponents to the plant had been underway for many years on the grounds that it presents an environmental and health hazard to those living nearby.

Council conceded the technology used by the Plant has become outmoded and since 1991 has been trying to get approval to upgrade the Plant and make it a contemporary Waste-To-Energy Plant which would meet the highest international emission standards. It closed for extensive maintenance and the Environmental

Protection Agency instigated proceedings to revoke the Clean Air Licence for the plant.

Council's position is that it is a valuable community asset and is monitored and upgraded in line with licence conditions which are issued by the Environmental Protection Authority. The NSW State government established the Eastern Suburbs Waste Management Inquiry which recommended phasing out of the plant. Eventually the Environment Protection Authority withdrew the Plant's license to operate and it closed. Council sought compensation from the State government for the value of the asset, loss of future earnings and additional costs associated with Council's future disposal costs.

1995. Council submits a grass roots strategy for tackling the area's graffiti problem to the State government's Youth Crime Prevention Program.

1995. Council opens a new garden competition, the Environmental and Landscape Improvement Competition, with six categories and a \$200 per category prize.

1995. A draft Waverley Local Environmental Plan provides greater flexibility in the application of planning controls. The Plan deletes the excessive and overly prescriptive commercial controls which currently apply and introduces more easily implementable commercial zonings.

1996. Council introduces a Small Parks Plan of Management. Council has 2.65 hectares of community land that has been categorised as small parks. There are 19 parks in this category with an average area per park of 0.139 hectares. There are also two small parks which are Crown Land. In addition Council has 35 small parks which are not community land, being either closed roads or road reservations. There are a large number of small parks in Waverley's open space. Small parks generally consist of grassed areas, pathways, seats, children's playgrounds or pieces of play equipment and occasionally picnic tables. They relate strongly to and tend to serve the immediate neighbourhood in which they are located.

1996. Council decides to act under its power legislated in the *Clean Waters Act* to issue on-the-spot fines for pollution offences. Problems include polluters dumping liquid waste of all kinds into stormwater drains, which then discharge into lakes in Centennial Park or ocean without any treatment at all. Council creates a special leaflet to distribute to Bronte residents where there is a particular on-going problem. This leaflet highlights: the nature of the Bronte catchment, how stormwater sweeps material into drains and eventually to Bronte Beach and the difficulty of trapping soluble pollutants, such as pesticides and detergents, which end up in Bronte Creek and in the ocean.

1996. The Waverley Local Environmental Plan lists heritage properties and heritage conservation areas.

1996. Council's Engineering Department is developing trash racks, smaller and simpler than gross pollutant traps at a cost of \$500 each. Litter from trash racks, can often be simply removed by hand by Council workers.

1997. Litter is removed daily from commercial areas, fortnightly from residential areas. Domestic waste and recyclable materials are collected weekly. Recycling rates improve and a Waste Reduction Education Officer is appointed to Council for the first time.

1997. The Environmental Protection Agency Recycling Rebate Scheme finished at the end of 1995. The scheme ranked Waverley Council within the top 10 councils for the volume of its recycling.

1997. Regular cleaning program of stormwater pits has been implemented to reduce the amount of rubbish being washed through the stormwater system and into the ocean.

1997. Bondi Park Plan of Management sets out Council's goals for Bondi Beach and Park. Bins for aluminium cans only are introduced onto the beach promenade as part of an aluminium recycling program to promote safe and clean beaches. As a result there is a large increase in cans recycled.

1997. Council develops an integrated stormwater policy and runs a stormwater awareness campaign for the Bronte catchment area in order to reduce water pollution.

1997. Council campaigns actively to protect valuable remnant bushland location on the site of the old Eastern Suburbs Hospital. Council advocates for it to remain public open space.

1997. A strategy for the protection of the intertidal zones is developed.

1997. A pollution complaints register began with majority of complaints to Council dealt with within 24 hours.

1997. Abandoned shopping trolleys continues to be a problem across Waverley with over 150 trolleys impounded.

1998. Council approves the Eastern Suburbs Community Garden, based on permaculture principles, for Clementson Park. It provides \$15,000 grant to set up pots, install a watering system and fence the area. After two years the of upgrades the park is re-dedicated and re-opened.

1998. Council proposes a legal ban on spear fishing at Bondi Beach saying the sport is not compatible with the growth in tourism. Previously Council had posted signs banning spear fishing, but felt the ban was impossible to enforce. It seeks support from the NSW State government in the form of legislation.

1998-1999. Council plants an additional 904 new street trees, bringing this to a total of 3,356 since 1996. Target of 80 per cent use of LPG in passenger vehicle fleet is achieved.

1998-1999. A new cleaning and maintenance team was established in conjunction with Woollahra Council in order to properly maintain the Bondi Junction Town Square.

1998-1999. The emergency cleaning of reserves is introduced so that within 24 hours of a request being made a park can be cleaned, including the removal of offensive graffiti.

1998-1999. Waverley Council recognised by the Sustainable Energy Development Authority, the Keep Australia Beautiful Council and other local government peers for protection and enhancement of the environment. Council was awarded: Champion of the Environment Award from the Keep Australia Beautiful Council, Green Global Award for being the first local government authority to implement 'green power' and a River Care 2000 Bronze Award for soil and water management in an urban development.

1998-1999. Completion of the Catchment Stormwater Management Plan and development of a comprehensive Bicycle Plan for Waverley.

1998-1999. Council applies for and is granted \$250,000 from the Natural Heritage Trust to fund pollution control devices at Tamarama and Bronte Beaches.

1998-1999. 180 tonnes of litter is collected from stormwater and road systems during the year avoiding it washing onto our beaches.

1999. The Eastern Suburbs Community Garden in Clementson Park at Bondi Junction opens to the public.

1999. Attempts to reduce the stormwater pollution levels that flow into Bondi Beach and Centennial Park are trialled by Council. Vacuum cleaners collect material from gutters. Public education campaigns aimed at reducing the amount of rubbish and poisons entering the stormwater system are run. The scheme is given funding approval from the NSW State government and was jointly conducted by the University of NSW and Council.

1999-2000. The first comprehensive user survey of the Coastal Walk ever undertaken by Council is completed and used to prepare a plan of management. Surveys show that the Bondi to Bronte section of the walk is used by thousands of people, about 75 per cent of who are Sydney residents, including many locals of the Eastern Suburbs. Most of the remaining 25 per cent are overseas visitors. The design of the new Hunter Ward Cliff Walk is completed and is open for public comment. Barracluff Park and Gibson Street Reserve are substantially upgraded. A new state of the art irrigation system is installed in Bondi Park.

1999-2000. Stormwater a focus during this period. The Environment Protection Authority adopted three Stormwater Management Plans that affect Waverley, as a result Council completed its own stormwater management plan to Environment Protection Authority requirements.

Council was also recognised for its energy efficient practices. Council also had a focus on pollution from wood heaters, which had become popular, particularly as older homes were renovated and old chimneys uncovered. Council decided to modify its environmental planning instruments to prohibit all new applications for the installation of solid fuel heating appliances.

1999-2000. Council introduced a number of new Development Control Plans including those for Energy Smart Homes and Site Waste Minimisation and Management. Council wrote four environmental procedure manuals: maintenance, construction, trades and restoration.

1999-2000. Resolution of the long running impounded shopping trolley dispute, with an agreement reached between Coles, Woolworths, K-mart and Council on the return of impounded trolleys. A new management agreement put in place in respect to trolleys abandoned in the future.

1999-2000. Council incorporated Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD) principles into a draft Local Environmental Plan and developed a system to implement ESD in the procurement of goods and services for Council. Council's Waste Reduction and Education Officer completed a waste service and waste minimisation brochure in Russian and participated in the launch of waste education campaign directed toward Russian speaking residents.

2001-2002. Council implements a new public places management project focusing on Bondi Beach, Campbell Parade, Bronte Beach and Bondi Junction to address problems of litter, beach cleanliness, overflowing rubbish bins and dumped rubbish and vehicles.

2003. Council's efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions are recognised by the Australian Fleet Managers Association who presented it with an Environmental Award. Over the past decade Council has introduced dual-fuelled cars, dedicated liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cars and smaller vehicles. It has also converted its heavy fleet to compressed natural gas (CNG) and where conversion was not possible reduced engine size from six to four cylinders.

2003. Waverley Greenhouse Gas Reduction Action Plan implemented.

2003-2004. Record numbers of visitors to Bondi Beach over the summer leave Council with a cleaning bill of \$1 million, up \$400,000 from last year. On Christmas Day 2003 a record 40,000 people come to Bondi Beach and by New Year's Day Council had filled 30 skips with rubbish, equivalent to 500 cubic metres of litter. Council employed an extra nine staff to collect litter from the beach, commercial areas and parks around the beach and increased its bin collections to three daily, instead of two.

2004. Council aims to dramatically cut water consumption and does a water-consumption audit of Bondi Park and Pavilion. Council develops and implements an anti-cigarette butt littering program.

2005. New natural 'green gas' trucks launched in Bondi Junction Mall during World Environment Day. The trucks are run entirely on CNG. The Green Fleet initiative is central to Council's commitment to minimising the impact of their vehicle fleet on the environment by purchasing vehicles that produce minimal greenhouse gases.

2005. A new waste and recycling system is completed and as a result recycling rates throughout Waverley increase.

2005. Council was recognised with a Gold Award for achieving its stated environmental milestones. Twenty-five per cent of energy requirements, from alternative green energy sources, are now in five Council buildings. Additional environmental achievements include: implementation of a Walking School Bus, Council's inaugural Waverley Family Bike Fair, the allocation of four car parking spaces for car sharing and the completion of stormwater improvement works at Hunter Park.

2006. Council adopts a Graffiti Management Policy.

2006. Residents are asked to don wetsuits for an underwater clean-up at North Bondi for Waverley's first underwater clean-up held as part of Clean Up Australia Day.

2006. Council's State of the Environment Report pointed to untreated stormwater run-off as a massive contributor to the loss of biodiversity in Waverley.

2007. Sam Fiszman Park is created out of the former car park at Ben Buckler Point. This is the first major public park created in Waverley in over a decade. It goes on to win a number of awards: 2008 Australian Institute of Landscape Architects NSW award for Excellence in Landscape Architecture, recognised in the 2008 NSW Australian Institute of Architecture Awards and the park's contractors took out Category One of the 2008 NSW Civil Contractors Federation Award. The park was named for Sam Fiszman, a Polish immigrant and Holocaust survivor, who later had a successful career in Australia which included being the head of NSW Tourism. He was a long-time Waverley resident who died in 2002.

2007. Toxic waste found in Bronte Creak was threatening wildlife and causing environmental damage. Teams from Council's Planning and Environmental Services have been trying to solve this on-going problem for more than 10 years. Waste appears regularly, however it is hard to trace its source.

2007. A new environmentally focused gardening award is launched called the Civic Pride Gardening Awards. A Sydney garden designer joins the judging panel and a sumptuous high tea for finalists in the gardens of Bronte House is offered. These new awards have a focus on helping the environment through water-wise and sustainable gardening techniques, as well as rewarding beautiful gardens. To support entrants the Environmental Services Department offers free courses on sustainable gardening, including how to use local native species, water-saving tips and bush tucker.

2008. Council's proactive graffiti team removed 1,272 incidents of graffiti last year, equivalent to 15,192 square metres. Council is committed to removing graffiti. Offensive graffiti is removed within 24-48 hours. Council has spent more than \$180,000 in the last year removing graffiti from private and public properties with some hot spots cleaned weekly. Council decides that it will allow young people to create temporary murals on roller shutters along the malls, to discourage tagging.

2008. An innovative water harvesting system, the Bronte Gully Stormwater Harvesting Project, is approved for Bronte Gully. This will save over 73 million litres of untreated water per year. The water will be used to irrigate Bronte Park, for the use of Bronte Gully Bushcare and flush Bronte Park toilets. Stormwater will be captured in a 120,000 litre underground tank and then passed through a UV treatment filter system to kill any pathogens. Currently large amounts of stormwater flow down through Bronte Gully and out to sea.

2008. There are 99 Council-owned parks/reserves in Waverley with a combined area of 76.11 hectares (82.59 hectares if Bondi Golf Course/Williams Park is included). Just 21 parks, with an area greater than 1 hectare account for most of this open space.

2009. Council uses Federal government Regional and Local Community Infrastructure funding to upgrade nine of its playgrounds: pocket parks in Bronte, Queens Park and Dover Heights, new playground at Caffyn Park, shade structure at Kimberley Reserve. Most money is to be spent at Clementson Park to create a larger landscaped play space, new play equipment, bubblers, bins and seats.

2009. As Waverley is one of Australia's most densely populated local government areas, recreational open space is highly prized. Waverley has 108 hectares of parks and reserves including pocket parks, small local parks which residents can 'adopt'. Council supports the Pocket Parks Program with tools and plants, while residents volunteer in the park. Council parks and gardens staff maintain parks, reserves and recreational facilities and the 10,000 street trees in Waverley.

2010. Civic Pride Garden Awards have traditional categories: best balcony garden, best back garden, best street frontage but also include best community maintained garden and an encouragement award. They also recognise beautiful gardens that are kind to the environment and remind entrants that sustainable gardens get more points in the competition. New criteria for the judging include: whether your garden contributes to civic pride, use of a compost bin or worm farm and the use of organic/non chemical gardening practices.

2010. A report prepared by Council shows that they are powerless to regulate spear fishing at the Bronte Bogey Hole. After consulting fishing experts within the Department of the Environment it was established that the current legislation permits spear fishing within the last 20 metres of the northern and southern ends of an ocean beach. Council erects signs advising spear fishers to keep clear of the Bronte Bogey Hole and Bronte Pool, but no enforcement or penalties are possible. Council also requests a fishing closure zone around the area. There are calls for Waverley Council to establish a marine sanctuary at North Bondi.

