

ITEM B NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR BLAKEY - VERGE GARDENS

Councillor Blakey has submitted the following Notice of Motion –

“I formally move that –

- 1 Council note that establishing a verge garden helps to beautify local streets, show pride in our neighbourhoods and contribute to a clean, green Wollongong.
- 2 Staff provide a briefing on the development of Verge Garden Guidelines that align with the Urban Greening Strategy and Pedestrian Plan.”

Background provided by Councillor Blakey:

Verges in suburban areas are generally public land under the tenure of the local council, but their upkeep is managed by the resident of the adjacent property. The development of verge garden guidelines will help support Wollongong’s vision of a clean, green city that protects and supports our local environment by sustainably managing and caring for our natural environment and resources. The guidelines will support the safety of pedestrians and road users by minimising trip hazards and ensuring community safety and access on this public space is maintained. Guidelines will also reduce public confusion and uncertainty regarding appropriate management of verge vegetation.

The Urban Greening Strategy was adopted by Wollongong City Council in November 2017. The strategy recommended the development of new “Verge Garden Guidelines” for public realm. Under the Community Strategic Plan, Urban Greening was identified as working towards a range of interconnected community goals and objectives which include reducing Wollongong’s ecological footprint (1.3), improving the sustainability of the urban environment (1.6), increasing the physical and mental wellbeing of residents (5.1), a high standard of public domain (5.3), and increasing participation in recreation and lifestyle (5.5).

Many councils around Australia have verge garden guidelines that inform residents of their responsibilities and site considerations when establishing a verge garden. Guidelines from Councils such as Sydney, Brisbane and Fremantle take this approach, and support growing a range of suitably managed vegetation on verges. If an instance of verge garden non-compliance is found then staff can work with the residents to address areas of concern.