

ITEM 16 NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR CATH BLAKEY - SOLAR OUR SCHOOLS

Councillor Cath Blakey has submitted the following Notice of Motion –

“I formally move that Council –

- 1 Investigate Participation in the Solar My School Program, including how it compliments actions within the Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2020
- 2 Provide a Briefing to Councillors by October 2021 on the progress of the Environmental Education Plan that is part of the Climate Change Mitigation Plan 2020.”

Background provided by Councillor Cath Blakey:

Solar My Schools is a joint initiative established between Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra Councils in 2016 which supports schools to install solar photovoltaic systems, reducing their energy bills and educating students on the benefits of solar power. The Program which is free for participating schools, provides a solar feasibility assessment and assistance in terms of grant applications. There are currently 16 Councils (including Shellharbour City Council as of April 2021) and over 160 schools participating with 6247 kWp solar identified and 7285 MWh/yr of clean energy produced so far. As of July 2021 participating schools have been assisted to secure \$1.2m in external grants to help schools pay for solar projects, and saved \$850k a year from their operating costs.

In March this year, the NSW Department of Education released their new funding guidelines for solar power on public schools: *School Renewable Energy Co-Contribution Program* (SRECP). Eligible public schools that follow the required process will have access to at least 50% funding towards their solar power systems. Solar my School is the lone official partner organisation listed in the guidelines that can work within this process in the initial feasibility stage, through to funding assistance and later, education and promotions.

More information: <https://www.solarmyschool.org.au/>

The Climate Mitigation Plan includes Action C12 to “Design and deliver a sustainability and environmental education plan to expand the existing education programs.” Action C16 identifies a specific environmental education partnership with the Department of Education to invest \$20,000 on an Eco Schools pilot program in the Warrawong Precinct to “reduce their environmental impact by reducing waste to landfill, improving energy efficiency and investigating opportunities to install solar panels”. It is timely for councillors to hear how these initiatives are progressing.