

ITEM 21 NOTICE OF MOTION - COUNCILLOR CATH BLAKEY - RIGHT TO REPAIR

Councillor Cath Blakey has submitted the following Notice of Motion –

“I formally move that Wollongong City Council –

- 1 Note that a ‘Right to Repair’ is the ability of consumers to have their products repaired at a competitive price using a repairer of their choice. The ‘Right to Repair’ helps households increase the usage time of products and minimise waste to landfill.
- 2 Investigate enhancing repair opportunities such as men’s shed’s, repair cafés, repair skill sharing, up-cycling, tip shop workshops and e-waste collection schemes for repair through revision of the Waste Strategy and inclusion in Community Development programs.
- 3 Write to the Federal Ministers for the Environment, Trade and Consumer Affairs to request the release of the government response to the Productivity Commission’s report on the Right to Repair.
- 4 Write to the NSW Ministers for the Environment and Fair Trading requesting action in support of the Right to Repair.
- 5 Submit a Notice of Motion to the up-coming LGNSW conference that urges the NSW government to take action to enable the Right to Repair.

Background provided by Councillor Cath Blakey:

As everyday consumer items have become more technologically advanced, from fridges to mobile phones to cars and even tractors, the ability to repair them has reduced, with many companies insisting only the manufacturer is able to do so. Through collaboration between business, all levels of government and the community there is the opportunity to improve the repair of consumer goods and reduce waste to landfill. The 2021 Productivity Commission Report on the Right to Repair illustrates pathways that the Federal government can take, including changes to consumer and intellectual copyright laws, product labelling and the e-waste product stewardship scheme.¹ The Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia has highlighted that “other countries have demonstrated it can be done. For example, France has introduced a reparability index at the point of sale similar to the energy efficiency rating on white goods; Austria allows consumers to claim back half the cost of their old electrical device repair; and some states in the US have digital right to repair laws.”²

The Right to Repair aligns with the Australian government’s target towards a Circular Economy by 2030³, and the 2018 NSW Environment Protection Authority’s “Too Good to Waste, a Discussion paper on a circular economy approach for NSW”⁴. It has been identified that Australia has a billion-dollar economic opportunity through enabling a right to repair for all key product categories commencing with white goods.⁵

¹ “Right to repair: Productivity Commission inquiry report” , Productivity Commission, 2021
Accessed 15/8/2023 <https://apo.org.au/node/315328>

² “End ‘Bin it if it’s broken’ ways or miss circular economy target: WARR Industry” by Waste Management and Resource Recovery Association of Australia published Friday 11 August 2023, accessed 15/8/2023
https://www.wmrr.asn.au/Web/Media/Media_Release/2023/End%20bin%20it%20if%20its%20broken%20ways%20or%20miss%20circular%20economy%20target.aspx

³ “Transitioning to a more circular economy” Australian Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, Last updated: 02 June 2023 accessed 15/8/2023
<https://www.dcceew.gov.au/environment/protection/circular-economy>

⁴ “Too Good To Waste, a Discussion paper on a circular economy approach for NSW”, NSW EPA, 2018
<https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/recycling-and-reuse/response-to-china-national-sword/circular-economy-policy>

⁵ “Towards the Circular Economy: Accelerating the scale-up across global supply chains”, World Economic Forum, 2014, accessed 15/8/2023 <https://www.weforum.org/reports/towards-circular-economy-accelerating-scale-across-global-supply-chains/>