

## Environmental Zones Review

### Focus Group Selection Process

October 2020

#### Background

Council engaged Meridian Urban planning consultants to undertake a review of the Environmental Zones in Council's four Local Environmental Plans (LEPs). This work will inform the preparation of the new Northern Beaches LEP, part of Council's program entitled [Planning our Sustainable Future](#).

Meridian Urban and the Strategic & Place Planning team undertook to conduct a series of Focus Groups as the first stage of this work. The purpose of the focus groups was to engage with a broad group of landowners and community members across the local government area to obtain an understanding of the values, issues and concerns that could influence the design and application of Environmental zones across the local government area (LGA).

Council sought expressions of interest (EOIs) by letter to approximately 12,000 property owners, and emails to over 20,000 subscribers for the environmental review focus groups. There were 70 places available on the focus groups and we received 325 nominations (EOIs) to participate.

To allow for deeper discussions in the focus groups, Council had to cap the number of attendees at each online session. For this reason, not everyone who registered could be selected for a session. An explanation of the selection process is provided below.

Participants were randomly selected based on an analysis of their availability and ensuring a geographical representation from across the LGA. Council was also able to select representatives from all local resident associations or community groups that applied.

At the conclusion of the focus group sessions, community members who missed out were sent the workshop material and a survey to ensure they have an opportunity to have their say during this early stage in the process

The survey and focus group discussion will be considered in the final Environmental Zone Review, along with a number of technical studies as outlined on Council's [website](#).

It is important to note Council is in the very early stages of the Environmental Zones Review and there will be further opportunities for the community to have their say. This includes the exhibition of an LEP discussion paper scheduled for early 2021.

## Focus Group Selection Process – Environmental Zones Review

Council undertook a comprehensive selection process to ensure each focus group had the following representation:

1. **Environmental Zone residents** - An even representation from each of the three existing Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) under the [Standard Instrument LEP](#) being the Manly LEP 2013, Warringah LEP 2011 and Pittwater LEP 2014 (2 each)
2. **Deferred Lands residents** – those EOLs identified as being under the Warringah Local Environmental Plan 2000 and hence not currently allocated any zone under the Standard Instrument LEP. For this category, representation was also sought from each of 3 areas being: the C8 Belrose North Locality, and the B2 Oxford Falls Locality divided into an eastern and western portion (2)
3. **Associations** - A significant representation from local community groups or residents' associations (4). This category also included some individuals known to represent large landholdings (e.g. churches and schools).
4. **Other** - Representation from EOLs that did not fall into the above categories (2). This included those EOLs identified outside an Environmental Zone, those who nominated a qualification or company, or those whose address could not be matched with Council's system (and hence the zone could not be identified).

Table 1 – Focus Group categories, percentage of forms, and representation

Focus Group Categories	% forms	Representation sought
Association	14%	4
Warringah LEP 2000 (Deferred Lands)	14%	2
Manly LEP - E zone	3%	2
Pittwater LEP - E Zone	52%	2
Warringah LEP 2011 E - Zone	3%	2
Other	15%	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>14</b>

To select participants from the “Environmental Zones”, “Deferred Lands” and Other” categories, we used a random number function using Microsoft Excel. Based on availability, the first two available participants were chosen for each of these categories, using the lowest random numbers. Where there weren't enough EOLs for these categories, additional spaces were allocated to Associations.

Associations were allocated additional spots given they represent a larger cohort of people and can report back to their groups. In total, 14% of EOLs were from Associations, with some Associations providing forms from multiple people.

In selecting Association participants, we aimed to invite one representative from each. For each focus group, we also aimed to ensure a representative spread from the former Manly (M), Warringah (W) or Pittwater (P) areas where possible. Following the selection process and based on the EOL information provided, we are unaware of any local associations or community groups not invited to participate.