

Ku-ring-gai Council Environmental Levy



Leading environmental stewardship while empowering our community to protect and enjoy our natural areas



Since 2005, the Environmental Levy has helped make Ku-ring-gai a leader in sustainability, resilience, and environmental conservation. Thanks to the support of our community, this investment has delivered real, measurable benefits – protecting our bushland, improving waterways, reducing energy, waste and transport emissions and strengthening our resilience to climate change.

Together, we are working towards electrifying our homes and buildings, creating a circular economy, a water-sensitive city and ensuring a thriving natural environment for future generations.



Delivering impact for Ku-ring-gai

The Environmental Levy provides essential services and environmental benefits across the community, including:

- Protecting bushland and biodiversity to enhance ecosystem resilience.
- Lowering energy use and greenhouse gas emissions to boost climate resilience.
- Reducing landfill waste and driving a circular economy with recycling and resource recovery programs.
- Reducing urban stormwater impacts and improving waterway health towards a water-sensitive city.
- Minimising potable water use through innovative water conservation initiatives.
- Expanding cycleways and recreational facilities to support active and sustainable transport.
- Preventing illegal dumping and encroachment in our bushland reserves.
- Supporting local businesses and households to live and operate more sustainably.
- Fostering a deeper connection to nature and green spaces to strengthen our sense of community and wellbeing.

Best practice environmental management

The multi-disciplinary team funded by the Levy is crucial to successfully delivering these programs. These specialists ensure that:

- Environmental policies and strategies are developed and reviewed.
- Council responds effectively to federal and state environmental policy changes.
- Sustainability principles are embedded in Council's land use planning.
- Expert guidance is provided to Council and the community on environmental issues.
- Research partnerships drive innovation and knowledge-sharing.
- Environmental assessments ensure compliance and continuous improvement.

How the levy works

The Environmental Levy is set at 5% of Council's total rate revenue, with the average residential ratepayer contributing around \$80 per year.

In the 2023/24 financial year, the Levy totalled \$3.4 million, allocated across six key service themes.

Key achievements (as of 30 June 2024)



Since it began, the Environmental Levy has leveraged over \$14.3 million in grants, amplifying our ability to deliver real outcomes for Ku-ring-gai.

Energy management

- Transition to 100% renewable energy through ZEN Energy contract.
- 87% reduction in emissions from Council operations.
- 26% reduction in electricity use, saving \$516,000 annually.
- 18 electric fleet vehicles, 11 public EV charging ports, and 16 fleet EV charging ports.
- 17 solar systems and LED upgrades across multiple Council facilities.
- Major energy efficiency upgrades at Ku-ring-gai Fitness & Aquatic Centre and key Council buildings.

Water and catchment management

- 21,582 tonnes of rubbish diverted from waterways since 2012 through stormwater quality improvement devices (WSUD, GPTs, and street sweeping).
- 1,112,092 kL of water reused since 2012/13 through stormwater harvesting, leachate reuse, and sewer mining systems.
- 90% of total demand across reuse/harvesting sites met by non-potable water in 2023/24.
- 16 creek restoration projects completed since 2005.

Community engagement

- Over 700 trees planted annually on National Tree Day with 120 volunteers.
- \$406,000 in community sustainability rebates, leading to \$431,800 in annual savings.
- \$1.1 million in grants distributed to community groups for 307 local environmental projects.
- 75,349 participants in Loving Living Ku-ring-gai programs since 2012.
- Over 2,116 residents assisted in extreme weather preparedness through Climate Wise Communities.





Photo: Matthew Ward

Biodiversity and bushland management

- Bush regeneration in 38 priority reserves, covering 342 hectares annually.
- 23 ecological burns covering 14.25 hectares to support native vegetation.
- 918 environmental volunteers contributing 7,084 hours annually.
- 881 dumping and encroachment issues resolved since 2012.

Fauna monitoring and conservation

- Monthly Grey-headed Flying Fox counts inform national conservation efforts.
- Eastern Pygmy Possum monitoring with 42 nest boxes surveyed quarterly.
- Microbat surveys across 62 sites to track species distribution.
- Large-scale fauna surveys, including Sheldon Forest and Rofe Park.



Bushfire management

- 33.4 km of major fire trails upgraded since 2012.

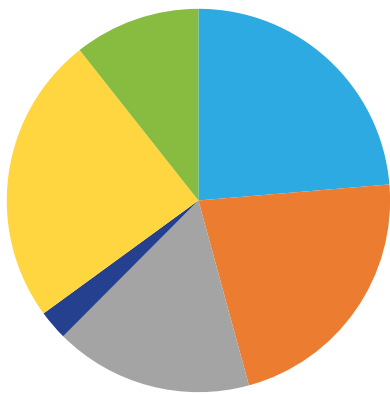
Sustainable transport and recreation

- Creation of Jubes Mountain Bike Park and Warrimoo Downhill Track.
- Development of 9 km of new cycleways from Roseville to St Ives.
- Maintenance and renewal of 58 km of walking tracks since 2012.





Breakdown of the 2023/24 Environmental Levy Budget



- **\$814,000** | Energy management
- **\$760,000** | Biodiversity & bushfire management
- **\$575,000** | Water & catchment management
- **\$839,000** | Community engagement & environmental education
- **\$86,000** | Sustainable transport & recreation in natural areas
- **\$366,000** | Project management & administration

Where appropriate staff salaries have been allocated to the themes they primarily support.

Looking ahead

Thanks to the support of our community, the Environmental Levy continues to drive real change, making Ku-ring-gai a cleaner, greener and more enjoyable place to live.

We look forward to building on this success – together.

Find out more

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