

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC FORUM

All members of the community who have registered have been advised that they have a **maximum of seven minutes** to put their case.

Ordinary Meeting of Council on **23 August 2022**

Name	Subject/Comments	Hybrid
Public Forum – 9.30am		
Louise Webb	NOM22/012 - Advocacy to NSW Government to legislate that 24/7 Cat containment can be enforced by local Government	Via Zoom
Kathryn Maxwell SHASA	PSR22/032 Climate Change Advisory Group	Via Zoom
Trish Hellier	NOM 022/012 – Advocacy to NSW Government to legislate that 24/7 Cat containment can be enforced by local Government NOM 022/013 – Advocacy to NSW Government to end Native Forest Logging in State Forests	Via Zoom
Philip Creagh	NOM 022/012 – Advocacy to NSW Government to legislate that 24/7 Cat containment can be enforced by local Government NOM 022/013 – Advocacy to NSW Government to end Native Forest Logging in State Forests	In Person

Public Forum Presentation

Louise Webb, President, RSPCA NSW Eurobodalla Volunteer Branch

Council meeting 23 August 2022

NOM22/012 ADVOCACY TO NSW GOVERNMENT TO LEGISLATE THAT 24/7 CAT CONTAINMENT CAN BE ENFORCED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

I would like to speak in support of Councillor Worthington's motion, and I thank Councillors for this opportunity.

I am currently President of RSPCA's Eurobodalla Volunteer Branch, and we, as members of the local community, are keen to see changes along the lines proposed by Councillor Worthington.

Twenty-seven per cent of Australian households have one or more pet cats. Cats play a valuable part in the lives of many of us, and it is up to us, as a society, to ensure their lives are happy and healthy.

Roaming cats can be run over by vehicles, attacked by dogs or other cats, be stolen or abused, be bitten by a snake, eat a toxin such as a poisonous plant, or pick up a serious infection such as Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. The best way to keep our pet cats safe and healthy is to contain them in some way, such as totally inside the house, or inside with access to an enclosure or escape-proof fence.

Cats are efficient killers, and pet cats kill far more than their owners realise, according to Professor Sarah Legge, deputy director of the Threatened Species Recovery Hub, a Commonwealth-funded research program. Professor Legge last year told ABC's Radio National that:

"About 80 per cent of cats that roam, hunt. And when they hunt, they only bring back on average about 15 per cent of what they kill."

Those are very sobering statistics, particularly for an area such as ours that is home to six national parks as well as other natural bushland regions.

There is an easy answer to the problem of pet cats killing wildlife, and that is to keep them safe at home. It's a win-win situation, which we need to embrace.

However, hand in hand with any move towards a requirement to keep pet cats contained within their owners' property there also needs to be a widespread education program, to help cat owners understand the rationale and benefits of keeping their pets enclosed, as well as the absolute necessity of ensuring that enclosed cats have opportunities for sensory and social enrichment, so that their lives are fulfilling. Having domesticated them, and taken them into our homes, we are morally obliged to meet their needs, and that goes beyond food, water and shelter.

We would certainly like local councils to be given the power to require 24/7 cat containment, and for these to be introduced. Ahead of that, however, we would encourage the development of an extensive advertising campaign to educate cat owners on the need to keep their cats at home, and where to find helpful resources to achieve this while ensuring their cats are happy and fulfilled in the home environment. There should be a sufficient lead-in time – say, six months – before 24/7 containment is made mandatory.

I would also add that thought needs to be given to the need for councils to have the resources to monitor and enforce such containment. The *Companion Animals Act 1998* already has requirements which are legislated but effectively left to individuals to either comply with or not. There is no clear program of enforcement for the requirement to microchip companion animals or for cats to be desexed at four months. One former NSW Minister even admitted to myself and a colleague that these legal requirements are set in place principally as an incentive to try and ensure compliance through people's goodwill, rather than as laws to be enforced. That is not good enough. It's not good enough for the companion animals we bring into our homes and certainly not for the native wildlife which is so threatened by human action or inaction. This is an aspect of animal welfare regulation by governments at

all levels which needs proper thought, planning, preparation and resourcing. If we accept that requirements set in place by law or regulation are sensible, necessary and reasonable, then we also must be prepared to ensure that the community is complying.

Both the education program and the enforcement plan are essential elements of a successful transition to an enclosed-cat community. If we are going to take this step, we should be aiming to ensure from the start that everyone understands why it's important, takes it seriously, and knows that the Council will be taking it seriously as well.

The RSPCA NSW and RSPCA Australia's Knowledgebase websites offer many helpful ideas and resources for people wanting to do the right thing and keep their cats safe at home, including transitioning outdoor cats to a more restricted life. I have some examples of the material here, which can be downloaded for free.

Many cats roam, and engage in fights, because they are not desexed. RSPCA's Eurobodalla Volunteer Branch offers desexing assistance to people on pensions and benefits, and, during July, we provided financial help with desexing costs to everyone who needed it.

As Councillor Worthington has pointed out, our branch has partnered with the local Council rangers several times to run Free Microchipping days, at which everyone attending was given the opportunity to obtain assistance with the cost of desexing their pet.

All of this helps to minimise cats roaming and breeding, but much more needs to be done, and one of the obvious steps is the one identified by Councillor Worthington – the ability for councils to require pet cats to be kept within their owners' property. RSPCA Eurobodalla Branch fully supports this motion and we hope that the proposal is agreed to.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today.

SHASA Presentation at the Public Forum

PSR22/032 Climate Change Advisory Group agenda item for Tuesday's Council meeting (note that a copy of the presentation must be submitted by midday on Monday 22nd).

1) SHASA welcomes Council's move to create a Climate Change Advisory Group, and strongly supports adoption of PSR22/032.

2) SHASA notes that the Climate Action Plan sets targets and outlines actions for Council and the community across key areas of sustainability, including energy, transport, built environment, waste, water, biodiversity, agriculture, regional economy, natural hazards and Council responsiveness. SHASA supports the comprehensive scope of the Climate Action Plan and the terms of reference for the Climate Change Advisory Group.

3) SHASA proposes that the agenda papers for meetings of the Climate Change Advisory group should be circulated at least 5 business days prior to the date of the relevant meeting, in order to give members adequate time to review and consider their contents. SHASA recommends that the Climate Change Advisory Group's Terms of Reference be amended to reflect this suggestion.

4) SHASA considers that there are significant potential economic, environmental, social and regional development benefits which can

arise from implementing the Climate Action Plan.

5) SHASA was formed to develop and implement practical solutions to develop community leadership, resilience and capability to deal with the impacts of climate change. SHASA's strategic plan has an overarching objective of **Creating a more resilient sustainable community & low carbon economy in the Eurobodalla.**

6) Over a relatively short space of time, SHASA has developed proposals and obtained funding to undertake a wide range of important and practical measures to achieve our objectives.

Projects to date include:

- Solar bulk buy with MESA since 2017 which has resulted in over 1500kw of rooftop solar.
- Run workshops with Council to raise awareness of the benefits of rooftop solar and batteries.
- Installed Solar on 16 community facilities in the Eurobodalla to help reduce electricity costs.
- Organised over 80 test drives in the SHASA electric vehicle resulting in 10 locals purchasing an electric vehicle.
- Upgraded the Red Door Hall, Anglican Parish and the Moruya PreSchool Kindergarten to Heatwave and Bushfire Havens with 4 more currently underway.

- Running an electric bike hire service with Moruya Bicycles since 2019.
- Co-hosted the Climate Solutions 4 Eurobodalla forum May 2021.
- Run webinars on energy efficient buildings, energy efficient appliances and electric vehicles.
- Worked with Nature Conservation Council to secure a \$490m electric vehicles package from the NSW Government.
- SHASA strongly supports the proposed community advisory group

7) SHASA strongly supports the proposed community advisory group, and that such a group can and needs to play a positive and constructive role in securing the outcomes of the Climate Action Plan. SHASA therefore encourages interested community groups and individuals in the Eurobodalla to consider nominating for membership of the Advisory Group – ideally, we need people with practical experience.

Good morning Mayor, Councillors, General Manager, Staff, Gallery and those comfortable zooming from home my name is Patricia Hellier from Batemans Bay I would like to speak on 2 items on the Agenda here today. I will add I never thought I would ever say this but I am embarrassed to be a resident, rate payer and voter of Eurobodalla with motions such as these are being proposed by a Councillor from Eurobodalla for the LGNSW Conference.

NOM22/012 Advocate to NSW Government to Legislate that 24/7 Cat containment can be enforced by Local Government. Cats are seen as a good companion animal. How much extra work will this create for the Rangers of this shire what will we see “Rangers prowling around on all fours with the sounds echoing of “here KITTY, here KITTY” or rangers climbing trees or knocking on residents doors at night asking “is Kitty at home” perhaps we could solve the problem by cutting down all the trees to save the bird life. It must be remembered in country areas when there was a mouse plague many, many farmers relied on their cats to help contain the plague. It appears that Clr Worthington is trying to contain the RSPCA led 2.5M “Keeping cats safe at home projects”.

Point 3 of this motion “Eurobodalla Shire Council delegates attending the 2022 LGNSW Conference vote in support of this motion”.

Councillors I am deeply concerned about this point should you Councillors vote to support this motion I believe not only will it “lock in your vote on this motion at the conference it will also lock in your vote for Clr Worthington next motion **Advocacy to NSW Government to end Native Forestry Logging in State Forest and Transition the Native Hardwood Sector of FCNSW to 100% Sustainable Plantations Point 2 Eurobodalla Shire Council representatives attending the conference vote in support of this motion**”. I believe it is both immoral and unethical to tell people how to vote.

NOM22/013 heading is **VERY misleading at the last Council meeting the Councillors did not vote “to end Native Forestry in this shire”** to take this motion to the conference would not be truthful and would give the many other Councillors attending the Conference the wrong impression. In all the years I have sat in a Council meeting the last weeks Council Meeting was the first time I saw a motion put forward being Point 6 of that failed to gain a seconder and the point could not be debated. It should be remembered that our area is 80% State Forests and National Parks.

I believe today’s motion of Councillor Worthington’s is due to the fact that she was not successful in getting her motion through at the Council Meeting 9th August 2022. This reminded me of the Greens representative on the Rural Lands committee when he wanted the “word stewardship” in the document when this did not occur he resigned from the Committee.

Point 1 of NOM22/013 No. 2 - Clr Wothington states -Note the concerns from **south coast residents** “ Councillors we have continually heard Clr Worthingtons referring to growing **Community concerns**” now it would appear that Clr Worthington would have us believe she is representing “**the south coast**” and yet to my knowledge Clr Worthington is not the elected **Greens representative of the South Coast** ” I ask Clr Worthington to be honest and I mean honest and provide the exact numbers of how many in the **Community and South Coast** she is referring to and I challenge the other Councillors to ask the same question.

Point 2 of NOM22/013 “Representatives attending the Conference vote in support of this motion – Councillors how many people go to a meeting with a view as to how they will vote they listen to both sides of the argument and then change their minds of how they will vote – that is their right we live in a democracy not a dictatorship. I believe what Clr Worthington is doing is a form of “**Caucusing**” and I refer you to the **Councils Model Code of Conduct-**

3.15 Binding caucus votes - You must not participate in binding caucus votes in relation to matter to be consider **at a council** or committee meeting – WELL there you have it Councillors I believe Clr Worthington **Point 3 in NOM22/0132 and NOM22/012 Point 2“Eurobodalla Shire Councillors who attend the LGNSW Conference vote in support of the Motions” is CAUCUSING VOTES and here we have it in writing by Clr Worthington.**

Councillors in ALL the years I have sat in a Council Meeting I have NEVER read a Council Agenda where a Councillor has dictated **in writing in a motion how fellow Councillors should vote Clr Worthington should be reminded we still live in a democracy.**

In Clr Worthington’s background information she made reference to the **NSW Parliamentary Committee Inquiry** that was held in the Council Chambers she has chosen to “cherry pick” statements - again I refer you to the statement made by **Chief Executive officer of Bega Council Mr Anthony McMahon stated** “that Forestry was a good neighbour, Forestry attended a community meeting in Eden during the fires where the RFS was under resourced Forestry changed the whole dynamics of the meeting given that the were able to offer support. Forestry also participates in Bega’s Bushfire management Committee and they were at the fore front during the Back Summer fires. Mr McMahon stated that the Logging Industry has been a major contributor to the Bega Valley Economy mentioning figures from 120-140 Million dollars. Mr McMahon stated the Timber Industry worked hand in hand with industries such as Eco-Tourism. He also stated that no one had presented in Council against Logging and the only time this came to his attention was when it was reported in the local newspaper ,he believed the demonstrators were from out of area.

Clr Worthington obviously failed to consider the statements made by the **GM, Director Sharpe and Usher at the meeting on 9th August** in relation to the positive things that Forestry did for this shire during the Black Summer Bushfires keeping roads open also the work conducted to establish the Bike Trails in Mogo and Narooma and work in our Botanic Gardens.

Clr Worthington has raised WA the facts are the WA government are not going to restrict Native Forest Clearing for mining areas as we all know WA is rich in mining of metals.

Councillors it should be noted NSW Agriculture Minister Saunders has signed a five year extension to contract for logging of native hardwood in State Forests the Agriculture Minister has signalled the government has no plans in phasing out logging the agreement covers from the mid north coast to the Queensland border, includes forests in Dorrigo, Wauchope, Kempsey, Grafton, Coffs Harbour, Taree, Wingham, Gloster, Glen Innes and Casino that represents 10 shires. Minister Saunders stated harvesting of native forests is a renewable industry.

What Clr Worthington has done is to paint a biased blackest of black pictures of Forestry NSW.

I am disgusted that Rate Payers monies and staff time is being wasted on motions that are interfering with State Government issues bought forward by an inexperience Councillor I believe who is playing party politics. Councillors you should be dealing with the urgent matters affecting this shire what Clr Worthington should be lobbying for at the conference is for the homelessness which is affecting all Councils in NSW .

Patricia Hellier

Presentation to Council on 23rd August 2022
NOM22/013 – Advocacy to NSW Government to end Native Forest Logging

Dr. Philip Creagh BVSc., CQCVMA
228 Old South Coast Rd., Narooma.

Councillors I would like to address the question on notice NOM 022/013 to end native forest logging and explain why I am against this motion in its entirety.

I am a member of South East Timber Association and I present a submission on behalf of the membership.

The motion as it stands is confusing to a layperson:

- Technically as State Forests are NOT part of Council lands, how does this affect the meaning and thrust of the motion?
- If a hardwood plantation was proposed on farmland within the Eurobodalla Shire, no DA would need to be sought. Does this make the motion even more pointless?
- The LGNSW annual conference states that “Proposed motions should be strategic, affect members state wide and introduce new or emerging policy issues and actions.” How this motion affects ‘members statewide’ is beyond me, or is this just a piece of virtue signalling?

Point 1

- (1) In the context of the NSW Government and Forestry Corporation of NSW.
 - Logging in NSW is regulated by the State Government. Minister Saunders has made it abundantly clear recently that logging contracts in NE NSW WILL be extended for a further five years. Of course this action has been greeted with doomsday scenarios about the future of forests by Sydney based, taxpayer funded ‘conservation’ groups.
 - Further the member for Bega, Dr. Holland stated on 2nd August 2022 that “it was unlikely the ALP would have an official position on phasing out the native forest logging industry before the state election in March 2023.” This is despite the unrelenting campaigns by taxpayer funded environmental groups, perhaps Labor has seen through the myths?
- (2) The ‘concerns from south coast residents for better management of State Forests to support nature based tourism, etc, etc.’
 - Yet the desirable ‘better management’ options are not delineated. The elephant in the room, that is conversion to National Parks, would mean there would be little to no opportunity for ‘eco-tourism’, no Mogo Bike trails, little recreational usage (no cars, no dogs), no firewood gathering, etc. etc.
 - Does ‘south coast residents’ imply all of us who live in Eurobodalla? I would suggest that the figure is probably confined to those who vote Green plus some residents who are swayed by the constant vilification of the timber industry. All of my acquaintances believe the Timber industry is overly demonised in our area.
 - It is worth noting that 98% of NSW Forestry products are certified to the Australian standard for sustainable forestry

- (3) Although this was carried at the 9th August Council meeting, the claims made are not supported by information that doesn't come from biased sources. It was disappointing to see the motion carried by five Councillors. A rational debate, rather than the current one sided one, will present the community with a thorough explanation of all the facts of this matter.
 - Nature based tourism opportunities ARE allowed in State Forests, they won't be in National Parks.
 - One has to wonder why Koalas are seen in State Forests, but don't appear to be seen in National Parks – is that because a managed forest supports a greater population? I am more concerned with the ongoing effects of Chlamydia, feral dogs and novel diseases on Koalas than Logging of about 1% of State Forests.
 - Logging, NOT land clearing, is a sustainable use of a natural resource. If this is not understood by Councillors, then it should be. Councillors are probably not aware of the managed state forests that have been transferred to the National Park estate, “locked up and locked out” and subsequently degraded.
- (4) This point raises too many issues to present in a seven minute talk. Softwood plantations are well developed in NSW. Hardwood plantations, although small, are slowly developing.
 - Walking through the pine forests near Canberra the lack of biodiversity is obvious. In fact the lack of any birds and animals is quite obvious. Being a monoculture this is to be expected. Similarly hardwood plantations ARE a monoculture and are grown purely for timber and profit – how would it be anything else?
 - With only 4% Arable land in Australia, and native hardwood forests currently present on them, one has to wonder where the huge hardwood timber plantations will be sited?

Point 2.

- This is a disgraceful suggestion. The three Eurobodalla Councillors who will go to the National conference of the LGANSW should, individually, listen to the facts of every motion put forward and vote accordingly. I cannot believe that this has been suggested.

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NOM22/012 – Advocacy to NSW Government to legislate that 24/7 Cat containment can be enforced by Local Government.

Dr. Philip Creagh BVSc., CQCVMA
228 Old South Coast Rd., Narooma.

Councillors

I am a retired Veterinarian. My wife and I moved to our 30 acre property in Narooma 20 years ago.

I would like to address the question on notice regarding cat containment and explain why I am against this motion in its entirety.

Without any doubt the intention of this motion is to presage that Council intends to force cat owners in Eurobodalla Shire to contain their cats within their property using cage confinement in one form or another.

It is clear that feral cats are a major contributor to small native animal destruction throughout Australia. However the figures quoted for pet cats are far more contentious and have been discussed at length within the scientific literature. I am quite familiar with the threatened species hub and its work which, to many, can be overly 'dramatic' for a 'shock' effect as opposed to rational and pragmatic discussion..

In my professional experience the 1970s saw few cats and dogs desexed. By the '90s education into the benefits of desexing led to a reduction in unwanted cats and dogs, a reduction in fighting and almost eliminated the burden of those 'going feral'.

In my Canberra practice every pet cat owner was strongly encouraged to have their cat desexed, were shown how to clip the front nails and advised to keep the cat indoors at night. These actions dramatically reduced the incidence of cat fights and the ability for predation on small animals. I would suggest that the vast majority, if not all, Veterinary practices continue to give this guidance to ALL cat owners.

I would like to address an issue that conservationists fail to understand in the rush to demonise pet cats and that is the highly significant human-cat bond amongst those people who own cats. Social media has many sites that demonstrate this. What conservationists fail to realise is the companionship that pets, especially cats, bring to those who are elderly and lonely.

When we came to live on the south coast the obvious reduction in socio-economic level compared to Canberra was even more apparent than what we saw as a tourist visitor. Over time we saw the high incidence of folks living alone with often only a dog or cat for companionship, barely making do. It was easy to see the psychological benefits for cat ownership amongst these people

In my professional opinion cats are easy to maintain, require little exercise and if desexed, fed correctly, have their front nails clipped and kept inside at night do not pose as great a problem as many in the 'conservation' media suggest. The habitat destruction and pollution required to build suburbs causes far more permanent mammal and bird damage than pet cat predation.

Cat containment systems range in price from \$800 to several thousand dollars. The people most affected by this will be that portion of the residents mostly elderly, not well off and frightened by the extra expense of keeping a cat.

Current rules and regulations available to Council are restrictive enough without the further imposition of costly preventative containment measures. Council's education in responsible pet ownership is to be applauded. Further the Companion Animals Act 1998 has several options for individual cat control.

Councillors I trust that you will reject this motion in its entirety. That you will think of those residents, the 'silent majority', who are against the constant stream of new and restrictive regulations and imposts that prevent people from going about their lives with as little restriction as possible.