

ITEM NO: 6

**SUBJECT: 2006-2007 SUPPLEMENTARY STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT
REPORT FOR THE CITY OF BLUE MOUNTAINS**

FILE NO: F03082

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council endorses the '2006-07 Supplementary State of the Environment Report for the City of Blue Mountains (Managing Our Heritage, Waste and Noise)' (enclosed separately) for submission to the Minister of Local Government as required by Section 428 of the Local Government Act 1993.*
 2. *That in the Council's next business planning process, the Council considers the issues identified in the '2006-07 Supplementary State of the Environment Report for the City of Blue Mountains' that require attention by decision-makers.*
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Report by Group Manager, Community and Corporate:

Background

State of the Environment (SoE) reporting is a tool for environmental management and education. Local Councils, in recognition of their significant role in environmental management at the local level, are required to produce State of the Environment reports for submission to the Minister for Local Government.

According to the *Environmental Guidelines for State of the Environment Reporting by Local Government* (1999), the purpose of State of the Environment reporting can be summarised as follows:

- Provide the public, Councils and other levels of government and other decision makers with important information about the condition of the environment;
- Report on the effectiveness of policies and programs developed in response to environmental change, including highlighting the cumulative effects of individual projects and environmental pressures across catchments or the local area;
- Assess progress towards achieving environmental standards and targets and ecological sustainability;
- Provide input into the development of long term ecologically sustainable economic and social policies by all levels of government through integrating environmental information with social and economic information;
- Identify current and emerging environmental issues and important gaps in knowledge and data collection; and
- Raise community awareness and understanding of their local environment and the contribution individuals and communities make through their use of resources such as energy, water and production of waste.

The following is a summary of SoE Reports available and planned:

Reporting Year	Type of Report	Available
2003-2004	Comprehensive	Available
2004-2005	Supplementary <i>Looking After Our Water</i>	Available
2005-2006	Supplementary <i>Looking After Our Biodiversity, Land and Air</i>	Available
2006-2007	Supplementary <i>Managing Our Heritage, Waste and Noise</i>	Available
2007-2008	Comprehensive	Dec 2008

What information is available in the 2006-2007 Supplementary SoE Report?

The ‘2006-07 Supplementary State of the Environment Report for the City of Blue Mountains’ is a supplementary report and has a focus on heritage, waste and noise. The Report is enclosed separately.

For each section of the report – heritage, waste and noise - the following information is provided:

Section 1 – Heritage	What are our heritage resources (Asset description)? What are the pressures on heritage (Pressure)? What is the current state of heritage (State)? Making a difference (Response). Trend data.
Section 2 – Waste	What is waste? What are the impacts of waste? What are the key management issues in relation to waste? Making a difference (Response). Trend data.
Section 3 – Noise	What is noise? What are the impacts of noise? What are the key management issues in relation to noise? Making a difference (Response). Trend data.

Heritage

Heritage relates to those places, objects, religions, customs and cultures that have aesthetic, natural, spiritual, historic or social significance for present or future generations. Heritage provides a link to the work and way of life of earlier generations, helps us to understand who we are today, and shapes what we will hand on to future generations. There are 89 places in the Blue Mountains listed on various heritage registers. Of particular note, is the Council’s walking track maintenance and restoration program with part-funding from the Environmental Levy. This program uses traditional construction techniques in stone step construction, drainage work and dry stone walling to repair walking track systems that are of local or state significance.

Waste

Reducing the volume of waste going to landfill has been a primary goal for the Council over a number of years. A 2004-2008 Management Plan objective is to “reduce the amount of waste

going to landfill through waste minimisation, resource recovery and educational awareness initiatives”. The volume of waste that was buried in 2006-2007 was 46,291 tonnes. This represents a reduction of 26.7% compared 2003-2004. The Council has set-up a Waste and Resources Reference Group with community, business, school, youth and environment representatives. The objectives of the Group are to:

- Ensure community views regarding waste and resources issues are canvassed and conveyed to Council;
- Act as a central point of communication between Council and the community regarding waste and resources issues; and
- Promote and involve the community in the planning, development and implementation of waste and resources initiatives.

Noise

Noise pollution encompasses both sound and vibration which has direct physiological and psychological effects on people. Noise can have a range of impacts from minor annoyance to more serious damage to hearing. Noise restrictions are specified in State legislation. There are a range of noise sources in the Blue Mountains including the highway corridor, barking dogs, domestic air conditioners, swimming pool pumps and commercial / industrial equipment. During 2006-2007 there were a total of 679 noise complaints to the Council with 536 of these related to barking dogs.

Sustainability Assessment (Triple Bottom Line Reporting):

By endorsing the ‘2006-2007 Supplementary State of Environment Report (Managing Our Heritage, Waste and Noise)’ to guide future decision-making a number of positive sustainability outcomes are supported.

Effects	Positive	Negative
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As well as highlighting the range of actions being undertaken to address heritage, waste and noise issues, this State of Environment Report contributes to our understanding of the condition of our natural, built and social assets. This assists all Blue Mountains stakeholders to guide the management of our heritage, waste and noise so that resources can be appropriately targeted to priority action areas. • By better managing our Heritage, our sense of local identity and place is strengthened, the distinctive qualities of our towns and villages are enhanced and creative and cultural expression is supported. • By better managing our Waste the life of the infrastructure required to dispose of waste is extended, the environmental impacts on adjacent areas is reduced and the promotion of low consumption lifestyles is supported. • By better managing our Noise the wellbeing of Blue Mountains communities is supported. 	No significant negative impacts
Social		
Economic		

Financial implications for the Council

There are no financial implications in relation to the Council endorsing the ‘2006-2007 Supplementary State of Environment Report (Managing Our Heritage, Waste and Noise)’. Any new initiatives that are developed to respond to the State of Environment are subject to the Council’s business planning process with budgets and programs adopted annually in June each year by the Council.

Legal and risk management issues for the Council

There are no legal or risk management issues in relation to the Council endorsing the 2006-2007 Supplementary State of Environment Report.

External consultation

As this Report is a “Supplementary” Report, no external consultation has been undertaken.

Local Government Reforms and State of Environment Reporting

With the State government’s proposed local government reforms to planning and reporting, annual State of Environment Reporting may no longer be mandatory. Until decisions are made by the Department of Local Government and implemented in the legislation, it is intended that a Comprehensive State of Environment Report will be prepared for the 2007-2008 reporting year.

Conclusion

According to the *Environmental Guidelines for State of the Environment Reporting by Local Government* (1999), the *2006-2007 Supplementary State of the Environment Report for the City of Blue Mountains* is an important management and decision making tool for the Council. It is recommended that as part of the Council’s next business planning process, Council considers the issues identified in the ‘2006-2007 Supplementary State of the Environment Report for the City of Blue Mountains (Managing Our Heritage, Waste and Noise)’ that require attention by decision makers.

When making decisions about the City of Blue Mountains, the Council as steward on behalf of community plays a significant leadership role in developing policy for managing the community’s assets and providing services to Blue Mountains people. The Council’s leadership role for the City on behalf of community means that policy and decision making by the Council can promote efficient, wise and effective management of resources, environmentally responsible actions which are fair and equitable and which promote liveable, vibrant communities with a sense of place and belonging for all.

An opportunity now exists for the Council to respond proactively to issues presented in the ‘2006-2007 Supplementary State of the Environment Report for the City of Blue Mountains (Managing Our Heritage, Waste and Noise)’ through making decisions and developing policy that will result in more sustainable action by the Council.

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Enclosure: (1) 2006-07 Supplementary State of the Environment for the Blue Mountains (Managing Our Heritage, Waste and Noise)

ITEM NO: 7**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON RECYCLING IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS****FILE NO:** F00035

Recommendations:

- 1. That the Council receives and notes this report; and*
 - 2. That the content of this report be taken into account by the Tender Review Panel of the Recyclable Materials Collection Service tender and contract.*
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Report by Group Manager, Community and Corporate**Reason for report**

This report has been written to provide the Council with an overview of the results from the various community consultations about recycling in the Blue Mountains that have been undertaken in the past 18 months.

Background

The Council is currently evaluating tenders for the next recycling contract program to commence on 1 July 2008. It is proposed to present tender recommendations to the 11 December 2007 Council meeting.

This report outlines some of the community factors that will be considered in the development of the recommendations.

During the past 18 months, various community consultation has been undertaken by the Waste and Resources Team that provides specific information on the community's view of recycling in the Blue Mountains. These consultations were:

1. Commercial Recycling Feasibility Survey
2. Eco Bin Service Survey
3. Waste and Resources Reference Group
4. Feedback on Recycling Discussion Paper
5. Petition Received

Community Consultation**1. Commercial Recycling Feasibility Survey (March 2006)**

The primary objective of this market survey was to determine the unmet demand for recycling from commercial and other non-residential premises in the Blue Mountains. This Market Research was conducted in partnership with the (then) NSW Department of Environment and Conservation. Surveys were posted to over 1200 properties, including 1100 randomly selected businesses and all schools and pre-schools. The survey was sent with a reply paid

envelope and a covering letter explaining the purpose of the survey. In order to encourage a high survey return, a free native plant was offered for every completed survey received. This incentive was also offered to ensure that surveys were returned from those businesses that were not interested in a recycling service and therefore may not have otherwise completed and returned the survey. By the specified return date, a total of 321 surveys had been received, reaching the target of 300 for statistical validity.

The research suggests that around 85% of all businesses in the surveyed sectors have a demand for paper and/or cardboard recycling. Of these, there appears to be unmet demand for a paper/cardboard collection service for around 75% of businesses. Similarly, around 50% of businesses in the surveyed sectors have a demand for recycling of co-mingled materials (glass, plastic and aluminium containers), of which almost 90% was unmet demand.

The research also revealed that the preferred service style for businesses and other non-residential premises is a weekly or fortnightly mobile bin service for paper and cardboard and another for co-mingled containers.

2. Eco Bin Service Survey (December 2006)

During October 2006, surveys were posted to all properties who had swapped to the 140 litre eco-bin service at that time. This was over 2000 surveys. The survey was posted with a cover letter and a reply paid envelope, with the incentive of the opportunity to win double movie passes for returning the survey. By the specified return date in December 2006, a total of 1439 surveys had been returned, a greater than 70% return rate.

The questions in this survey related specifically to the household's use of the eco-bin service, with one open ended question at the end asking for any comments on the Domestic Waste Services. There were 969 responses to this open question, with 218 specifically mentioning the recycling service. The following table shows the main comments from these 218. Please note that individual responses did include comments on multiple topics, hence the total number of comments is greater the 218.

ISSUE	NUMBER
Satisfied with the crate service	40
Specifically requesting that the crates be removed	13
Negative comments about crates*	113
Preference for a mobile bin service	60
Request for non-residential services	4
Request for additional materials to be collected	26

*Litter from the crate based system was the primary concern (41), followed by difficulties in carrying a crate (22) and the crate being too small (18).

3. Waste and Resources Reference Group (August 2007)

The Waste and Resources Reference Group met on 16 August 2007. Attendance included a community representative from each Ward, from an environment group, from lower and mid-

mountains businesses, a Councillor and three Council staff. Recycling in the Blue Mountains was the main issue under discussion at this meeting.

At the time of this meeting it had not been decided to include the crate based service in the Recycling Tender, so discussion was primarily around the three other options. There was no distinct consensus from the Group, however discussion included the following issues:

- Preference to retain a weekly service, but acknowledgement that with appropriate education tools a fortnightly service would be acceptable, particularly as so many other areas manage it;
- Preference for a choice of size (140 or 240 litre) mobile bins, because many would find a full 240 litre bin difficult to manoeuvre;
- Preference for a service style appropriate for businesses and schools as well as residential properties (with the twin bin style considered most appropriate);
- Preference for any style that keeps the Rates lowest.

None of the Group members indicated a preference to include the crate as an option.

4. Discussion Paper Feedback (October 2007)

Between 12 September and 5 October 2007, feedback was sought from the entire Blue Mountains community about recycling in the Blue Mountains. A brief Discussion Paper was prepared and made publicly available. The Discussion Paper included ways in which a recycling service can be improved, current service performance and options being sought in the Tender process. The Discussion Paper is attached.

This feedback period was promoted in the following ways:

- 4 x half page Gazette advertisements
- 3 x article on Council's News page in the Gazette
- Posters at all Council offices (2) and libraries (6)
- Media release (resulting in an item in the Gazette Mountain Murmurs)
- Councillor Bulletin
- Youth Council meeting
- Advice and reminder to all Waste and Resource Reference Group members
- Council's website (information and Discussion Paper for download)

Feedback was accepted via email or post. During the feedback period, 58 responses were received. The table below provides a summary of the main comments made. Please note that individual responses did include comments on multiple topics, hence the total number of comments is greater than 58.

ISSUE	NUMBER
Satisfied with the crate service	9
Specifically requesting that the crates be removed	27
Negative comments about crates*	66
Preference for a mobile bin service	50
Request for non-residential services	7
Request for additional materials to be collected	4

*Litter from the crate based system was the primary concern (33), followed by difficulties in carrying a crate (14) and the crate being too small (11).

5. Petition Received (October 2007)

On 9 October 2007 a petition was received by Council requesting that the recycling service be kept the same. The petition contained signatures from 86 households. The three issues raised in the petition were:

- More materials are actually recycled with the crate system;
- A split recycling bin is not wanted
- Concern about loss of local employment with a change away from the crate system

Conclusion

Overall, input about recycling in the Blue Mountains has been received from greater than 690 households/properties. These consultations demonstrate that there are clearly many views on recycling in the Blue Mountains.

There are 86 households requesting the current crate based service be retained based on its high quality of recyclable materials (low contamination) and the importance of local employment.

There are also 110 households requesting a change to a mobile bin recycling service based predominantly on concerns about litter and difficulties carrying the crate. A change to a mobile bin service was also considered preferable for a non-residential recycling service.

* * * * *

Attachment (1)

Attachment 1:**Discussion Paper - The Future of Recycling in the Blue Mountains**

Blue Mountains City Council are currently preparing for a new recycling contract to begin in mid-2008. Community experience, cost, environmental performance and operational considerations will be considered in deciding on a style of recycling service.

The performance of any recycling service can potentially be improved in the following ways:

1. Increasing the number of people who use it

Approximately 4 out of 5 households in the Blue Mountains use their recycling service at some time. This means that one out of every five never recycle at home, and there is potential to increase the number of households using the service.

2. Increasing the amount of material people correctly sort into the recycling instead of into the garbage bin

The most recent audit revealed that 15.7% of material in garbage bins could have been recycled. This was around 3600 tonnes of material in 2006/2007 and provides potential to improve the amount recycled.

3. Reducing the amount of incorrect materials placed in the recycling

Audits of the recycling service have always revealed very low contamination, so there is little potential to improve this aspect of the recycling service.

4. Increasing the types of recyclables that are accepted

Additional types of materials collected by some other councils account for 1.3% of the material in the garbage bins, equating to approximately 300 tonnes in 2006/2007. This provides some limited opportunity to improve recycling performance.

Current Recycling Performance

The table below shows preliminary good practice performance measures released by the Department of Environment and Conservation¹, including a baseline indicator and aspirational targets. The final column shows the results Blue Mountains achieved in 2006/2007.





Indicator	Baseline	Target	Blue Mountains
Yield (Kg/h'hold/week)	>4	>5.5	4.0
Yield (Kg/person/week)	>1.5	>2.1	1.7
Diversion (%)	19	>29	22
Contamination (%)	n/a	<3.5	2.9

The Blue Mountains community are meeting all the baseline measures of good practice, and now have an opportunity to strive for the aspirational targets.

Recycling Options for the Future

The next table describes the types of services Council will be considering for the new contract:

¹ NSW Department of Environment and Conservation, 2004. Good practice performance measures for kerbside recycling systems – an overview.

Service Style	Positive	Negative
 <p>2 x 55 litre Crates (1 x co-mingled containers & 1 x paper/cardboard) collected weekly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low (almost zero) contamination – maximum recovery • Low capital cost • Familiar and simple to utilise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OH&S Issues • Potential litter source • Easily damaged or stolen • Difficult to carry for elderly & frail • Material exposed to weather • Poor option for commercial users • Can't accept aerosol cans • May be regulated against • Limited service providers
 <p>240 litre mobile bin for fully co-mingled containers, paper and cardboard collected fortnightly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 litres more capacity than current • Common industry practice • Established education and support programs available • Substantial reduction in vehicle impacts (traffic & emissions) • Low cost option (should be similar to current cost) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for contamination • Heavy when full • Frequency may not be suitable for commercial users • Requires calendar and substantial education • All collected material must be sorted
 <p>Twin Bin, 140 litre mobile bin for paper and cardboard and a 140 litre mobile bin for co-mingled plastic, glass, steel and metal containers, collected on alternate weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 litres (over fortnight) more capacity than current • Smaller bin than fully co-mingled, easier to manage for elderly and frail • Reduction in vehicle impacts (traffic & emissions) from current • Lower contamination risk than fully co-mingled • Maintains “weekly habit” • Potential for highest recovery rates (DECC research) • More flexible for commercial users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage issues – space required for 3 bins • Highest capital cost • Potential for contamination (lower than fully co-mingled) • Requires more vehicles than fully co-mingled fortnightly collection • Possibly highest cost option • Requires calendar and substantial education
 <p>140 litre mobile bin for fully co-mingled containers, paper and cardboard, collected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 litres more capacity (weekly) than current • Small bin (140) easy to manage especially for older residents • Maintains weekly service frequency • Reduction in vehicle impacts (traffic & emissions) from current 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for contamination • All collected material must be sorted • Requires more vehicles than fully co-mingled fortnightly collection • Possibly highest cost option • Not as much capacity for

<p>weekly, with an option to upgrade to a 240 litre mobile bin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal education with no need for calendars • Suitable for commercial users 	<p>larger cardboard products</p>
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A mobile bin with a split down the middle (one side for paper and cardboard and the other side for containers) is not favoured by the industry because these systems require expensive vehicles and have problems with the materials being mixed, either by confused residents or during their transfer from the bin to the truck. Most councils who have used this system have now removed the split to have a fully co-mingled service.

Feedback

Blue Mountains City Council is investigating improvements to the performance of the recycling service. Your comments on recycling in the Blue Mountains are invited now. Please write to:

Email: WARRG@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

Post: Waste & Resources Team, BMCC,
 Locked Bag 1005 Katoomba 2780

Comments must be received by **Friday 5 October 2007**.

ITEM NO: 8**SUBJECT: PURCHASE OF INDIAN MYNA TRAPS****FILE NO: F00088**

Recommendations:

1. *That the Council receives the report and notes the information.*
 2. *That the Council does not support a trapping program for Indian Mynas.*
 3. *That community education about the passive control of Indian Mynas is incorporated into the existing environmental community education program where appropriate.*
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Report by Group Manager, Community and Corporate**Reason for report**

This report was prepared in response to the Notice of Motion of Councillors Brown and McInnes, proposed and unanimously endorsed at the Council Meeting held on 17 July 2007, vide Minute No 193:

- “1. *That the Council, on behalf of all Blue Mountains residents, prepare a report on the purchase of Indian Myna traps with the view to them being rented out to residents for a small fee.*
2. *That the report to the Council investigates humane methods of disposing of any Indian Myna birds caught, outlining these methods and collection points for the birds.”*

(Minute No 193, 17/7/07)

Background**Indian Mynas in the Blue Mountains**

Indian Mynas were first introduced into Melbourne in 1862 and are now common in most urban centers along the eastern coast of Australia. Indian Myna populations have become firmly established around the townships of the Lower Blue Mountains and are becoming more common in the townships of the Upper Blue Mountains.

Indian Mynas live in both the urban environments of townships and in the modified woodlands and agricultural land near townships. Open space, lawns, a low density of native shrubs and trees, and a high density of exotic plants with dense foliage, especially palms and conifers, all favour the establishment of the Indian Myna at the expense of native birds. High densities of Indian Mynas are also encouraged by access to ‘free food’ such as uncovered pet bowls, uncovered bins, people feeding wildlife, and food scraps left around outdoor eating areas and fast food outlets.

Indian Mynas have a negative impact on biodiversity by competing aggressively for nesting hollows with native wildlife, including both native birds and small native fauna such as the Sugar Glider. Indian Mynas have been shown to be capable of evicting even large birds such

as Kookaburras and Dollar Birds from their nests. Indian Mynas also reduce public amenity through noise and fouling at communal roosts, with the attendant risk to human and domestic animal health.

Indian Myna trapping

Trapping of Indian Mynas is a method for the attempted control of Indian Mynas that is known to be selective, safe for humans and the environment, and whose humaneness is acceptable to the majority of the community. Myna traps, that are selective for Indian Mynas and Starlings (another feral species) as well as a euthanasia system based on carbon dioxide gassing that is considered humane by the RSPCA, have both been developed.

However limited trials have been conducted to test whether trapping can effectively reduce Indian Myna populations or what the number of traps required to achieve a particular population reduction would be. In the only substantial trial conducted to date Environment and Recreation (ACT) collaborated with the Australian National University in a trial to determine whether Indian Mynas could be successfully removed from the urban areas of Canberra using trapping. The results of this trial suggested that 'whilst trapping can have some impact on Myna numbers in the vicinity of traps, it may not be a practical method to eradicate or achieve a long-term reduction in Myna numbers on a broad-scale across Canberra.' In recognition that the use of individual traps are unlikely to be able to generate a reduction in the Myna population overall, research is now focused on developing systems for trapping larger numbers of Indian Mynas at communal roosts.

Anecdotal evidence and advice compiled by contacting other councils that have conducted small scale trapping programs indicate that Indian Myna trapping is both resource intensive and ineffective at significantly reducing overall Indian Myna densities. The advantages identified by Councils that have developed an Indian Myna trapping capacity included:

1. That having an Indian Myna trapping capacity was a useful tool for raising community awareness of the Indian Myna problem.
2. That the existence of a proactive Council trapping program encouraged individuals to implement the more effective community passive control methods such as reducing access to food and nesting resources.

Of the various models investigated, the predominately community driven models used by groups such as the Mid North Coast Myna Control Program and the Canberra Myna Control program were the most successful models examined. In these models community volunteers established the Myna Control Programs and conducted the majority of the resource intensive administration of the traps and the collection and disposal of the trapped Mynas while land management agencies and councils provided a once off capital injection of funds to purchase the traps and develop educational resources and programs thereby avoiding the potentially significant ongoing administration costs of maintaining a council run Indian Myna Control Program.

Overall it is considered that while a trapping program may provide some beneficial educational outcomes, it has not been shown to be a method that can significantly stop the spread or control the density of Indian Myna populations.

Humane methods of disposal for trapped Indian Myna birds

Three humane methods of euthanasia of trapped birds are authorized by the Department of Primary Industries.

1. *Carbon Dioxide Gassing*

Carbon dioxide gassing involves placing the trap and the trapped birds in an impervious gassing sleeve, which is then filled with pressurized industrial grade carbon dioxide. Anaesthesia occurs within 60 seconds and death occurs within 3 minutes.

2. *Injection of Barbiturates*

Euthanasia by the injection of Barbiturates is quick and painless but needs to be performed by a qualified veterinary surgeon.

3. *Cervical Dislocation*

Cervical dislocation involves separation of the skull and the brain from the spinal cord by pressure applied posterior to the base of the skull. The brain stem, which controls respiration and heart activity, is consequently damaged, stopping breathing and reducing blood flow to the brain, leading to death. This method needs to be conducted confidently by a skilled operator to be humane.

Recommended method of disposal

The use of carbon dioxide gassing would be the recommended method of disposal as it is humane and safe when used by a trained operator in a well ventilated area and does not require the supervision of qualified veterinary surgeon. It has also been endorsed by the RSPCA. However operators would need to be trained in cervical dislocation techniques as well as DPI regulations state that each animal must be verified as dead before removing it from the chamber and that if uncertainty exists whether the animal is dead, CO₂ narcosis must be followed by another euthanasia method, eg cervical dislocation.

Suitable collection points and carbon dioxide gassing stations for the trapped Indian Mynas would need to be identified and established as carbon dioxide gassing stations are best operated as fixed units due to the OH&S issues of moving pressurized gases. Operators would need to be trained in the safe use of pressurized gasses and in carbon dioxide gassing and cervical dislocation euthanasia techniques.

Establishing an Indian Myna Trap for Hire Program

In order to establish an Indian Myna Trap for Hire Program the following components of the program would need to be resourced:

1. *Purchase of Indian Myna Traps*

A variety of companies produce Myna traps. They tend to be either small traps for trapping small numbers of birds (up to 20 birds), retailing at around \$200, or large traps for trapping larger numbers of birds (20 birds or more), retailing at around \$400 (Prices include accessories and delivery).

2. *Administration of Hire program*

The administration associated with running an Indian Myna Trap for Hire Program would involve:

- (a) Establishment of a hiring protocol.
- (b) Training of staff on how to administer the program.
- (c) Training of staff on the technical aspects of the purchased Myna Traps operation and maintenance and the procedure and ethics of the disposal of trapped birds.
- (d) Administration of the hiring of traps (storage of traps, maintenance of traps, taking trap bookings and answering queries, signing in and out of traps, handling of hire

fees and deposits, providing technical information about how to operate traps and the disposal process to community users).

Establishment an Indian Myna collection and disposal program

In order to establish an Indian Myna collection and disposal program the following components of the program would need to be resourced:

1. *Purchase of carbon dioxide gassing units*

Gassing sleeves, gassing hoses with regulators and at least two pressurized industrial carbon dioxide cylinders would need to be purchased for each carbon dioxide gassing station. At least two G-size bottles and two regulators must be available and accessible with the second (full) bottle and regulator being required on site, and easily accessible, in the event of a failure of the primary regulator and/or bottle.

2. *Administration of collection and disposal of trapped birds*

The administration associated with running an Indian Myna Trap Collection and Disposal Program would involve:

- (a) Establishment of a collection and disposal protocol.
- (b) Training of staff on how to administer the program.
- (c) Training of staff on the technical aspects and ethics of the humane handling and euthanasia of the trapped birds including the carbon dioxide gassing and cervical dislocation procedures and the handling of pressurised gasses.
- (d) Administration of the collection and disposal program (receiving trapped birds, euthanasing trapped birds, maintenance of carbon dioxide gassing stations, providing information about the disposal process to community users, maintaining records on the number of birds euthanased).

Sustainability Assessment

Environmental

The Indian Myna traps for hire program would not significantly reduce the density or the spread of Indian Myna populations in the Blue Mountains. The main benefit of having an Indian Myna trapping capacity would be its potential use as a tool to raise community awareness of the Indian Myna problem and of the passive control methods available to help control them.

Economic

The establishment of a BMCC Indian Myna control capacity would require ongoing resourcing for the life of the program. The limited environmental benefits from the program would not justify the substantial costs to Council.

Social

The engagement of the community in the prevention of the spread and density of Indian Myna populations would represent a socially and environmentally responsible outcome. However a proportion of the Blue Mountains community would be opposed to the capture and euthanasia of any wild birds, whether they are feral or not. Council staff could also have practical, ethical or philosophical concerns about having to handle and euthanase birds.

Financial implications-

The capital costs of purchasing the Indian Myna traps and the carbon dioxide gassing stations would be relatively small (approximately \$200 per trap and \$200 per carbon dioxide gassing station). However, the establishment of the program, the training of staff, and the ongoing administration of the Indian Myna Trap hiring program and the collection and disposal program would require far greater and ongoing resourcing. The administration costs would be recurrent and dependent on the popularity of the service. Training costs would also be incurred from time to time due to staff turnover.

Legal and risk management issues for Council

Animal welfare issues arising from the inappropriate treatment of trapped Indian Myna birds by the hirers of the Indian Myna traps would be difficult to control. Clear instructions on the ethical treatment of trapped Indian Mynas would need to be given to trap hirers and would need to be a condition on the use of the traps by the hirer.

Care must be taken when handling birds (especially pest species) as they may carry diseases such as psittacosis (chlamydiosis), aspergillosis, erysipelas, yersiniosis and salmonellosis that can affect humans and other animals. Safety precautions such as routinely wash hands after handling all birds and the use of personal protective equipment, especially face masks, would be recommended when handling birds to reduce the risk of contracting disease.

During set-up of traps and handling of gas cylinders, operators would need to be aware of the risks of injury from lifting heavy and bulky items.

Staff would need to be trained in the safe use of pressurized gasses and the carbon dioxide gassing procedure.

External Consultation

1. Councils with Indian Myna Trapping programs including Pittwater Council, Kiama Council and Campbelltown Council were telephoned and asked to provide advice about their Indian Myna trapping programs and their experiences.
2. Community driven Myna Control programs including the Mid North Coast Myna Control Program were telephoned and asked to provide advice about their Indian Myna trapping programs and their experiences.
3. Blue Mountains Birders Vice president was telephoned to assess her views on the potential for the establishment of a community driven Indian Myna Control Program in the Blue Mountains.

Conclusion

Both the available research and the anecdotal evidence compiled by contacting other councils that have conducted similar small scale trapping programs indicate that Indian Myna trapping is both resource intensive and ineffective at significantly reducing overall Indian Myna densities. Through changing community behaviour, passive control methods including reducing access to 'free food' and nesting resources, offers the most effective as well as the most economical means of controlling the spread and density of Indian Mynas in the Blue Mountains. These passive methods would also help control other bird species and feral species, which can have negative impacts on biodiversity such as the native Currawong and the Noisy Minor and the feral cat and fox. Community education about the passive control of Indian Mynas could be readily incorporated into the existing environmental community education program where appropriate.

It is recommended that an Indian Myna trapping program not be supported. Education on passive control of Indian Mynas can be incorporated into existing community education programs.

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