POSITION DESCRIPTION

SENIOR BIODIVERSITY PLANNING OFFICER

POSITION DETAILS

Date of Position Description	September 2024
Position Title	Senior Biodiversity Planning Officer
Position Grade	12
Directorate | Business Unit	City Assets and Operations | Environment and Sustainability
Reports to	Manager Natural Resources
Physical Requirements Category	Category 1 – Desk role with Ergonomics Requirements
Job Location	316 Victoria Road, Rydalmere *(Council retains the right to alter locations should the operational need arise)*

POSITION OVERVIEW

This position is responsible for the assessment of Development Application referrals and other planning matters relating to Natural Areas on behalf of the Natural Areas team consistent with the requirements of relevant legislation, environmental planning instruments and policies. It will provide the Natural Areas Manager and other internal and external stakeholders with professional advice and specialist technical expertise relating to ecology and biodiversity matters. The position also leads and manages strategic (LGA-wide) biodiversity conservation projects. The position also undertakes reviews of arboricultural reports relating to bushland trees that are impacted by proposed developments under Part 4 & Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979.*

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Role Specific

- Coordinate the assessment of Pre-lodgment Application, Development Application, State Significant Development and Planning Proposal referrals on behalf of the Natural Areas team with regards to ecology, biodiversity, natural areas, and impacts to bushland trees.
- Review and negotiation of complex ecological and arboricultural solutions with both highly motivated and resourced customers and customers with limited understanding of the development processes.
- Prepare assessment reports and development consent conditions within a complex statutory framework.
- Ensure any assessment undertaken is completed in accordance with the applicable law, including, Legislation, Environmental Planning Instruments, Development Control Plans, Council Policies, etc.
- Represent Council in joint conferences and/or as an expert witness in appeals to the Land and Environment Court.
- Lead and manage strategic (LGA-wide) biodiversity conservation projects.
- Provision of professional and technical advice to internal and external stakeholders in relation to ecology, biodiversity and natural area.
- Provide professional and technical expertise in the development, implementation and review of biodiversity and natural area strategic plans, policies and planning instruments.

- Conduct research to support the development of environmental strategy and actions.
- Maintain an in-depth understanding of, and ensure compliance with, relevant biodiversity and natural areas legislation and regulations, environmental planning instruments and policies.
- Operate with a considerable degree of independence and take responsibility for, and manage, own work and contribute to a productive work environment.
- Monitor council processes and procedures to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and policies.

Baseline

- Ensure that all practices are up to date with current and pertinent legislation, statutory regulations and better practice to ensure a subject-matter-expert mindset is adopted and promoted to all stakeholders.
- Promote continuous improvement and innovation in practices, optimisation of technology, procedures and recommendations with the aim of providing better service to the client base in line with the organisation's values.
- Build in performance metrics and mechanisms to identify early visibility of risks to enable mitigation approaches.
- Promote and maintain effective relationships with all external business partners including community organisations, contractors, State and Federal authorities.
- Ensure to take reasonable care of the health and safety of yourself, employees, visitors, contractors and volunteers whilst at work, and cooperate with the organisation to comply with WHS legislative obligations.
- Promote the value of diversity and inclusion in all practices, engaging with and integrating the views of others.
- Contribute to customer service and organisational effectiveness, by acting ethically, honestly and with fairness.
- Comply with Council policies, including the COVID 19 Vaccination Policy, as amended from time to time

KNOWLEDGE

Qualifications

- Tertiary qualifications such as, a Degree in Ecology, Environmental Science, Environmental or Natural Resource Management or equivalent.
- BAM Accredited Assessor (or eligible for accreditation) under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.
- Diploma (AQF Level 5) in Arboriculture (Desirable)
- Qualifications or experience in Natural Area Restoration (Bush Regeneration) (Desirable)
- Class 'C' Driver's Licence.

Experience

- Minimum 7 years professional working experience in natural areas management or related field.
- Demonstrated experience in the assessment and review of ecological matters, in the context of development applications and environmental planning proposals, including the preparation or review of Biodiversity Development Assessment Reports (BDARs) and Tests of Significance under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016.

- Extensive experience in ecological survey techniques, including plant and vegetation community identification and fauna survey methods.
- Demonstrated experience in managing biodiversity conservation projects and consultants.
- Practical experience and detailed knowledge in ecology, wildlife management and botany.
- Extensive experience in working with multidisciplinary teams.
- Demonstrated experience in the development and implementation of environmental policy.

Skills

- Extensive knowledge of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*, *Local Government Act 1993*, related legislation and environmental planning policies.
- Excellent skills and understanding of the principles and practices of biodiversity conservation.
- Demonstrated capability in preparing high quality reports, correspondence and technical reviews.
- High level of clear and concise written and verbal communication skills, negotiation skills, and conflict resolution skills, and an ability to relate to all levels of staff within the organisation and the community.
- Ability to work within cross functional teams involving members from a wide range of professions, public authorities, government bodies, community members, internal and external stakeholders.
- Ability to deliver strategic biodiversity conservation projects in accordance with the requirements of the project brief and the expectations of the Natural Areas Manager
- Ability to work effectively with a high level of independence and within a team, displaying appropriate judgment, flexibility, accuracy, organisational awareness, problem solving and decision-making skills. High level customer service, case management and project management skills.
- Understanding of the role and functions of local government.
- Understanding of protocols governing the need for privacy, confidentiality and probity.
- Excellent computer literacy, the ability to operate in a Windows environment, and a high level of experience with Microsoft Office products.
- Demonstrated organisational and time management skills.