

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY GENERAL POLICY

Intent

The intent of this policy is to continue to embed environmental sustainable principles into Council's operations. Environmental sustainability is the third pillar of the Triple Bottom Line, which also includes social/cultural and economic sustainability. Council intends to focus on environmental sustainability in this policy.

Council commits to six Environmental Sustainable Principles, which are:

1. Preserve and restore the natural environment
2. Utilise resources efficiently
3. Protect and enhance biodiversity
4. Monitor and reduce Council's environmental footprint
5. Strengthen Council's resilience to climate change
6. Display strong environmental leadership

This policy recognises Council's commitment to the protection of the natural environment and the importance of developing and integrating suitable sustainable environmental practices across Council operations. It aligns with the principles of the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (1992) and other relevant environmental legislation.

The key areas of focus for the delivery of this policy are:

- Events primarily initiated and/or funded by Council
- Capital works projects
- Infrastructure and maintenance
- Procurement
- Resource management
- Water and waste water operations

Scope

This policy is applicable to all of Council and its employees in all decisions and activities.

Reference

Relevant Legislation:

- Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011
- Sustainable Planning Act 2009
- Biodiversity Act 2004
- Environmental Protection Act 1994
- National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development – adopted by all levels of the Australian Government in 1992.

Other Principles:

- Intergenerational Equity –The present generation has a guardian duty to protect the natural environment for future generations, as each generation has the right to inherit the same resources enjoyed by previous generations.

- Life Cycle Cost Analysis – The financial, environmental and social costs associated with an asset or resource throughout the entirety of its life. This includes the costs associated with raw materials, production, transport, operating costs and disposal.
- Polluter Pays Principle – The costs associated with environmental pollution, including containment, abatement and avoidance, should be borne by the party who caused the pollution.
- The Precautionary Principle – When an activity may lead to morally unacceptable harm, for example the destruction of the natural environment, action should be taken to avoid or diminish that harm even when the scientific evidence has a degree of uncertainty.
- Triple Bottom Line – A sustainability framework which takes into account social/cultural and environmental performance in addition to financial/economic performance.
- Waste Hierarchy – A guide for prioritising waste management practices with the objective of achieving optimal environmental outcomes. The most preferable option is to avoid producing the waste, this is followed by reduce, reuse, recycle, recover, treat and disposal.

Provisions

Council commits to applying the six Environmental Sustainable Principles to its operations and decision making, while delivering efficient and cost-effective services to the community.

Processes

Council will embed the Environmental Sustainable Principles into Council operations through the following actions:

1. Comply with and aspire to exceed the requirements of relevant environmental legislation, policy and standards to continually improve Council's environmental sustainability performance.
2. Give purchase preference to goods and services which provide value for money outcomes to Council and consider re-useable, recycled and/or environmentally friendly products in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy.
3. Identify and roll out suitable energy efficiency initiatives across Council operations.
4. Endeavour to reduce the amount of waste generated by Council operations and increase the percentage of waste re-used and/or recycled in accordance with the Waste Hierarchy.
5. Endeavour to increase the amount of recycled water used for irrigation, industry and other appropriate purposes within the Shire.
6. Endeavour to protect and restore biodiversity through targeted weed management, tree planting, seed propagation and pest/animal control.
7. Regularly monitor Council's carbon emission performance and report outcomes to senior management, community and relevant government agencies.
8. Endeavour to reduce Council's carbon footprint by improving environmental performance by setting measurable objectives and targets.
9. Plan and prepare for natural events and the associated environmental impacts.
10. Integrate the environmental sustainable principles into management frameworks to ensure environmental sustainability is a core part of Council's strategic planning and operations.

This Policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council

Manager Responsible for Review:

Manager Sustainable Communities

ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 28/03/2017

DUE FOR REVISION: 28/03/2020