

## OPEN SPACES GENERAL POLICY

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### Intent

This policy recognises Council's commitment to achieve a network of diverse, accessible, high quality parks, reserves and recreation facilities that are sustainable, contribute to the attractiveness and vitality of communities, and enhance people's health and wellbeing by meeting their needs for outdoor recreation in urban settings now and into the future.

Open space is the publicly owned land that is set aside primarily for recreation, nature conservation, passive outdoor enjoyment and public gatherings. This includes public parks, gardens, nature reserves, waterways, and publicly owned sporting venues.

The purpose of this policy is to provide the strategic direction for public open space planning and management in the Douglas Shire.

### Scope

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

In terms of Open Space, this policy relates to all Councillors and Council Officers who are engaged in the process of planning, developing, and maintaining open spaces and associated infrastructure.

In addition, the policy serves as a guide to developers, State Government, organisations, community groups and individuals who are submitting open spaces projects for Council's consideration.

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

- Capital works projects;
- Infrastructure maintenance;
- Procurement; and
- Planning / Development applications.

### Reference

- Douglas Shire Council Corporate Plan 2019 – 2024;
- Douglas Shire Council Annual Operational Plans;
- Douglas Shire Planning Scheme;
- Local Government Infrastructure Plan.

### Relevant Council Policies

- Corporate Sustainability General Policy;
- Climate Change General Policy;
- Environment (Council Operations) General Policy;

- Arts General Policy.

### Relevant Legislation

- Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003;
- Biosecurity Act 2014;
- Environmental Protection Act 1994;
- Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993;
- Sustainable Planning Act 2009;
- National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development – adopted by all levels of the Australian Government in 1992;
- Land Act 1994.

### Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>Open Space</b>	Areas for "parks", "green spaces", and other open areas. The landscape of open spaces can range from playing fields to highly maintained environments to relatively natural landscapes. They are commonly open to public access.
<b>Intergenerational Equity</b>	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.
<b>Life Cycle Cost Analysis</b>	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.
<b>The Precautionary Principle</b>	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.

### Provisions

Council commits to applying the following six (6) guiding principles to its operations and decision making, while delivering efficient and cost-effective services to the community.

- **Principle 1 - Accessible and Connected**  
Safe, easily accessible and convenient cycling and walking connections between parks, activity centres, neighbourhoods and regional destinations is central to creating an integrated and accessible open space network, well connected communities and opportunities for sustainable and healthy living. Parks should be welcoming, and designed to avoid perceptions that some areas are limited access or private spaces.
- **Principle 2- Place Making**  
Open Spaces play a major role in creating the identity or sense of place for a community. Parks, playgrounds and trails should respond positively to the natural environment and to local community

values and needs. Open space plays an important role in the protection and enhancement of environmental, cultural and heritage values.

- **Principle 3 -Safe and healthy**

Public safety is an important consideration in the development, management and maintenance of parks, playgrounds and trails. Park design should incorporate the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). Well-developed parks are important to the physical and mental health of residents and provide opportunities for social interaction and the creation of a strong sense of community.

- **Principle 4 –Sustainability**

Open space will be developed and managed in response to contemporary environmental values and conditions, community aspirations and economic considerations and must remain viable in the long term. Parks should be fit for purpose and capable of adaption to cater for changing recreational demands.

- **Principle 5 -Diversity**

A diverse range of park setting types and playgrounds that creates an interesting and locally relevant Open Space network. The network should provide opportunities that cater for the varied recreational needs of residents and visitors of all ages and abilities. A balanced range of parks, playgrounds, nature reserves and trails is required to meet the diversity of community needs.

- **Principle 6 -Consultation**

Changes to local open space networks and improvements to individual parks will be guided by local communities.

## Policy Review

This policy is to be reviewed whenever legislation changes, or every 4 years if no changes have been required to be enacted, at the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.

## Policy Details

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Open Spaces General Policy</b>
<b>Policy Number</b>	71
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<b>Document Number</b>	
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<b>Policy Type</b>	Council
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Council
<b>Date Adopted</b>	12/11/2019
<b>Time Period</b>	4 Years

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<b>Review Date</b>	12/11/2023
<b>Policy Department</b>	Infrastructure
<b>Link to Corporate Plan</b>	Leading Environmental Stewardship
<b>Revoked/Superseded</b>	

**This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.**