

BACKGROUND

From the mountains to the sea, we value and protect our natural environment and we will be leaders in building an educated, creative and connected community – Wollongong 2022.

Wollongong is a place of unique natural beauty and ecological diversity, our community treasures our beautiful beaches, escarpment and bushland areas. To protect and enhance our natural environment we must embrace environmental sustainability and integrate environmental sustainability into all Council decision making processes. An Environmental Sustainability Strategy has been developed to support this policy and will provide strategic direction and priority actions to reduce our impact on the environment.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to guide Council activities to integrate environmental sustainability considerations into all Council decision making processes and activities, to meet legislative requirements, community expectations and to demonstrate leadership.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy will support Council's requirements under sections 7 and 8 of the Local Government Act that:

s.7(e) "require Councils, Councillors and Council employees to have regard to the principles of ecologically sustainable development in carrying out their responsibilities"; and

s.8(1) "to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development".

This policy will:

- a act as a foundational document to embed environmental sustainability in all of Council's operations;
- b provide a set of principles to support further implementation of strategies and actions contained within the Environmental Sustainability Strategy; and
- c simplify the principles of environmental sustainability and provide a shared understanding of what environmental sustainability means to Council.

DEFINITION:

Sustainability has been commonly defined as "*meeting the need of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development 1987).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PRINCIPLES

Wollongong City Council will work to protect our local environment, reduce the use of natural resources and to support our quality of life for present and future generations. We will demonstrate leadership and responsible planning and decision-making to avoid any harmful local and global effects of our actions. We will also work in partnership with the community, stakeholders and other government organisations to achieve our environmental sustainability commitments.

- a We will consider the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) in all Council decision making processes. These principles are:
 - i The Precautionary Principle – we will not undertake any actions that have a potential risk to cause serious harm to the community or the environment; even in the absence of scientific certainty;
 - ii Inter and intra-generational equity – we recognise the importance of equity within and between generations;
 - iii Biological diversity – we value our natural biodiversity and will work to protect and enhance local native habitat; and
 - iv Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms – we will integrate long and short-term economic, environmental and social considerations into all Council decision making processes and operations.
- b We will use resources efficiently and responsibly and reduce our ecological footprint.
- c We will develop sustainable performance measures for Council's built assets.
- d We will protect and enhance our bushland areas, high ecological value sites, coastal areas and waterways.
- e We recognise the importance of access to fresh, local and sustainably produced food and protecting our fertile and productive lands.
- f We will improve sustainability awareness of Council staff, Councillors and the community.
- g We will actively encourage the community to become involved at the local level to reduce the environmental impact of their work, home, school and recreational activities.
- h We recognise the importance of issues beyond our borders and aim to create a balance between local and global issues.
- i We will adopt an advocacy role where an issue is not under our direct control but will have a major impact on our environment and/or community.

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

We will protect the local environment, reduce our use of natural resources and support a high quality of life for present and future generations. We will also demonstrate leadership, responsible planning and decision making to minimise the local and global impacts of our actions.

We have identified a number of strategies that will assist Council in meeting its environmental sustainability commitment and to incorporate environmental sustainability principles into all operations and services. These objectives not only highlight longer-term sustainability objectives but also reflect work that has been undertaken by Council over a number of years as well as its present delivery program.

We will put our Environmental Sustainability Commitment into action through implementing strategies and priorities identified in the Council adopted Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2014-22. These will be enacted through the Annual Plan and will be monitored, reviewed and reported on annually.

SUMMARY SHEET

Responsible Division	Environmental Strategy and Planning
Date adopted by Council	14 July 2014
Date of previous adoptions	16 December 2002
Date of next review	July 2017
Prepared by	Environmental Sustainability Officer
Authorised by	Manager Environmental Strategy and Planning