Mackay Regional Council

Environmental Sustainability Strategy

2017-2022

Mackay REGIONAL COUNCIL

Mackay Regional Council

Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022

Acknowledgment of Country

Mackay Regional Council acknowledges the Yuwibara People, the traditional owners and custodians of the lands in our region, and we pay respect to the Elders both past and present.

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Mayor's Foreword:

The Mackay region boasts of opportunity, a vibrant economy and a culturally diverse community. The reasons why we live, work and play here are substantially underpinned by the fabulous environment that surrounds us. We have a duty therefore to continually care for our environment.

While council can provide leadership through policy direction, it is important to recognise that all stakeholders in this fabulous region have a role to play when it comes to our environment.

The health of our environment is a huge contributing factor in our current and future prosperity.

This Mackay Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022 is a key document that provides the framework and identifies priorities for us to become an environmentally sustainable region.

With 31 pristine beaches, a natural rainforest and a picturesque blue river, our challenge is to think about what sustainable development looks like.

As a fifth generation local, I am enormously proud of this region and the proactive approach council has to integrate key sustainability practices into our operations.

This strategy demonstrates council's commitment to build an engaged, informed and connected community coupled with strong leadership in the area of environmental sustainability.

Cr Greg Williamson
Mayor of Mackay Regional Council

Part A
Background

Part A.
Background

What is sustainability?

Sustainability, in the way we use the term in relation to cities, towns, regions and communities is about ensuring the way that we live today doesn't reduce the quality of life of future generations or degrade the quality of the environment they will live in.

Growth and development of communities in line with these principles is often referred to as 'sustainable development'.

Leading practice councils pursue sustainability by balancing economic, community and environmental priorities directly through their strategic plans, planning schemes and policies, corporate operations and indirectly through government, industry and community partnerships.

This 'triple bottom line' approach is a recognised pathway for local governments seeking to strengthen their corporate sustainability performance and facilitate sustainable development for their communities.

Sustainability for Mackay Regional Council means we are committed to integrating sustainability principles across our organisation and into our way of thinking and acting as opposed to achieving a specific end point or goal.

Why is sustainability important for the Mackay region?

As a prominent local environmental manager and community leader, council recognises sustainability as a core business priority which underpins our region's prosperity, liveability and lifestyle.

By embedding sustainability principles into council operations and partnerships, we will optimise resource use and capabilities to deliver better services for our community while protecting our environment.

Innovative sustainability initiatives will deliver financial savings for council operations through continuous improvement and efficiency gains - particularly in relation to energy use.

Effective climate change adaptation will strengthen community resilience over time and identify emerging challenges and opportunities for our region.

How is council approaching sustainability?

Mackay Regional Council is committed to a healthy, connected and sustainable community and aims to minimise environmental impact by achieving a balance between our built infrastructure and the conservation of our natural resources.

Council puts sustainability into practice through its corporate commitments, governance arrangements, planning scheme, operations and community partnerships which work to protect and enhance our region's natural assets, biodiversity and respond to climate change.

Council's approach to sustainability is demonstrated through our membership to the world's leading organisation for local governments dedicated to sustainable development (ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability).

Our ICLEI membership helps to build genuine partnerships and bring leading practice experience of other local governments across Australia and internationally to benefit our region.

In late 2016, council resolved to adopt ICLEI's internationally acclaimed sustainability framework to guide development of this strategy and further integrate sustainability principles into council's operations, plans and strategies.

Elements of ICLEI's framework have been adapted to reflect our regional priorities and used to shape this strategy's nine 'Strategic Outcomes' (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1. 'Strategic Outcomes' guiding this strategy

Environmental sustainability – this strategy's focus

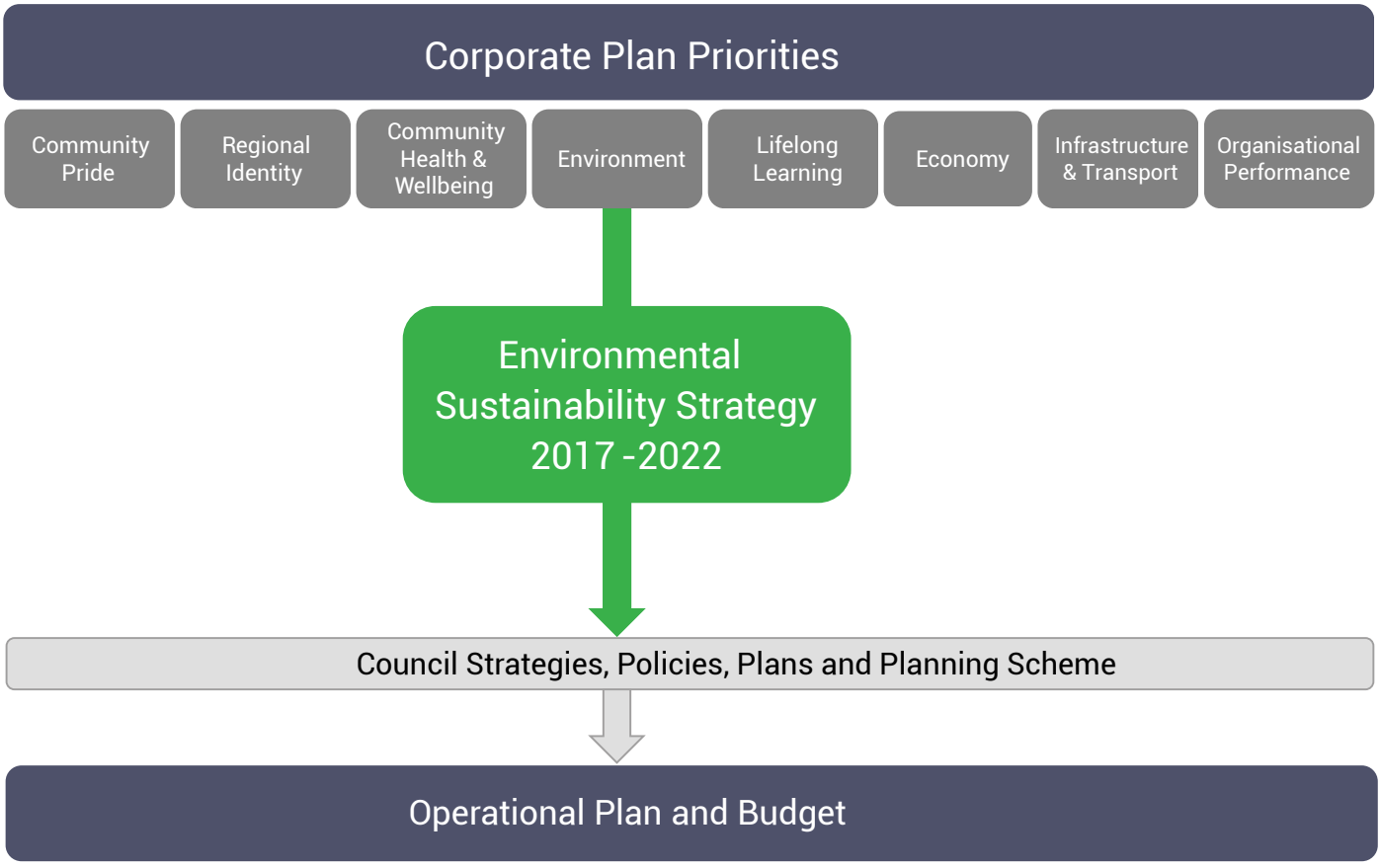
Council pursues 'triple bottom line' sustainability through a suite of strategies that respond separately to economic, community and environmental drivers in our region.

It is important to highlight that this strategy pursues environmental sustainability outcomes with economic and community outcomes pursued through other strategic documents (**refer Appendix 2**).

Over time, it is intended that 'triple bottom line' sustainability outcomes will be enhanced through broad incorporation of this strategy's strategic outcomes across council's policies, strategies, plans and planning scheme.

This strategy acts as an important bridge between our Corporate Plan commitments to environmental sustainability and the implementation of environmental sustainability initiatives through the Operational Plan and will work with existing plans and programs to firmly embed environmental sustainability principles into the core business of council (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2. This strategy acts on council's Corporate Plan commitments to environmental sustainability by exerting broad influence over our strategies, policies, plans, planning scheme and day-to-day operations.



Purpose of this strategy

The purpose of the strategy is to exert broad strategic influence in the area of environmental sustainability over important council functions such as planning, service delivery, law-making and enforcement, policy development and advocacy.

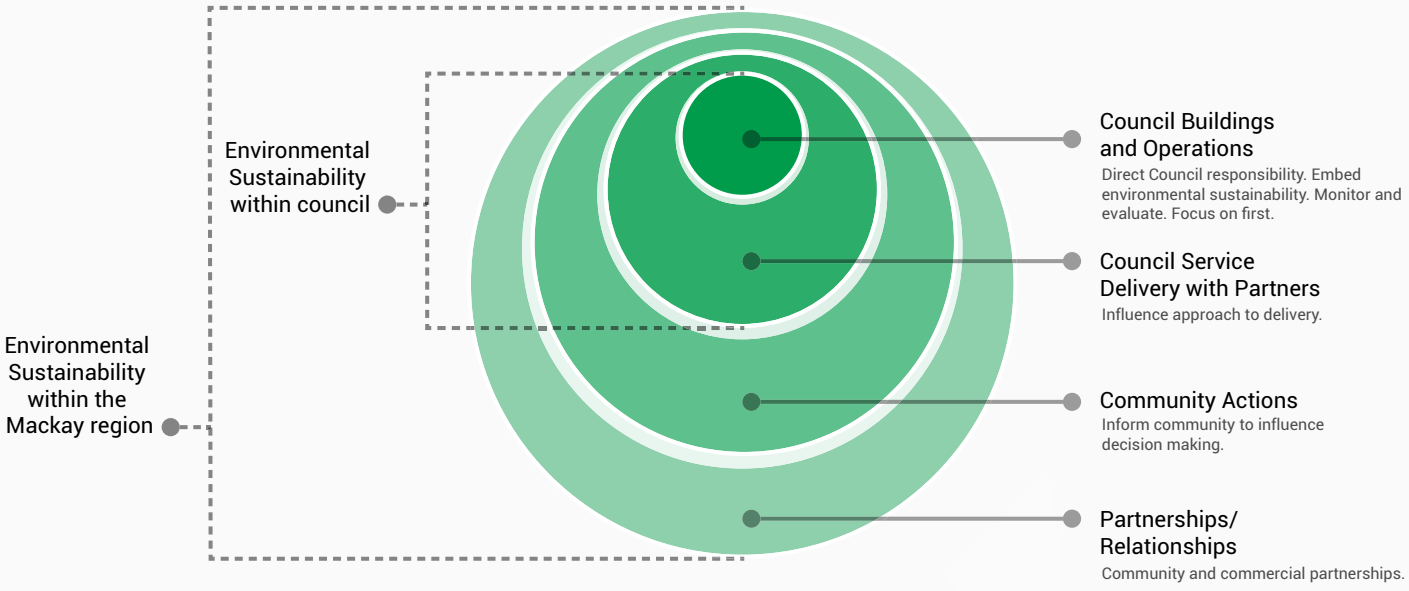
This strategy will:

- assist in identifying and responding to organisational and regional drivers for environmental sustainability
- embed guiding principles for environmental sustainability into council operations
- promote our strategic outcomes as a framework for advancing 'triple bottom line' sustainability outcomes
- identify funding streams and partnerships for environmental sustainability projects
- influence environmental levy expenditure and provide a basis to support grant funding applications
- align council's environmental sustainability goals with state and federal policy
- work with but not duplicate other environmental plans and strategies identified in **Appendix 2**.

Actions implemented under this strategy will be limited to council's operations as a local government organisation or to those programs council delivers in partnership with the community.

Our efforts will focus primarily on activities council has direct control over, can influence significantly, or advocate for (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3. Council's ability to influence environmental sustainability outcomes within the Mackay region



Part B

Environmental Sustainability in the Mackay Region

Part B.
Environmental Sustainability in the Mackay Region

About our region

The Mackay region is located midway between Brisbane and Cairns, nestled between the Great Dividing Range and Great Barrier Reef.

Covering 7,622 square kilometres, our region boasts rainforests and National Parks, 30 townships, 320 kilometres of mainland coastline, 31 beaches and more than 70 tropical islands.

Our region represents 1.8% of the 42 million hectare Great Barrier Reef catchment area and for aboriginal people who identify with the region, the land and sea is rich with cultural heritage, providing them with their identity and opportunities for traditional and contemporary practices.

The Mackay region forms part of the Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management cluster and experiences a tropical climate with average annual rainfall of 1,585mm per year, received largely during the months from December through to March with the driest months being August & September.

Average maximum temperatures range from 30°C in summer to 23°C in winter with average minimums ranging from 23°C to 11°C.

30
Townships

7,622km²
Area of Region

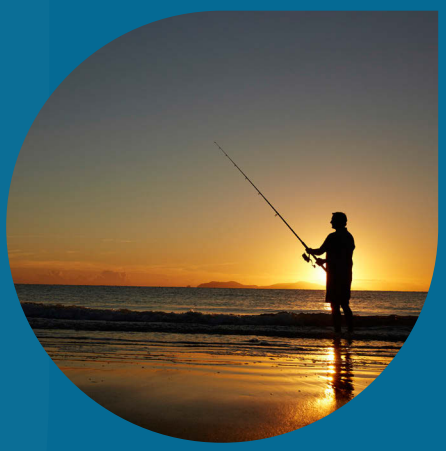
>1.5m
Rainfall per Year

31
Beaches

1.8%
Great Barrier Reef Catchment Area

70
Tropical Islands

320km
Mainland Coastline



62
Mammal species

350
Bird species

95
Reptile species

31
Frog species

10%
of these are rare or threatened species

>250
Fish species

Our Natural Environment and Biodiversity

Preserving and enhancing natural systems and ecological values is essential for maintaining the long-term prosperity, liveability and lifestyle of our region.

Major regional economic activities such as mining, agriculture, fishing and tourism are supported by our marine and terrestrial flora and fauna, coastal ecosystems, scenic landscapes, wildlife corridors and habitats, wetlands and waterways.

The Mackay region is recognised as one of the most biodiverse in the Great Barrier Reef catchment area and home to a wide diversity of animals, including 62 mammal species, 350 birds, 95 reptiles, 31 frogs and over 250 fish species.

About 10 per cent of these animals are listed as rare, threatened or vulnerable under the Queensland Nature Conservation Act 1992, including the Flatback Turtle, Mangrove Mouse, many species of waders and shorebirds, Rufous Owl, Powerful Owl, Glossy Black Cockatoo, Ghost Bat, Squirrel Glider, Estuarine Crocodile and Beach Stone-curlew.

Key challenges for council and our environment

Population Growth

Our region's population is predicted to grow to 171,000 by 2036 from its current population of around 123,000. The focus of that growth will be in urban areas, particularly Mackay, Sarina, Marian, Mirani and Walkerston.

As our community grows, we need careful planning to prevent adverse impacts on our natural environment while also encouraging more sustainable living practices to reduce dependency on our natural resources.

Water Quality

The health of our waterways and the Great Barrier Reef is directly linked to population growth, land use, development and the quality of water within the catchment.

As a Reef Guardian Council and member of the Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership Mackay-Whitsunday, we are an important partner for regional stakeholders and natural resource management groups responding to water quality concerns within our region and delivering collaborative projects to protect and enhance the health of our freshwater and marine environments.

Water Resources

We rely on both surface and groundwater resources to provide a reliable and safe water supply for our communities. Challenges facing council in managing our water resources include:

- influencing water use culture in the community
- managing demand to ensure sustainable use of our water resources.

Waste Management

Waste management remains a critical service provided by council to the community that can impact our environment. Our challenge is to look for opportunities to restructure production and distribution systems to prevent waste being produced in the first place and ensure council waste disposal facilities continue to implement leading practice methods to minimise environmental impacts.

Pests and Disease

Like many regional councils, our agricultural industries and natural areas are vulnerable to invasive plants, introduced pests and exotic diseases. Council's challenge is to work with our community partners to implement comprehensive measures to protect our economy, environment and community against current and emerging biosecurity threats.

Climate Change

Climate change presents both challenges and opportunities for the future of our region.

Many of the challenges for our environment are likely to be exacerbated by changes in climate over time and council is committed to using the best scientific information and local climate projections as a basis for climate change mitigation and adaptation planning decisions.

Modelling shows that over time, the Mackay region will be exposed to:

- increases in average temperatures
- more hot days and warm spells
- increased intensity of extreme rainfall events
- mean sea level rise and increases in the height of extreme sea level events
- fewer but more intense tropical cyclones.

As climate change continues, council has a leading role to play in identifying and responding to climate risks through our operations and strategic planning processes.

Key drivers for corporate sustainability

Corporate sustainability is a key focus for this Strategy. It is an area over which council has direct control and can provide leadership as a significant and influential organisation within the Mackay region. A focus on corporate sustainability is driven by council's desire to:

- pursue a triple bottom line approach to sustainability
- showcase leading practice to our community
- reduce operational costs through improved efficiency
- respond to increasing costs of fuel, water, energy and waste disposal
- encourage technological innovation and attract emerging industries and partners to our region
- reduce and manage risk associated with extreme weather events and climate change
- take advantage of state and federal government incentives for environmental sustainability initiatives
- reduce regulatory costs and liabilities
- strengthen regional collaborations for environmental sustainability
- enhance the health of natural areas that underpin our prosperity, liveability and lifestyle
- govern ethically by ensuring economic growth enhances environmental values and reduces carbon emissions
- prepare for growth by identifying strategic land for environmental purposes
- deliver positive environmental outcomes for current and future residents of the Mackay region.

Environmental sustainability - our journey so far

Natural Environment Levy

Natural Environment Plan

Sustainability Strategy 2013-2018

Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022

Council's commitment to environmental sustainability is evident through the Natural Environment Levy which was introduced in 2003 to fund environmental projects.

The levy is an essential source of funding to support community partnerships and natural resource management initiatives in our region. The Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Committee (formerly the Natural Environment Advisory Committee) provides advice to council regarding appropriate use of levy funds for environmental projects.

A key achievement for the scheme was the acquisition of Blacks Beach Spit in 2012 using levy funding. This 42 hectare site is now under the management of council and boasts substantial natural values, sustaining important marine and terrestrial natural resources and supporting wildlife populations of national and international significance.

The Natural Environment Plan

Council's Natural Environment Plan provides management direction to ensure the maintenance and improved condition of the natural environment in the Mackay region.

The plan provides reliable, scientifically robust information about the region's natural assets and their values, key threats and priority areas for council investment.

The Sustainability Strategy 2013-2018

Council's first Sustainability Strategy was endorsed in 2013 to integrate sustainability into the core business of council. The strategy played an important role in advancing sustainability outcomes across council in areas such as:

- sustainable planning and infrastructure
- preservation of the natural environment and biodiversity
- energy, carbon emissions and climate change
- water and waste management.

Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022

This strategy is the refreshed framework that will build on previous efforts and guide council initiatives in the area of environmental sustainability over the next five years.

Part C

Environmental Sustainability Approach

Our Vision

Our region's prosperity, liveability and lifestyle is underpinned by a healthy and sustainable environment managed through council, industry and community partnerships.

Our Mission

To advance environmental sustainability within council and across our region.

Guiding principles for environmental sustainability

Acting on our mission to advance environmental sustainability within council and across our region, it is important to have a strong set of guiding principles and processes to apply consistently through all initiatives delivered under this Strategy. They will guide our behaviours, the decisions we make and the way our decisions will be implemented.

Sustainable Region (our vision)

› Our region's prosperity, liveability and lifestyle is underpinned by a healthy and sustainable environment managed through council, industry and community partnerships.

Low Carbon Region

› Council operations and our region become low carbon to minimise our contribution to climate change.

Resource-Efficient and Productive Region

› Consumption of our natural resources is sustainable to protect and enhance environmental sustainability in our region.

› Sustainable local production systems are supported to reduce consumption and reliance on non-renewable resources from outside our region.

Resilient Region

› Effective planning for climate change enhances the resilience of council and the capacity of our communities, infrastructure and natural areas to recover from stresses while maintaining function and identity.

A Sustainable Natural Environment

› The sustainability of our region is dependent on our ability to preserve and enhance natural infrastructure and ecological values, while benefiting from the products and services provided by our natural environment.

Smart Region

› New and emerging technologies will improve council's service delivery and environmental sustainability performance.

Sustainable Transport

› Connected, active, electric and shared transport options reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption while improving air quality and use of public spaces.

Sustainable Procurement and Local Economy

› The purchase of products and services achieves value for money and generates environmental, community and economic benefits for our region.

Regional and Community Partnerships

› Regional cooperation will strengthen influence at the national level to improve environmental sustainability outcomes for our region.

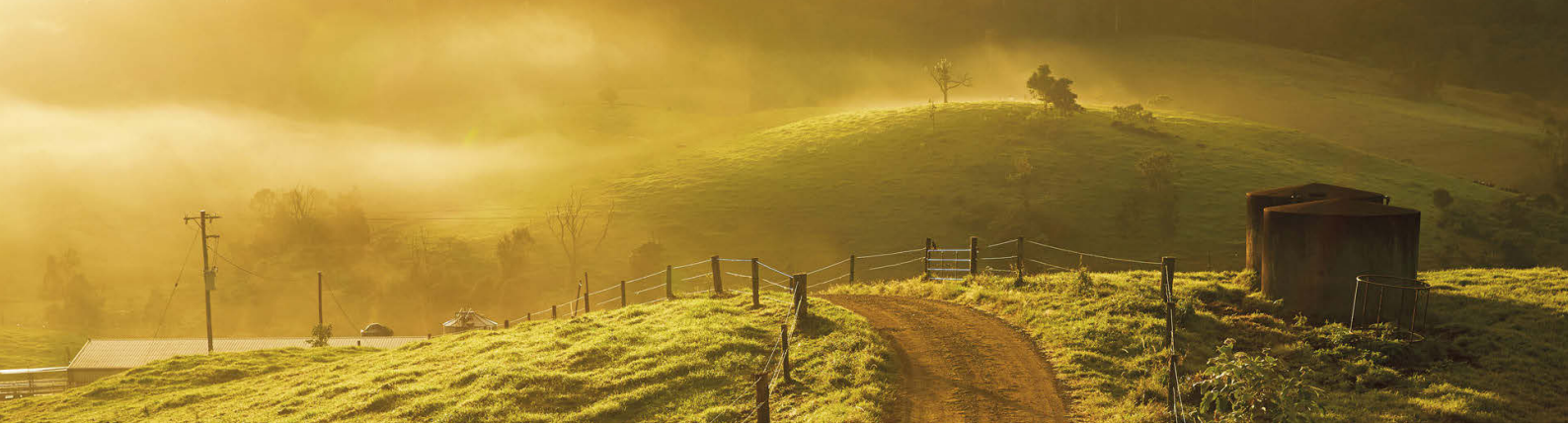
› Community partnerships make the best use of finite resources and avoid duplication of effort or missed opportunities.

Strategic outcomes and targets

Council seeks to achieve nine strategic outcomes through implementation of this strategy.

A practical mix of short term, baseline establishment targets and longer term environmental condition related targets will guide specific action under this strategy.

An interim review of strategy targets will occur in 2019 in response to baseline data collected during the initial stages of implementation with a full review of this strategy to occur in 2022.



1.
Sustainable Region (Our Vision)

Guiding principle:

› Our region's prosperity, liveability and lifestyle is underpinned by a healthy and sustainable environment managed through council, industry and community partnerships.

Outcome:

› Council operations integrate principles for environmental sustainability and recognise this strategy's nine strategic outcomes as a framework for the sustainable development of our region.

How we will get there:

Our efforts will focus on:

› integrating principles for environmental sustainability into council strategies, policies and plans

› strong and effective governance arrangements for strategy implementation

› monitoring and evaluation of environmental sustainability performance

› leading by example through our actions, engagement and community support for sustainable living practices and behaviours

› engagement, knowledge sharing and capacity building leveraged through council's ICLEI membership

› active participation in ICLEI programs to accelerate action toward strategy outcomes.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

1. Integrate principles for environmental sustainability and this strategy's nine strategic outcomes into relevant council strategies, plans and policies.

2.
Low Carbon Region

Guiding principle:

› Council operations and our region become low carbon to minimise our contribution to climate change.

Outcome:

› Council operations and our region become low-carbon regardless of size and growth trends.

How we will get there:

Our efforts will focus on:

› promoting energy management as a strategic priority for council

› preparing baseline assessments of energy consumption and carbon emissions

› participation in ICLEI climate and energy programs

› leading practice sustainable building design and minimum energy efficiency standards for council

› consideration of low carbon electricity options for council

› consideration of electrification and fuel switching options for council

› consideration of non-energy emissions and opportunities for carbon sequestration in our region.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

2. Establish a leading practice energy monitoring platform for council assets.
3. Establish an accurate inventory of corporate carbon emissions.
4. Participate in the ICLEI Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy Program and/or Cities Power Partnership.
5. Reduce council's energy consumption and carbon emissions.
6. Partner with the Green Building Council of Australia to develop a leading practice sustainable building design policy/guideline.
7. Investigate options for a planned transition to electrification of council's vehicle fleet.
8. Increase the percentage of council's total energy consumption from renewable sources.

3.
Resource-efficient and Productive Region

Guiding principles:

- Consumption of our natural resources is sustainable to protect and enhance environmental sustainability in our region.
- Sustainable local production systems are supported to reduce consumption and reliance on non-renewable resources from outside our region.

Outcome:

- Council and our community use resources as efficiently as possible and support new sustainable local production systems.

How we will get there:

Our efforts will focus on:

- preparing baseline assessments of corporate water consumption and waste generation
- leading practice corporate water efficiency and waste management standards
- paperless offices at council and use of smart devices for electronic data management and reporting of field activities
- leading practice sustainable event management standards for council
- value add waste management initiatives that present economic benefit through producing material for reuse and reduce the impact on the environment
- influencing water use culture in the community and managing demand.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

9. Establish a leading practice water monitoring platform for council assets.
10. Establish leading practice waste management standards for council.
11. Automate waste management performance reporting for council.
12. Achieve NIASA and Eco-Hort accreditation at all council nurseries.
13. Establish leading practice sustainable event management standards for council.
14. Establish leading practice water efficiency standards for council in partnership with the Cooperative Research Centre for Water Sensitive Cities.
15. Implement paperless office technology and smart devices for data management and reporting.
16. Reduce council's water consumption and waste sent to landfill.
17. Update Water and Waste Services Strategic Plans.

4.
Resilient Region

Guiding principle:

› Effective planning for climate change enhances the resilience of council and the capacity of our communities, infrastructure and natural areas to recover from stresses while maintaining function and identity.

Outcome:

› Council uses the best available science and sub-regional projections to identify and respond to the risks associated with climate change to enhance the resilience of our organisation and natural areas.

How we will get there:

Our efforts will focus on:

› taking action to embed climate change adaptation and risk management as core components of council planning functions including:
  » coastal and inland flood/stormwater management
  » land use and infrastructure planning
  » conservation / management of the natural environment and biodiversity
  » asset management
  » risk management
  » biosecurity.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

18. Participate in the Queensland Climate Resilient Council Program.
19. Implement leading practice coastal adaptation, flood and stormwater management strategies.

A Sustainable Natural Environment

Guiding principle:

› The sustainability of our region is dependent on preserving and enhancing natural systems and ecological values, while benefiting from the products and services they provide.

Outcome:

› Essential elements of our natural environment including landscapes, waterways, wetlands, coastal areas, native plants, animals and their habitats are well managed, healthy, resilient and valued by our community.

How we will get there:

Our efforts will focus on:

› identifying priority areas that will maintain and improve ecological functionality and connectivity at a whole of landscape scale

› preserving and enhancing natural waterways and wetlands to support healthy and diverse aquatic habitats and species

› preserving the natural values and function of our coastal and nearshore marine environments

› partnering with property owners to protect and enhance regional biodiversity and water quality values

› managing biosecurity threats and promoting use of non-invasive plants throughout our region

› adopting environmentally friendly weed control methods for council operations

› investigating options to expand council's Natural Environment Centre as a community education facility for environmental sustainability

› participation in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Reef Guardian Council Program

› participation in ICLEI biodiversity programs.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

20. Develop a Biodiversity and Waterways Blueprint for our region and ensure this is considered in new planning scheme amendments.
21. Develop and implement a Biosecurity Plan for our region.
22. Increase native plant establishment on council and privately owned land.
23. Reduce council herbicide use by adopting alternative weed control methods.
24. Achieve ecosystem condition and overall freshwater and inshore marine water quality targets for our region.
25. Develop leading practice management plans for our coast and beaches.
26. Expand the Natural Environment Centre to engage the community in environmental sustainability.
27. Maintain active participation in the Reef Guardian Council Program and the Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership Mackay-Whitsunday.
28. Participate in the ICLEI Local Action for Biodiversity Program.

6.
Smart Region

Guiding principle:

› New and emerging technologies will improve council's service delivery and environmental sustainability performance.

Outcome:

› Council builds a reputation for the uptake of innovative technology becoming increasingly efficient and environmentally sustainable.

How we will get there:

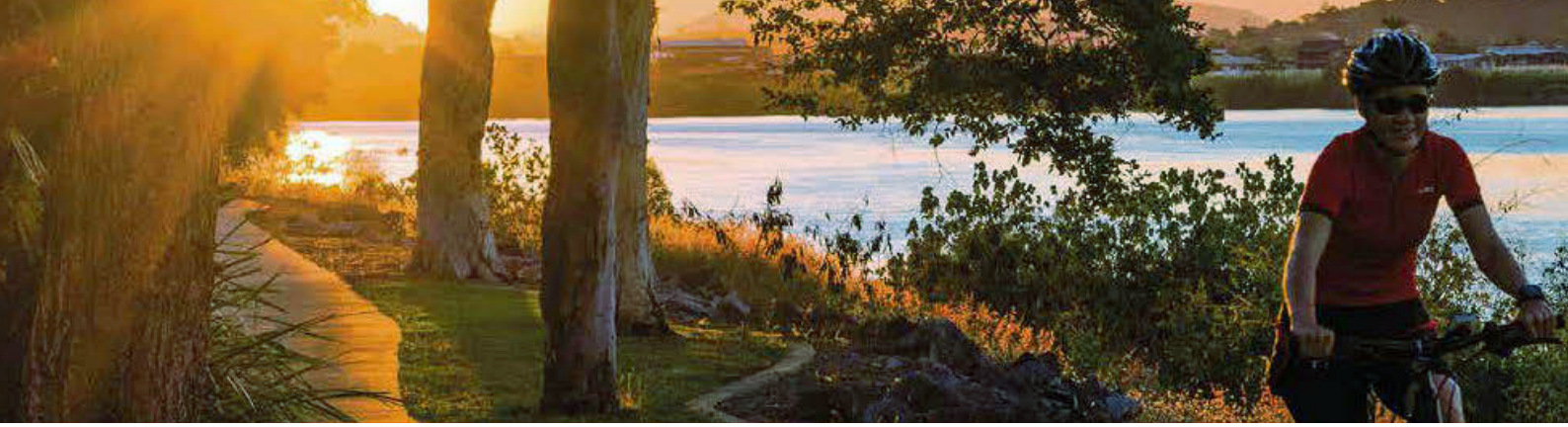
Our efforts will focus on:

› identifying innovative pilot projects aimed at improving efficiency, reducing cost, energy, natural resource consumption and carbon emissions.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

29. New and emerging technologies are integrated into council operations through an Integrated Communication Technology Strategy.



7.
Sustainable Transport

Guiding principle:

› Connected, active, electric and shared transport options reduce carbon emissions and energy consumption while improving air quality and use of public spaces.

Outcome:

› Council employees and our community have access to a range of sustainable transport options as alternatives to private vehicle use.

How we will get there:

Our efforts will focus on:

› preparing baseline assessments for council employee use of sustainable transport modes

› incorporating sustainable transport planning into council strategies, plans and policies

› promoting the uptake of sustainable transport modes by council employees and the community

› advocate for better public transport and work with the state government to increase the frequency and number of public transport services

› work with the State Government to implement relevant actions from the Regional Transport Plan.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

30. Establish baseline data for council employee use of sustainable transport modes.
31. Increase in the use of sustainable transport modes by council employees and the community.

8.
Sustainable Procurement and Local Economy

Guiding principle:

› The purchase of products and services achieves value for money and generates economic, community and environmental benefits for our region.

Outcome:

› Council makes smart procurement decisions that reduce negative environmental impacts, meet financial requirements, encourage innovation and support a local, sustainable economy.

How we will get there:

Our efforts will focus on:

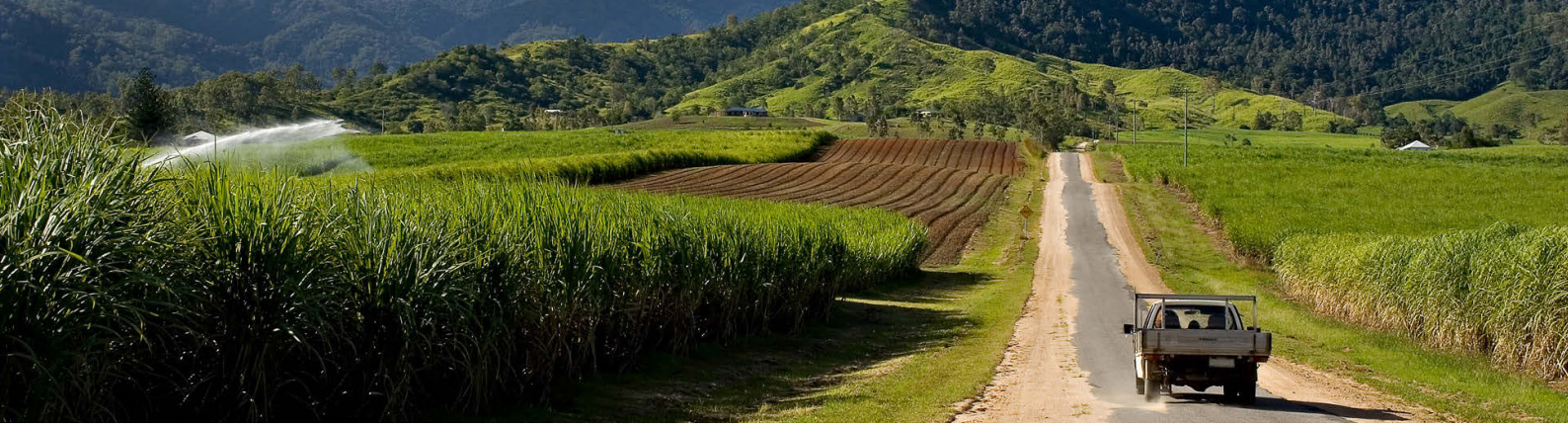
› establishing leading practice, sustainable corporate procurement standards that consider life cycle costs and environmental externalities in the costs of materials and service provision

› implementing an enabling policy, legal and financial framework to support and sustain our local economy.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

32. Integrate leading practice, sustainable procurement principles into council strategies, policies, plans and procedures.



9.
Regional and Community Partnerships

Guiding principles:

- Regional cooperation will strengthen influence at the national level to improve environmental sustainability outcomes for our region
- Community partnerships make the best use of finite resources and avoid duplication of effort or missed opportunities.

Outcome:

- Council partners with industry, all tiers of government and community groups to enhance environmental sustainability in our region.

How we will get there:

Our efforts will focus on:

- working with key industry organisations and businesses to show case leading environmental sustainability practices in the region
- aligning council priorities with state and federal government policy to take advantage of funding opportunities that support investment in environmental sustainability projects
- building regional partnerships that strengthen influence at the national and state level to improve environmental sustainability outcomes in areas such as public transport, energy generation, resource management, food systems and urban/regional planning
- working with Natural Resource Management Groups to address regional priorities and minimise duplication of effort
- promote sustainable living practices within our community
- collaborative research projects with local universities
- strengthening partnerships and funding arrangements with our community and environmental groups
- encouraging the expansion of environmentally sustainable industries in the region.

How progress will be measured:

Our targets:

33. Implement an external Strategy Communication and Engagement Plan.

Implementation arrangements

Implementation of this Strategy will be supported by a number of governance, planning, reporting and partnership arrangements. These implementation arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Sustainability Executive Group

A Sustainability Executive Group (SEG) will oversee delivery of the strategy with a specific focus on core governance and organisational change initiatives to be implemented through an annual action plan (**Figure 4**). Reporting directly to the Strategic Leadership Performance Team, this group will meet quarterly and be chaired by the Director - Development Services.

Membership will comprise a core group of directors, managers and governance staff.

Additional members may be appointed to the group on an 'as needed basis' to oversee delivery of specific projects relevant to the annual action plan.

Sustainability Team & Sustainability Working Groups

Supporting the Sustainability Executive Group will be a Sustainability Team positioned within the Parks, Environment and Sustainability program. This team will act in a coordination role to guide strategy implementation through action plan development, project delivery and reporting.

The Sustainability Team will convene Sustainability Working Groups to deliver specific projects included in the annual action plan.

Sustainability Working Group membership will depend on project requirements and be approved by the Sustainability Executive Group. Other working groups and committees may operate alongside or replace specific Sustainability Working Groups to minimise duplication of effort.

Figure 4. Environmental Sustainability Strategy Governance Framework

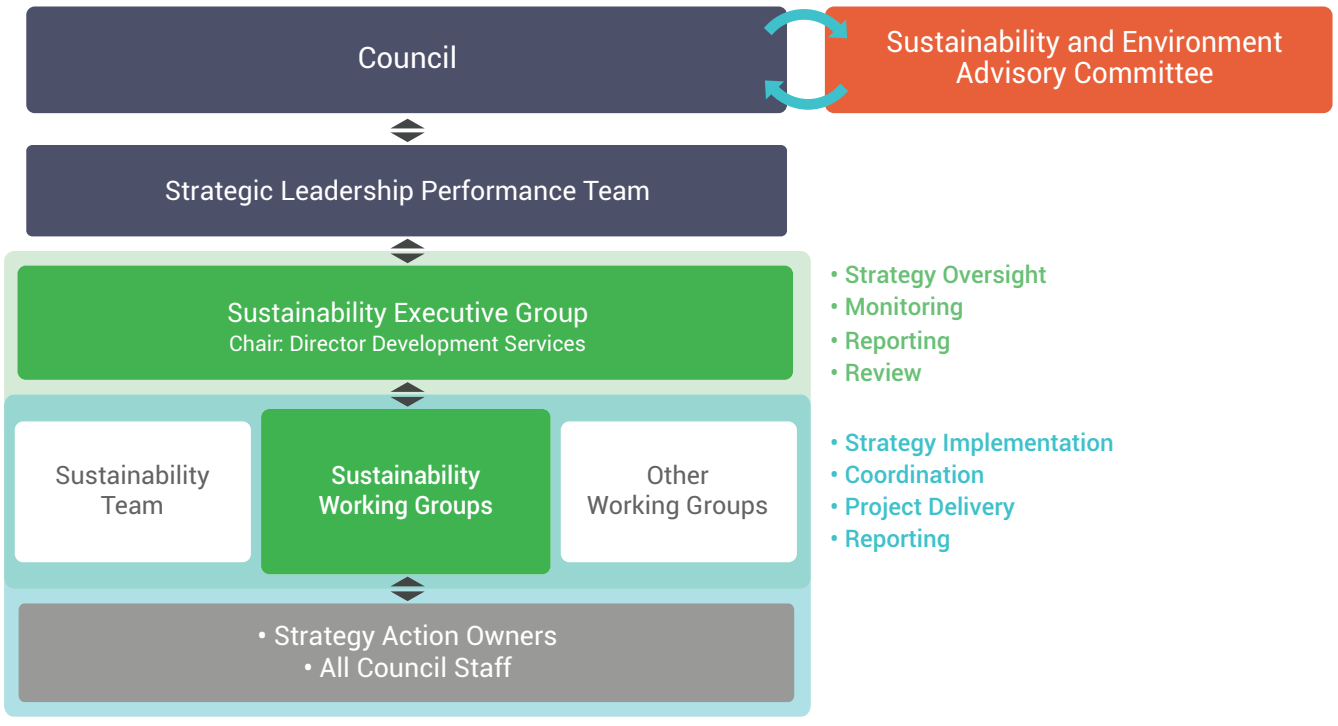


Figure 5. Strategy Planning and Reporting Framework

Planning & Reporting Framework

Reporting of strategy operational activity will be integrated into council's quarterly operational plan and annual reporting framework (**Figure 5**). Key to this approach will be development of a draft annual action plan each November outlining proposed projects for the following financial year.

The annual action plan will be finalised and approved by the Sustainability Executive Group. Capital and operational funding for projects endorsed by the group will be incorporated into individual program budgets for the following financial year through council's normal budget cycle.

Monitoring & Review

Monitoring our progress is critical to achieving the Strategy outcomes over the five year implementation horizon. Progress towards achieving individual targets will be reviewed at each Sustainability Working Group and Sustainability Executive Group meeting.

Action owners will provide project updates as requested by the Sustainability Team and Sustainability Executive Group for inclusion in council's quarterly and annual operational reports.

Engagement & Community Partnerships

A strategy communication and engagement plan will be implemented and reviewed annually by the Sustainability Team to ensure council employees, relevant stakeholders and partners are adequately engaged during the life of the strategy. The plan will also identify key strategic partnerships to be pursued under the strategy.

Local Government Leading Practice Partnerships

Participation in leading practice local government sustainability programs will benefit our region by drawing on national and international experience in delivering specific sustainability initiatives.

The following mix of existing and new programs will be considered to collectively accelerate action toward our nine strategic outcomes for environmental sustainability.

ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability

LAB Local Action for Biodiversity AN ICLEI – IUCN PROGRAMME

CITIES POWER PARTNERSHIP

Q CRC Queensland Climate Resilient Councils

HEALTHY RIVERS TO REEF PARTNERSHIP MACKAY-WHITSUNDAY

GLOBAL COVENANT of MAYORS for CLIMATE & ENERGY

green building council australia

reef guardian council

CRC for Water Sensitive Cities

Part D

Environmental Sustainability Action Plan

This strategy will be implemented through the attached annual action plan that will be reviewed each financial year.

By reviewing our progress regularly, we will ensure practical and achievable progress towards our nine strategic outcomes over the five-year implementation horizon.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Glossary of terms

Biodiversity:
The variety of all life forms including the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part.

Built Environment: Places and spaces created or modified by people including buildings, parks, facilities, infrastructure services and transportation systems.

Climate Change:
The observed century-scale rise in the average temperature of the Earth's climate system and its related effects.

Climate Change Adaptation: Proactively managing risks associated with climate change through a planned approach that takes into consideration the best available science and local climate projections.

Climate Change Mitigation:
Activities to reduce the extent of human induced climate change, primarily through eliminating or reducing carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.

Conservation Estate:
The collection of state, council and private lands managed for conservation within a region (including national parks). The conservation estate consists of both legally protected and voluntary conservation areas that:

- protect biodiversity, enhance environmental values and ecological functionality
- contribute to landscape connectivity and assist to consolidate habitat areas
- contribute to the landscape and character of the region.

Ecosystem Services:
Essential services provided by the natural environment such as the provision of clean air, soil, drinking water and the ability to assimilate contaminants and waste.

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability:
The world's leading organisation for local governments dedicated to sustainable development. Globally, ICLEI has over 1,200 members from 84 countries including more than 40 Australian members. ICLEI provides its members with a wide range of resources and access to global programs to support to accelerate action toward their sustainable development goals.

Liveability:
Liveability is the combination of factors that lead to a community's quality of life now and into the future. Important factors affecting liveability include the built and natural environments, economic prosperity, social stability and wellbeing, equity and access, education, cultural and recreation opportunities.

Natural Environment:
The physical and biological surroundings in which plants, animals and people live and interact. It encompasses water, soil, air, plants, animals and the ecological and physical processes that affect them.

Natural Environment Levy:
Introduced by council in 2003 to fund environmental projects in the Mackay region. Ratepayers contribute to the levy yearly via their rates. The aim of the levy is to fund projects that address the following broad objectives:

- Protect, manage and enhance ecologically significant areas on public and private land and encourage leading practice in native vegetation and waterway management
- Monitor health of native vegetation, water quality and ecosystems
- Provide a range of types and styles of projects including pilot projects
- Ensure an integrated catchment management focus to ensure multiple benefits (i.e. for biodiversity, land degradation, water quality, community wellbeing, economic and commercial gains).

Sustainability and Environment Advisory Committee:
Established to make recommendations to council about appropriate environmental projects that may be funded via the Natural Environment Levy or other funding mechanisms.

Prosperity:
Refers to a state of abundant opportunity, good fortune and social status. Prosperity often encompasses wealth but is underpinned by other factors independent of wealth such as happiness and the health of the natural environment.

NRM organisations:
Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations provide an important link between governments and communities. They work collaboratively with volunteer and grass-roots organisations (e.g. Landcare), rural industry groups and landholders.

Reef Catchments is the NRM group for the Mackay Whitsunday Isaac region, working to effectively manage and preserve the region's critical natural assets for future generations.

Resilience:
The capacity of individuals, communities and environmental systems to survive, adapt, and grow despite experiencing chronic stresses and acute shocks. Resilient communities turn vulnerabilities into opportunities – particularly in relation to the current and emerging challenges presented by climate change.

Smart Technology:
Integrated information gathering and communication technologies such as sensors, data and real time monitoring used to connect people, businesses, communities and the environment to improve liveability and sustainability outcomes.

Sustainability:
Ensuring the way that we live today doesn't reduce the quality of life of future generations or degrade the quality of the environment they will live in. Sustainability for local governments can be defined as an ongoing commitment to integrating sustainability principles and processes into council operations as opposed to achieving a specific end point or goal.

Triple Bottom Line Sustainability:
A concept adopted by leading practice councils that effectively balance the integration of economic, social and environmental sustainability principles, both directly through their corporate operations and indirectly through government, industry and community partnerships.

UNESCO Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area:
The Great Barrier Reef (GBR) is the world's most extensive coral reef ecosystem, a globally outstanding and significant entity which was inscribed as a World Heritage Area in 1981. The GBR World Heritage Area covers 348,000 square kilometres, stretching from the low water mark along the mainland coast up to 250 kilometres offshore.
This includes vast shallow inshore areas, mid-shelf and outer reefs, and beyond the continental shelf to oceanic waters over 2,000 metres deep. The Mackay region represents 1.8% of the 42 million hectare Great Barrier Reef catchment area.

Appendix 2. Key strategic plans

Corporate:

- Mackay Regional Council Corporate Plan 2016-2021
- Mackay Regional Council Operational Plan
- Tomorrow's Mackay - Our Community Plan 2011-2031.

Other Key Strategies and Plans:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Community Development Strategy (draft)
- Planning Scheme
- Natural Environment Plan
- Urban Stormwater Quality Management Plan
- Biosecurity Plan (draft)
- Waste Management Strategic Plan
- Water Services Business Plan
- Trade Waste Management Plan
- Erosion & Sediment Control & Urban Stormwater Strategy for Queensland (draft)
- Active Transport Strategy/Plan (draft)
- Mackay Region Recreational Fishing Strategy
- Recreation and Open Space Plan (draft)
- Coastal & Inland Flood Hazard Adaptation Strategy
- Mackay Region Flood and Stormwater Management Strategy
- Asset Management Plans
- Regional Transport Plan (draft)
- Local Government Infrastructure Plan (draft)
- Integrated Communication & Technology Strategy (draft)
- Strategic Risk Register
- Whitsunday ROC - Digital Economy Strategy
- Biosolids Strategy (draft)
- Asset Management Plans

Mackay REGIONAL COUNCIL

Phone **1300 MACKAY** (622 529)
mackay.qld.gov.au