



# Sustainability Report

FINANCIAL YEAR 2011-12

JUNE 2013





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## Mayor & CEO Statement



**Mayor**  
Deirdre Comerford



**CEO**  
Barry Omundson

Mackay Regional Council is committed to building a sustainable region and making decisions that respect and protect our environment and community now and into the future.

The region's fast growing population (average annual growth rate of 2.5 per cent), coupled with climate change, continues to present challenges to the sustainable management of the region, and is why Council is actively developing two sustainability initiatives, including one for the overall strategic direction of Council in delivering its services to the community and a second major initiative for the sustainable development of the region's growth.

In 2011, Council initiated the development of its own five year plan for sustainability 'Mackay Regional Council Sustainability Strategy 2013-2018'. Council's Sustainability Strategy 2013 - 2018 is a leadership initiative of Council to actively build and strengthen a culture of sustainability throughout the organisation and the community to protect our social, cultural and environmental values. This involves establishing a Sustainability framework for Council, and creating a long-term targets and actions to lead the process of continually improving our own sustainability performance. Council's sustainability strategy outlines our agenda for planning, assessing and reporting on our sustainability performance and will act

as a tool to assist Council in achieving a united vision for a sustainable future, meet changing business needs and corporate objectives, and provide leadership for the community in managing sustainability and climate change issues.

In 2013, Council will embark on the development of the first Regional Sustainability Strategy for Mackay. The Regional Sustainability Strategy will capture the processes and actions that Council has delivered under the Sustainability Strategy 2013 - 2018 and this annual report to provide greater strategic direction for the entire regions growth over the next twenty years.

This report, Council's first annual Sustainability Report, provides an update on our approach, performance and targets as they relate to our Sustainability Strategy focus areas.

We want to see sustainability become embedded into our organisation and way of thinking every day. We all have a role to play in achieving a sustainable region including elected councillors, indoor and outdoor staff, contractors, all levels of government and our community. It is commitment, adaptability, innovation, cooperation, communication and effective teamwork that are key to our success.

We look forward to working with you to achieve a sustainable Mackay region.



## About This Report

This is Mackay Regional Council's first annual Sustainability Report to inform the community about Council's sustainability performance for the financial year of 2011/2012.

The purpose of this report is to: Report on sustainable targets and actions adopted by Council in the Mackay Regional Council Sustainability Strategy: 2013-2018, Corporate Plan 2009-2014 and other Council sustainability-focussed strategies. Illustrate programs and initiatives undertaken by the Council to support the Sustainability Strategy and Policy.

This report provides a summary of the progress that Council is making to improve the sustainability of its operations and assets, as well as the Council programs and incentives provided to help the community to live more sustainably.

The Sustainability Report supports Council's Sustainability Policy and Strategy by

reporting on tangible achievements and establishing sustainability targets for each of the sustainability focus areas outlined in the Strategy. The Sustainability Report allows Council to track progress against sustainability targets in a consistent and transparent manner.

Over time, the examination of a succession of these reports will allow trends to be analysed and will provide a sound basis for determining whether or not the policies, programs and management activities implemented by Council are achieving success and how they can potentially be refined and improved.

Council envisages that the format and scope of the annual Sustainability Report will progressively develop as data capture and reporting improves over time. There have been no significant changes during the reporting period regarding size, structure or ownership of the Council.





## Sustainability at Mackay Regional Council

The Council has built a vision to create 'a vibrant prosperous lifestyle today – held in trust for tomorrow's generations'. To achieve this vision, Council is keen to adopt a leadership role in developing and managing the sustainability of the region and has developed a number of plans, strategies, policies and stakeholder engagement methods to achieve this. This section highlights a number of these documents and activities.

### **Mackay's Community Plan Tomorrow's Mackay**

After extensive consultation with the community and local stakeholders Mackay's Community Plan *Tomorrow's Mackay* was officially adopted by Council in December 2011. The Mackay Community Plan encompasses the community's aspirations and sets out a long term plan for a prosperous, sustainable and vibrant region. In relation to sustainability and climate change the Mackay Community Plan states that the Council will:

- be proactive and responsive to the challenges presented by climate change
- protect our infrastructure and our communities from fire, flooding and storm surges and sea level rise, tsunamis, cyclonic events and earthquake
- reduce our dependency on non-renewable energy sources and move towards more efficient energy technology and appliances
- reduce carbon emissions by shifting towards greater use of sustainable types of transport
- have a community that is educated and aware of the impacts of climate change
- protection of existing developments from sea surges and sea level rise.

### **Corporate Plan**

The Corporate Plan 2009-2014 is an important document that defines the strategies and programs that Council will pursue to deliver the outcomes, as identified through a community engagement process. It allows Council to respond effectively to key regional and local issues identified for the region and Council as an organisation. The strategic priorities and their corporate objectives identified in the Corporate Plan are:



# Sustainability at Mackay Regional Council

**Figure 1 Sustainability Strategy Vision and Focus Areas**

KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITY	CORPORATE OBJECTIVES
Community and Lifestyle	To build safe, strong and self-reliant communities with access to a diverse range of community services and facilities aimed at providing opportunities for participation in community life.
Economic Development	To promote a strong, competitive and diverse economy throughout the region by supporting and investing in sustainable business development and local employment opportunities.
Environmental Sustainability	To enhance and protect the environmental assets of the region, ensuring a protected/preserved natural environment for future generations.
Strategic Planning	To take an active approach to integrated regional planning to reflect the aspirations and lifestyle of our community.
Infrastructure Services	To effectively plan, deliver and maintain physical services and infrastructure networks for our community's current and future needs.
Commercial Services	To provide and manage high-quality water and waste programs on a commercial basis that meet social and environmental objectives.
Organisational Excellence and Governance	To pursue excellence as an organisation which embraces exceptional customer service, values its staff and promotes ethical standards of practice supported by clear policies and strategies responsive to the needs of the community.

The Corporate Plan also includes various strategies against each corporate objective. One of the strategies to support the Environmental Sustainability corporate objective is for Council to *'take a proactive leadership role in relation to future sustainability and potential climate change issues'*. Council's proactive development of the Sustainability Policy, Strategy and this Sustainability Report is a testament of Council's commitment to deliver on the Environmental Sustainability corporate objective. It is noted that the Corporate Plan is currently being reviewed and updated. Any relevant changes to corporate objectives and associated targets will be incorporated into subsequent editions of the Sustainability Report.

## Sustainability Futures Advisory Committee

Another key driver for developing the Sustainability Strategy and Sustainability Report has been the formation of Council's Sustainable Futures Advisory Committee, which has taken a proactive leadership role in delivering sustainable practices across the organisation. The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Assess the likely effects of climate change on the roles and responsibilities of Council and plan appropriate responses
- Ensure Council takes a proactive leadership role of prudent stewardship in relation to future sustainability
- Support the community and business responses; and reduce Council's carbon footprint

There are four working groups accountable to the Sustainable Futures Advisory Committee: fleet and procurement, carbon management, built environment and natural environment. Further details regarding the Committee are provided in the section on Organisational Excellence.



## Sustainability at Mackay Regional Council

### Sustainability Policy

Council began their sustainability journey with the development of a Corporate Sustainability Policy in 2012. The policy was developed to:

- Provide a framework for Council's ongoing commitment to Sustainability
- Embed sustainability into the core functions and operations of the organisation on all levels
- Explain Council's responsibility to comply with applicable legislation and regulations relating to sustainability
- To help Council employees understand their role in achieving workplace sustainability and provide guidance for the application of sustainable workplace practice.

The policy outlines key areas for its' successful delivery, including specific actions that Council will undertake to achieve its goals for sustainability.

### Sustainability Strategy

The key objective of the Mackay Sustainability Strategy 2013-2018 is to outline Council's sustainability direction for the next five years. It builds on the Corporate Sustainability Policy and sets targets and actions for each key focus area to achieve the vision statement.

The Sustainability Strategy contains an Implementation Plan which includes specific performance measures against each focus area action and responsibilities for completing actions. This allows for progress in sustainability to be regularly measured, reviewed and reported in a transparent manner. Performance measures (targets and actions) are to be achieved progressively by 2018 and will be reported in the Implementation Plan annually through the Sustainability Report.

### Stakeholder Engagement and Materiality Assessment

Engagement with stakeholders has been an important part of the process in developing Council's Corporate Plan and the sustainability framework and its direction.

The Corporate Plan was prepared in close consultation with the community. This involved the publication of a questionnaire to allow residents to have input. Numerous community meetings were held to discuss the Council's key strategic themes. This led to the formation of six focus groups with stakeholders around the key specific themes. Stakeholder input formed an important part of developing the Corporate Plan.

Prior to the development of the Sustainability Strategy and this Sustainability Report, Council undertook stakeholder engagement through a Sustainability Materiality Assessment process. This process provided Council with an indication of its key sustainability issues across economic, environmental, governance and social dimensions. The assessment was undertaken using the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) framework which is an internationally recognised standard for sustainability assessment and reporting.

The Materiality Assessment required significant stakeholder engagement and the involvement of senior management, Council staff and Councillors. An initial workshop was held with senior management and officers at Council to identify material issues and their stakeholders relating to environmental sustainability and climate change. The issues identified in the workshop were rated by Council staff and Councillors in a survey to determine the importance of each issue as a high, medium or low priority. This engagement process resulted in the development of the eight focus areas for the Mackay region around which the Sustainability Strategy and this first annual Sustainability Report are presented.



# Sustainability at Mackay Regional Council

## Our Focus Areas and Indicators

The diagram below shows the eight key focus areas for Mackay Regional Council that are identified in the Sustainability Strategy.



A number of indicators were established in the Sustainability Strategy including targets and actions to monitor and report against these indicators. These indicators are founded on a combination of relevant GRI indicators and Council's own indicators and are reported on

throughout this Sustainability Report for each focus area (i.e. 'Our Performance' sections). The GRI and Council Indicator Index on page 33 provides an overview of all indicators and where they are reported.



# Sustainable Planning and Infrastructure

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

OUR PERFORMANCE		INDICATOR REFERENCE
	<p>Council's capital expenditure for 2011/12 was <b>\$160,551,997</b> across a range of programs including waste services, water and waste water, civil infrastructure, flood damage, parks and environment.</p>	<p><b>MRC1</b></p>
	<p>As of 30 June 2012, Council had <b>18 km of bikeways</b> and <b>206 km of footpaths</b>, and spent <b>\$1.06 million</b> during 2011/12.</p>	<p><b>MRC5</b> <b>MRC6</b></p>
	<p>Council achieved an average residential lot size of <b>750 m<sup>2</sup> in 2010/11</b> and <b>662 m<sup>2</sup> in 2011/12</b> in low-density residential approvals in support of our effort to use urban land more effectively. This has met the target of achieving average residential lot size approvals equal or below 750 m2.</p>	<p><b>MRC2</b></p>
	<p>Council has an area of approximately <b>6 km<sup>2</sup></b> reserved for regional, district and local community parks.</p>	<p><b>MRC4</b></p>

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS - MACKAY REGION



### Carpool

Council has created a website aimed at facilitating carpooling in as part of its objective to encourage more sustainable forms of transport.

The website ([www.mackayregioncarpool.org](http://www.mackayregioncarpool.org)) enables members of the community to find like-minded people to carpool with to and from work.

Initiatives such as carpooling can save money, reduce wear and tear on vehicles, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help minimise the volume of traffic on Mackay's roads.

Further information for Sustainable Planning and Infrastructure can be found on page 22.



# Preservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

OUR PERFORMANCE		INDICATOR REFERENCE
	A total of <b>166,784 ha</b> (~25%) of land is protected and managed as conservation areas in the Mackay region.	<b>GRI:EN13</b> <b>MRC9</b>
	Council works in partnership with Reef Catchments on the Coasts and Communities Project which aims to protect and restore the environmental values of Mackay beaches, while allowing for appropriate recreational access and use. There were <b>27 volunteer coastal community activities</b> held in 2011/12 as part of the Mackay Coasts and Communities Program.	<b>MRC11</b>
	<b>96%</b> of the priority actions identified through the Natural Environment Plan prioritisation process were implemented in 2011/12. These included a variety of weed removal and control, revegetation and fencing activities.	<b>MRC10</b>
	<b>38 days</b> of spraying for declared high priority weeds was recorded during 2011 and <b>120 days</b> of spraying for declared high priority weeds was recorded during 2012.	<b>MRC16</b>
	<b>30 pest baiting programs</b> were executed in 2011 and <b>44 baiting programs</b> were executed in 2012.	<b>MRC14</b>
	Council spent approximately is <b>\$1,168,560</b> on the natural environment levy expenditure and natural environment capital projects in the financial year 2011/2012.	<b>GRI:EN30</b>
	<b>0.22%</b> of Council's budget was used for natural areas management.	<b>MRC12</b>
	During 2011/12, there were <b>125 complaints</b> recorded regarding mosquitoes and midges, with mosquito control achieved through the application of <b>2,160kg of solid form s-methoprene</b> , <b>500kg of vectrobact crystals</b> mixed to a liquid and <b>9L of twilight</b> . A total of <b>14,059 mosquitos</b> were caught in traps.	<b>MRC13</b> <b>MRC15</b> <b>MRC17</b>
	The Plant-ed program had <b>1,476</b> school students attend from prep to year 7 from Mackay and surrounding districts.	<b>MRC74</b> <b>MRC93</b>
	<b>630</b> school students visited the gardens to conduct their own self-guided activities.	<b>MRC74</b> <b>MRC93</b>
	Free educational activities within the Botanic Gardens and the Plant-ed Elsewhere program had <b>685</b> participants from 7 different schools including home school children, under 8's and small explorers, Matsuura students and Kid Teaching Kids conference.	<b>MRC74</b> <b>MRC93</b>



## Preservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

#### The Coast and Communities Program

In the 2011/12 financial year, Council worked in partnership with Reef Catchments to identify and deliver 11 priority coastal projects. The total cost of the projects was \$200,000, which was funded from Council's Natural Environment Levy. The projects included fencing, weed control and revegetation activities to improve the condition of coastal vegetation and re-establish a functioning dune system in coastal areas. Projects included:

- Weed control across 18ha of remnant vegetation at Blacks Beach, including critically endangered beach scrub vegetation.
- Construction of 320m fencing at Ball Bay to delineate pedestrian beach access tracks and the natural area from mown parkland, and protect frontal dunes. Weed control was undertaken and natives were planted to reinstate a functioning dune system and reduce light pollution for nesting marine turtles.



#### Plant-ed, Planted Elsewhere and Small Explorers Programs

Council develops and runs a number of educational programs including:

- **Plant-ed:** is a fauna and flora conservation educational program for students from Prep to Year 12 from Mackay and surrounding districts. The program explores a range of activities and topics designed to develop curiosity, promote asking questions and be both fun and informative.
- **Planted Elsewhere:** is Council's outreach program aimed to create learning experiences in schools. Topics include Wildlife and Wetland Wonders and Plant a Seed and Grow a Mind.
- **Small Explorers:** this program is offered by the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens and provides fun and educational opportunities suitable for toddlers, playgroups, family day care, child care and kindergarten aged children (from 18 months - 5 years).

In addition a number of school holiday programs, Guided walks and Events in the Botanical Gardens are also conducted.



Further information for Preservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity can be found on page 23-24.



# Energy, Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

OUR PERFORMANCE		INDICATOR REFERENCE
	<p>Council's 2011/12 greenhouse gas emissions total <b>32,801 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e</b>. Expressed in terms of Council's size this is equivalent to approximately <b>26 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e</b> per Council staff member for energy, fuel and waste and <b>0.05 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e</b> per local resident for street lighting.</p>	<p><b>GRI:EN16 &amp; 17</b> <b>MRC23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 33 &amp; 34</b></p>
	<p>The total energy cost for 2011/12 was <b>\$5.124 million</b>. The increasing cost of electricity means that although GHG emissions may be managed or even decreased over time, the cost is likely to increase.</p>	<p><b>MRC20</b></p>
	<p>Council has implemented a number of energy efficiency measures, saving <b>734 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>-e</b> and <b>882,973 kWh</b> each year. Council also monitored the energy use of up to <b>10 buildings</b> during the 11-12 year and carried out <b>3 energy audits</b> for Gordon White Library, Mackay Regional Council Administration Building and Mackay Library. Council's priority energy efficiency initiatives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fleet emission reduction</b> projects such as light fleet transition and the downsizing of Council's vehicle fleet which has included the introduction of hybrid vehicles and the reduction of large, high consumption vehicles in the fleet. <b>82%</b> of Council's fleet vehicles are four cylinder and hybrids vehicles.</li> <li>• <b>Gordon Street Administrative Building energy efficiency projects</b>, such as the installation of sub-metering equipment, energy monitoring systems and other building hardware and software upgrades. Upgrades have also been made to heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, hot water supply and lighting and power saving equipment.</li> <li>• <b>Gordon White Library projects</b> also include the installation of metering and energy management as well as upgrades to building infrastructure similar to the Gordon Street Administrative Building. In addition upgrades have been made to allow air movement for free cooling in terms of opening and breeze paths.</li> <li>• <b>Regional Depots projects</b> include upgrades to lighting and power saving equipment. At Council Works Depot projects additionally include the installation of 76kW solar power system, LED car park lighting, variable refrigerant volume air conditioning, CO<sub>2</sub> sensors, daylight and motion sensors, heat exchangers, swirl diffuser, upgrade to the hot water heating, roof insulation and work shed light fixtures.</li> <li>• <b>The Entertainment and Convention Centre projects</b> include installation of energy efficiency LED lighting. Similarly the main gallery at Artspace has received upgrades of lighting fixtures and fittings. The Botanic Gardens projects also include upgrades to lighting (outdoor) and draught proofing of the building.</li> </ul>	<p><b>GRI:EN5, 6, 7</b> <b>MRC30, 31 &amp; 32</b></p>



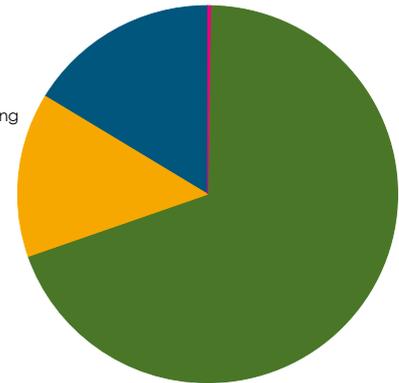
# Energy, Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

**Table 1 GHG Emissions**

SOURCE OF EMISSIONS	2011/12 CONSUMPTION	2011/12 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (tonnes of CO2-e)
Energy use	22,314,972 kWh	22,767
Fleet	1,267 kL of diesel 228 kL of unleaded petrol 154 kL of E10	4,603
Street Lighting	5,245,567 kWh	5,350
Waste	Unknown	81
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>32.801</b>

■ Energy Use  
■ Fleet  
■ Street Lighting  
■ Waste



The pie chart above shows the 2011/12 organisational footprint breakdown between energy use, fleet, street lighting and waste.

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### Premier's Sustainable Award for the Built Environment - Paget Depot

The Paget Depot was constructed in 2011 as Council's main works depot. The depot accommodates between 350-400 staff and a variety of operations, such as water services, park operations, plant and procurement and civil works. The depot incorporates environmentally sustainable design principles which reduce Council's energy and water consumption costs and impact on the environment.



Council's focus on energy efficiency and sustainable design principles has been recognised with Council collecting the Built Environment Award at the Premier's Sustainable Awards.

Premier Campbell Newman and Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection Andrew Powell congratulated Council for its commitment to the environment – "Some of these savings have been achieved through really simple ideas, such as the use of sun shading, natural light and ventilation, rainwater harvesting and recycling". Council was among 141 nominations across 11 categories.

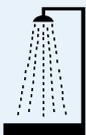


Further information for Preservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity can be found on page 23-24.



# Water

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

OUR PERFORMANCE		INDICATOR REFERENCE
	<b>282 litres</b> of daily water was consumed per capita, including residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural. Residential consumption accounted for <b>251 litres</b> of daily water consumption per capita.	<b>MRC39</b> <b>MRC42</b>
	<b>14,574 Mega Litres</b> of water was withdrawn, <b>13,438 Mega Litres</b> from surface water and <b>1,136 Mega Litres</b> from ground water.	<b>MRC52</b>
	<b>164 full trade</b> waste approvals were issued for 2011/2012. <b>95%</b> compliance was achieved against EPA Sewerage Licensing requirements.	<b>MRC46</b> <b>MRC55</b>
	<b>100%</b> of the 18 large residential subdivision applications in the Mackay Region (totalling 1255 lots) approved in 2011 and 16 large residential subdivision applications (totalling 634 lots) approved in 2012 achieved the pollution reduction targets for stormwater management.	<b>MRC36</b>
	<b>4,344ML of recycled water</b> was used for irrigation (mainly by cane farmers) during 2011/12. <b>4,967 Mega Litres</b> of wastewater was discharged (not reused).	<b>GRI:EN10</b> <b>MRC35, 51</b>
	<b>86</b> sewerage overflows for 2011/12 were recorded.	<b>MRC44</b>
	<b>7</b> water related communication/community engagement plans or activities implemented by the Council. <b>1100</b> students took part in the Water Education Program in 2011-2012.	<b>MRC47</b> <b>MRC48</b>
	<b>Water restrictions</b> are necessary to ensure that the region's consumption does not exceed supply, and that the water infrastructure can cope with the level of demand. During 2011/12, Level 1 and 2 water restrictions remained in place across all of Mackay Regional Council's water supply areas.	<b>MRC49</b>
	<b>The Waterwise Rebate Scheme</b> continued, offering residents rebates on the cost of purchasing a water efficient shower rose, dual flush cistern and rainwater tank. During 2011/12, more than <b>\$3000</b> was paid out to residents who purchased more than <b>\$14,300</b> worth or water saving products.	<b>MRC50</b>
	In 2011/12, Water Services successfully completed the installation of over <b>700</b> automatic meter reading devices in the Slade Point area as part of the initial project trials for the Integrated Management Demand Program.	<b>MRC40</b>



# Water

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### Upgrade to the Nebo Road Water Treatment Plant

The Nebo Road Water Treatment Plant is Mackay's largest water treatment plant, and recently underwent a \$26 million upgrade. The upgrade saw the capacity of the plant increase from 55ML per day to 75ML per day to cater to the predicted population growth for our region over the next 15 years. The water is treated to a high quality to ensure it is safe for human consumption. The upgrade included improving the waste handling facilities to use a sludge thickener and centrifuge to dewater the contaminants removed from the water,

optimising the plant's capabilities to treat water from different sources, including varying proportions of river water and bore water, control system upgrade to enable operation from both onsite and remote locations

The upgrade won an award in the design and construction of a project over \$10 million category at the annual Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia Queensland (IPWEAQ) Awards.

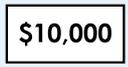


Further information for Water can be found on pages 27-28.



## Recycling and Waste

### SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

OUR PERFORMANCE		INDICATOR REFERENCE
	<b>23 Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) tours</b> attended by <b>643</b> community members and <b>24 waste minimisation education sessions</b> attended by <b>638</b> community members were held.	<b>MRC56, 57</b>
	<b>5 composting workshops</b> were held for the community and school teachers.	<b>MRC58</b>
	A <b>\$10,000</b> grant was awarded to Council's Waste Services through Ergon Energy's Envirofund Program to develop a mobile waste education trailer.	<b>MRC59</b>
	Domestic waste accounted for <b>43,671 tonnes</b> or <b>0.4 tonnes per person</b> . The weekly domestic waste collection emptied <b>47,134 bins</b> and the fortnightly recycling collection emptied <b>42,920 bins</b> . Domestic kerbside recycling was equivalent to <b>0.05 tonnes per person</b> .	<b>GRI:EN22 MRC61, 62, 66 &amp; 94</b>
	Commercial waste totalled <b>60,730 tonnes</b> or <b>0.5 tonnes per person</b> .	<b>GRI:EN22 MRC63 &amp; 64</b>
	<b>104,581 tonnes</b> of waste went to landfill, the equivalent of <b>0.9 tonnes per person</b> .	<b>GRI:EN22 MRC67 &amp; 68</b>
	<b>16,688 tonnes of waste was diverted from landfill</b> , the equivalent of <b>0.1 tonnes per person</b> . This was comprised of <b>10,758 tonnes</b> of green waste recycled, <b>5,753 tonnes</b> of kerbside recycling, <b>130 tonnes</b> of steel and 47 tonnes of batteries.	<b>GRI:EN22 MRC65, 69 &amp; 70</b>
	A total of <b>5,753 tonnes</b> of material was recycled at the materials recovery facility; of which approximately 16% was glass, 58% was paper and cardboard, 4% was high density polyethylene (HDPE), 5% was aluminium, 9% was steel, 5% was mixed plastics and 3% was other recyclables.	<b>GRI:EN22 MRC72</b>
	Council spent <b>\$21,941,070</b> on the treatment and disposal of waste in the financial year 2011/2012.	<b>MRC60</b>
	A total of <b>1,851 tonnes</b> or <b>98%</b> of biosolids were reused, and approximately 2%, or 33 tonnes were sent to landfill. The total biosolids processed from each of the Council's wastewater treatment plants is shown in Table 3.	<b>GRI: EN22 MRC71</b>



# Recycling and Waste

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

**Table 2 Approximate Biosolids Processed (Tonnes)**

TREATMENT PLANT	TONNES
Mackay North Water Recycling Facility	312
Mackay South Water Recycling Facility	1,377
Sarina	33
Mirani	129
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,851</b>

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

### Composting Workshops

Each year over half of the rubbish Australians put in the general waste bin at home could be better used in the garden as compost and mulch. Mackay Regional Council Waste Services encourages householders to compost at home by sponsoring a number of free community composting workshops throughout the year.

The workshops are run in partnership with the Mackay Community Gardens and aim to highlight the benefits of composting and assist householders with setting up a successful compost system at home.

Members of the community learn that by turning food scraps and organic garden waste into compost they can:

- Improve soil quality in the home garden
- Create valuable nutrients that can reduce the need to use artificial fertilisers
- Prevent greenhouse gas emissions by reducing organic waste going to landfill
- Improve water savings Save your money



### RRR Day

As part of Mackay Regional Council's commitment towards building a sustainable organisation, Council staff cleaned out their offices on Reduce Replace Recycle (RRR) Day to reduce the number of paper documents in circulation, replace filing cabinets with electronic storage and recycle unwanted paper. The day proved to be a success as Council staff recycled enough paper and cardboard to fill 39 - 240 litre wheelie bins. This equates to saving 858 kg CO2 which could fill 17,160 black balloons!



**Further information for Recycling and Waste can be found on page 29.**



## Community and Lifestyle

### SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

OUR PERFORMANCE		INDICATOR REFERENCE
	<p><b>15 community engagement plans and 12 community development initiatives</b> that are relevant to sustainable communities were developed and implemented in 2011/12.</p>	<p><b>MRC74</b></p>
	<p>Council spent <b>7%</b> of the budget on cultural service events, facilities and programs.</p>	<p><b>MRC73</b></p>
	<p>Council delivered a range of community festivals such as the Mackay Region Festival of Arts, Coal to Coast Festival and River to Reef Festival.</p>	<p><b>MRC77</b></p>
	<p>Council delivered a range of services to our diverse multicultural communities such as interpreting services, the annual Global Grooves Multi Cultural Festival and visa assistance sessions for newly arrived migrants in conjunction with the Federal Government.</p>	<p><b>MRC78</b></p>
	<p>Council assisted a large range of community and sporting groups with over <b>\$200,000</b> handed out via community grants to local sporting and not for profit groups.</p>	<p><b>MRC79</b></p>
	<p>Council implemented <b>6</b> community resilience projects in response to natural disasters in 2011-2012 including:</p> <p><b>Weather the Storm</b> - The Disaster Resilient Communities program was offered by National Rural Women's Coalition. The program works with groups of women in communities at risk of, or recovering from, disaster and facilitated women's awareness, preparation and resilience. More information is provided in the case study.</p> <p><b>Presentations to Community Groups</b> - Several presentations on preparedness and resilience have been made to a number of community groups / organisations.</p> <p><b>Emergency Liaison Officers</b> - In order to assist smaller communities that have previously been cut-off by cyclones or floods, eight volunteers Emergency Liaison Officers (ELOs) have been appointed in three communities to enhance communication between the Council / Local Disaster Management Group and their communities both in preparedness, response and recovery.</p> <p><b>Cyclone Awareness Day</b> - Council participated in a cyclone awareness day in November 2011 and also arranged an "SES Orange Day" to promote preparedness and raise funds for SES.</p> <p><b>Business Preparedness</b> - Working with Volunteering Queensland to build resilience and stress the importance of preparedness for the business community regarding natural disasters, Business Roundtable meetings were held in Mackay and Sarina.</p> <p><b>Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Community</b> - delivered presentations on disaster preparedness for migrants at TAFE English language classes, Mackay Language College and at George Street Neighbourhood Centre.</p>	<p><b>MRC80</b></p>



## Community and Lifestyle

### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

#### **Weather the Storm - creating sustainable, resilient communities in Eungella and Midge Point**

Mackay Regional Council was privileged to be the first Council in Queensland to offer the pilot program of Weather the Storm for women in Eungella and Midge Point, areas which had been severely affected in recent natural disasters.

The aim of the 15 hour program was: to prepare women, and in turn they would prepare households and families to be more prepared when faced

with natural disasters to allow rural women in more isolated communities to be more resilient and support each other.

This program was developed by the National Rural Women's Coalition and was funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The program was held over three days at Eungella and at Midge Point and was at no cost to the attendees.

There were a total of 26 women from Eungella and Midge Point who attended the program. All of the respondents felt the program prompted them to take action to better prepare them for future natural disasters.

The most common actions taken from the program have been to obtain an emergency kit, save important documents on a USB and increased consideration of food items to store. Participants now feel more prepared by having people to go to for help and support, knowing where to get more information and feeling more confident in their ability to plan and cope with disasters/ emergencies. All participants felt that the program had an impact on the strength of the social connections within the community. Both groups have decided to continue to meet to further their preparedness and remain a support network for each other.



**Further information for Community and Lifestyle can be found on page 30.**



# Organisational Excellence

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

OUR PERFORMANCE		INDICATOR REFERENCE
	<p>During the 2011/12 financial year a structured rollout of SafePlan was completed across all Council Programs. Reports developed on Monthly Action Plans indicate a high level of completion and WHS audits of Council's system have shown a steady improvement. Council had <b>27 lost time injuries incidents</b> and <b>687 days lost</b> as a result of these incidents.</p>	<p><b>GRI:PR-PA MRC3 &amp; 83</b></p>
	<p>Council has had <b>0 fines</b> for non-compliance with laws and regulations concerning the provision and use of products and services. <b>0 complaints</b> upheld by regulatory bodies regarding the health and safety of products and services.</p>	<p><b>GRI:PR9</b></p>
	<p><b>0 complaints</b> upheld by the Queensland ombudsman</p>	<p><b>GRI:PR5 MRC82</b></p>
	<p>In 2011/12, Council received <b>8 awards</b> for their social, ethical and environmental performance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Winner of the 2012 premier's sustainability built environment award</b> for the Paget Depot</li> <li><b>Joint winner of the 2012 government communications Australia - brand communication award</b> for the Council Connect initiative</li> <li><b>Joint winner of the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac healthy waterways alliance urban business award</b> for Council's water and waste services laboratory</li> <li><b>Winner of the 2011 national trust of Queensland Bendigo bank governor's heritage silver award</b> for Council's heritage promotion project</li> <li><b>Winner of the 2011 institute of public works engineering Australia Queensland - design and construction of a project over \$10 million award</b> for Nebo road water treatment plant</li> <li><b>Winner of the 2011 Mackay spinal injuries association inclusive community champion - best recreation/leisure/entertainment venue award</b> for the bluewater trail</li> <li><b>Winner of the 2011 keep Australia beautiful tidy towns - energy innovation Queensland award</b> for the Mackay entertainment and convention centre</li> <li><b>Winner of the 2011 Mackay Isaac tourism attraction award</b> for the Sarina sugar shed</li> </ul>	<p><b>GRI2.10 MRC81</b></p>
	<p>Council has taken action to achieve improvements in service delivery, including business improvement initiatives to provide more electronic forms and services, streamlining administration processes and increasing the use of video training and conferencing.</p>	<p><b>GRI: PR-PA</b></p>
	<p>Council has implemented a number of business improvement groups and maintained the collaboration of the Sustainable Futures Advisory Committee.</p>	<p><b>GRI: PR-PA</b></p>



## Organisational Excellence

### SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

#### Case Study – Sustainable Futures Advisory Committee

Council's Sustainable Futures Advisory Committee has taken a proactive leadership role in delivering sustainable practices across the organisation. The purpose of the Committee is to assess the likely effects of climate change on the roles and responsibilities of Council and plan appropriate responses; ensure Council takes a proactive leadership role of prudent stewardship in relation to future sustainability and supports the community and business responses; and reduce Council's carbon footprint.

There are four working groups accountable to the SFAC:

1. Fleet and procurement – assess the likely effects of Council's procurement processes on the total carbon footprint and reduce carbon emissions related to Council's fleet and procurement.
2. Carbon management - understand and plan for the implementation of the Federal Government's Carbon Reduction Legislation, as it relates to the Mackay Region and provide related support. The working group will also investigate emerging technologies and recommend implementations.
3. Built environment - reduce potential carbon emissions and minimise water and energy usage throughout Council facilities. The working group will also ensure Mackay Regional Council takes a proactive role in relation to the sustainability of its built environment.
4. Natural environment - minimise the potential impact of Council's activities on the environment, protect and enhance the biodiversity of Council's owned or managed land and investigate options to minimise the effects of climate change impacts on the natural environment.

Further information for Organisational Excellence can be found on page 31.



# Economic Growth and Development

## SUSTAINABILITY PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT

OUR PERFORMANCE		INDICATOR REFERENCE
	In 2011/12, Council's operating expenditure totalled <b>\$283.9 million</b> , of which approximately 24% (\$68 million) was for employee costs, 45% (\$127 million) was for materials and services, 5% (\$13 million) was for finance costs, and 27% (\$76 million) was for depreciation.	<b>GRI:PA8</b>
	Council's government grants and subsidies totalled <b>\$77.5 million</b> in 2011/12, of which approximately 11% (\$7 million) was for recurrent general purpose grants, 44% (\$34 million) was for recurrent government grants and subsidies, and 45% (\$35 million) was for capital government grants and subsidies.	<b>GRI:EC4</b>
	The Gross Regional Product of the Mackay Local Government Area was estimated at approximately <b>\$7.5 billion</b> , contributing approximately <b>2.8%</b> of the Gross State Product for Queensland.	<b>MRC84 &amp; 85</b>
	Council met its targets for working capital ratio, net financial liabilities ratio and interest coverage ratio as shown in Table 4.	<b>MRC86-91</b>

**Table 3 Financial Sustainability Ratios**

RATIO	2011/12
Working capital ratio	1:2.82
Operating surplus ratio	-8.1%
Net financial liabilities ratio	34.1%
Interest coverage ratio	1.8%
Asset sustainability ratio	Not available
Asset consumption ratio	83.5%

Further information for Economic Growth and Development can be found on pages 31-32.



## Sustainable Planning and Infrastructure

### Our Approach

Mackay is one of the fastest growing locations in Queensland, with growth forecasts indicating the region's population will near 200,000 within the next 20 years. While accelerated growth is beneficial for the region in terms of business and industry opportunities, Mackay is faced with significant challenges to provide and maintain vital infrastructure that will adequately service this rapid rate of expansion. Physical infrastructure, particularly the region's arterial roads and water and sewerage networks require substantial financial support in the short to medium term to maintain this high level of growth. Council recognises that infrastructure assets are of critical importance to the Mackay region and are fundamental to Council's overall service delivery and has developed the following management tools to support this:

- **Priority for Infrastructure** - This document, endorsed in February 2012, provides a blueprint for the region's key infrastructure needs. Projects totalling almost \$1 billion are included in the document, which identifies priorities in the short and long term.
- **Asset Management Policy** – The policy provides a gateway to asset management plans, which will indicate predicted levels of service and predicted cost of service.
- **Mackay Region Planning Scheme** – This draft Planning Scheme is being developed to manage land use and ensure sustainable development of the Mackay Region over the next 20 years. Council supports sustainable settlement design by using urban land more effectively to avoid unnecessary expansion into good quality agricultural land. This means promoting a consolidated urban form with higher residential densities at appropriate locations, and includes achieving smaller average lot sizes in key urban areas. A first State Interest Review was completed in April 2012 and community consultation is expected to occur in 2013.
- **Mackay Regional Council Cycleway Strategy** - The Strategy seeks to encourage cycling in Mackay and guide the development of a more safe, convenient and accessible environment for cyclists. The number of people cycling to, from and within the City and region is growing significantly. This growth is attributed to flat topography and an increased awareness of the health and environmental benefits of cycling.
- **Mackay City Council Planning Scheme Open Space Policy** - The Policy outlines Council's requirement in relation to the type and quality of public open space to be provided. The broad goals for open space provision include that a parkland provision of a 5ha per 1000 people should be provided, with approximately 2ha being for active use (sports), and 3ha being for passive use (general parkland).
- **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy** - Identifies a five year strategy for Council's planning and provision of open space, sport and recreation. The Strategy seeks to define a regional context for the planning and provision of parks, sport and recreation and proposes a new framework for the management and delivery of sport and recreation opportunities.



## Sustainable Planning and Infrastructure

### Our Strategic Targets

TARGET	INDICATOR REFERENCE
Develop a Regional Sustainability Strategy to identify the long term priority needs for the Mackay region and the infrastructure required to meet population growth.	<b>MRC1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</b>
Increase the use of sustainable forms of transport such as network of bikeways or pathways to improve the patronage and usage of active transport options.	<b>MRC5 &amp; 6</b>
Develop a comprehensive infrastructure asset management strategy to support the maintenance, replacement and enhancement of Council infrastructure.	<b>MRC1 &amp; 3</b>
Implement the Active Towns project with the aim to increase the number of people walking and cycling instead of using their cars in the Mackay community.	<b>MRC5 &amp; 6</b>
Apply Environmental Sustainable Design (ESD) principles and practices into the planning, upgrading and maintenance of new and existing Council buildings.	<b>MRC7 &amp; 8</b>



## Preservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

### Our Approach

The Mackay area has a significant and diverse natural environment that provides resources that underpin the region's economic prosperity and quality of life. The foundation of the region's tourism industry lies in its natural attributes - beaches, islands, fishing grounds, rainforest and unique wildlife. More broadly, the region's agricultural wealth relies on healthy soil, clean water and effective management of pests and wildfire. The region's natural environment will continue to provide these benefits if effectively and sensibly managed. Council manages the natural environment through the:

- **Corporate Environmental Policy** – The Policy advocates Council's commitment to prevent, manage, and minimise environmental impacts associated with our operations and activities whilst conserving and enhancing the region's biodiversity and environmental quality and thereby cultivating community health and wellbeing now and for future generations.
- **Natural Environment Plan** - The purpose of the Plan is to provide management direction to ensure the maintenance and improved condition of the natural environment. The Plan aims to:
  - provide reliable, scientifically robust and easy to access information about the region's natural assets
  - provide an overview of the key threats to these assets
  - identify priority areas and activities to ensure that our natural assets continue to provide a source of economic prosperity and quality of life for the region's residents and visitors
- Coastal Management Guidelines and individual Beach Plans - The Mackay Coastal Guidelines sets the vision for the Mackay coast and outlines the strategic management intent for the coastal zone. Site-specific beach management plans identify key management issues and prioritise on-ground actions.
- **Coasts and Communities Program** - The Coasts and Communities program is a joint initiative of Mackay Regional Council and Reef Catchments, with support from Mackay Regional Council's Natural Environment Levy and the Australian Government's Caring for Our Country program. 27 Coasts and Communities activities were held during the 2011/12 financial year, providing coastal communities with opportunities to get involved with management activities in coastal areas and learn more about coastal processes, plants and animals. Activities included planting seedlings, weed removal, rubbish collection and maintenance of revegetation areas. Volunteers have the opportunity to meet like-minded community members, and learn more about coastal environments and how they are being managed.
- **Plant Ed programs** - The Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens runs a number of fauna and flora conservation educational programs, many focused on children and students as well as the wider community.
- **Pest Management Plan** - Control of pest plants and animals, including spraying and baiting programs are undertaken to reduce economic, environmental and social impacts. Wild dogs can cause significant predation losses to livestock and have a major impact on a range of native animal species. Council's current Pest Management Plan was endorsed by Council in 2012. The Plan aims to prioritise resources to ensure that time and money is spent on those pests where work will be most effective. This is achieved through guiding landholders and managers in the region to identify high priority plants and animals as well as apply varying methods of control depending on the classification of the plant/animal.



## Preservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity

### Our Strategic Targets

TARGET	INDICATOR REFERENCE
Utilise funding from the Natural Environment Levy to improve biodiversity values in natural environment areas.	<b>GRI:EN30</b>
Improve the condition of natural environment areas by implementing priority actions in the Natural Environment Plan by each year as determined by the prioritisation process.	<b>MRC10</b>
Increase environmental awareness by promoting community participation in conservation activities and implementing a program focused on protecting and restoring native ecosystems.	<b>MRC11</b>
Continue to protect habitat areas through planning scheme and statutory instruments as well as Council programs.	<b>GRI:EN30 MRC9 &amp; 12</b>
Protect natural environment areas by including them in councils pest management plan.	<b>MRC13, 14, 15, 16 &amp; 17</b>
Raise awareness and educate the community on the importance of biodiversity and conservation of the local fauna and flora.	<b>MRC 74 &amp; 93</b>



# Energy, Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change

## Our Approach

Council is committed to a sustainable future, and continues to monitor and investigate ways to tackle climate change and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to protect our region for future generations to enjoy. This section provides details on a number of Council projects and initiatives that have been developed to fulfil this commitment.

### Sustainable Living to reduce the Mackay community carbon footprint

Council strongly encourages Mackay regional residents take action to live more sustainably at home and in the community. To facilitate this, Council has developed a sustainable living website ([ecomackay.com.au](http://ecomackay.com.au)) which provides sustainable living advice and information relating to areas of community, food and drink, garden, house, products, recreation, services, transport, waste, work and rebates. The website contains an online tool called 'myfootprint' that enables residents to create an individual household action plan to reduce your ecological footprint, track progress towards a more sustainable lifestyle and save power, water and money.

### Climate Change

The Mackay region is susceptible to climate change issues. It is one of the most vulnerable sections of the Queensland coast in terms of storm tide inundation. Council has developed the Coastal Management Guidelines which aim to protect beaches, dunes and coastal wetlands in the Mackay region and where opportunities exist restore these sensitive environmental areas to enhance their natural values and appeal, whilst allowing for appropriate recreational access and use. Adhering to these guidelines will help to address climate change issues within the Mackay Region.



### Monitoring our carbon footprint

Mackay Regional Council has used Planet Footprint to collate and track its carbon performance since 2008, including its energy use, fuel use, street lighting and greenhouse gas emissions. Mackay Regional Council is the first Planet Footprint subscriber to achieve Gold Recognition for successfully utilising the service to monitor greenhouse gas performance, communicate to staff and routinely act on anomalies to enhance environmental performance and achieve savings. More information about Planet Footprint can be found on the website. [www.planetfootprint.com.au](http://www.planetfootprint.com.au)

### Water Consumption and Electricity Use

Delivering water and wastewater services is an energy-intensive effort. As water is treated, pumped to homes and businesses and then pumped to wastewater facilities to be treated again, the need to conserve water use is very important as it also reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Council has adopted various approaches to saving energy and encourage staff and the Mackay community to conserve water such as the H2O water conservation awareness campaign (see council's website), the shower head rebate scheme, installation of water efficient tap fixtures in most Council buildings and the installation of variable speed drive pumps at selected high energy usage water and sewage pump stations. Table 4. outlines the measures taken at the Paget Depot precinct and the projected annual electricity savings made.



# Energy, Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change

## Environmental Sustainable Design

The Council's Paget Depot incorporates Environmental Sustainable Design principles which reduce Council's energy and water consumption costs as well as reduce the impact on the environment. Rainwater is collected in tanks around the site and water is distributed between tanks using a siphon transfer system. Rainwater harvested is utilised in garden irrigation, toilets and urinals, in the sewer wash down area and in a variety of treatment systems. A range of energy saving measures have been taken including the use of motion and daylight sensors, LED lighting, roofing insulation, heat exchanges and CO2 sensors. A 76kW solar system was also installed at the site. The wash bay utilises a water recycling system that reuses all water once it has been through the filtration system. This system is only 'topped' up with rainwater as required. All storm water on site is collected in two large bio-retention basins which is filtered using the constructed profiles and natural vegetation to filter the storm water before returning it into the river system.

**Table 4 Electricity Savings**

MEASURE NAME	ANNUAL ELECTRICITY SAVING
76kW solar power system	272,047
VRV air conditioning	277,865
LED car park lighting	76,392
Work shed light fixtures	71,726
Daylight and motion sensors	62,455
CO <sub>2</sub> sensors	58,062
Heat exchangers	34,702
Roof insulation upgrade	19,850
Swirl diffusers	11,200
Hot water heating upgrade	3,638
Water transfer between tanks via passive siphon	1,572

## Our Strategic Targets

TARGET	INDICATOR REFERENCE
Investigate the most cost-effective options for reducing Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions.	<b>GRI:EN5- 7 &amp; 16-18 MRC 19-29</b>
Provide leadership and guidance to the community on the actions they can take to support Council's own actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	<b>GRI:EN5, 6, 7 &amp; 18</b>
Report on energy and greenhouse gas data related to landfills and waste water treatment plants starting from financial year 2012/13.	<b>GRI:EN16, 17 &amp; 18</b>
Expand the current portfolio of facilities Council report on.	<b>MRC30</b>
Continue energy efficiency actions and report back on the progress through the Sustainability Report	<b>GRI:EN5, 6 &amp; 7 MRC31</b>
Continue to focus on downsizing of Council's vehicle fleet which has seen the introduction of hybrids and a significant reduction in larger vehicles within the fleet.	<b>GRI:EN6 &amp; 7 MRC 32</b>
Conduct annual Waste Audits of Council's corporate waste to determine waste greenhouse gas emissions and report back through the Sustainability Report.	<b>MRC33</b>
Reduce water consumption and related energy use.	<b>GRI:EN6 &amp; 7 MRC18</b>
Apply sustainable event management principles to Council run community events in order to reduce an event's carbon footprint.	<b>MRC75</b>



# Water

## Our Approach

The largest source of water for the Mackay region comes from the Pioneer River. Drawn from the river at Dumbleton Weir, the water is pumped to the Nebo Road Water Treatment Plant, the largest of the Council's three water treatment plants.

Council ensures that the water is of a high quality through rigorous testing performed by our Scientific and Analytical Services department at the Water and Waste Services Laboratory. Many tests are performed on both the raw and potable water supplies to ensure the water meets the National Health and Medical Research Council's Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Council is a significant water infrastructure owner with:

- 3 water treatment plants
- 12 water treatment facilities
- 2 raw water pump stations
- 4 wastewater treatment plants
- 176 wastewater pump stations
- 7 recycled water storages (main)
- 27 recycled water storages (farm dams)

## Stormwater Quality

Sustained high population growth in Mackay is increasing the threat to water quality. Council's Stormwater Quality Policy outlines minimum key performance indicators to manage stormwater quality in urban waterways in a way that maintains or enhances the state of balance across environmental, social and economic interests within the community. Council strives to maintain the key performance indicators specified in Council's Stormwater Quality Policy. The Policy is aligned with the water quality objectives outlined in State Planning Policy 4/10 – Healthy Waters and the Urban Stormwater Planning Guidelines.

## Water and Waste Services Education Programs

Mackay Water Services delivers a Water Education Program to help school students and the community learn about the importance of water. The school program provides insight into our local water story, the water cycle and the journey water takes to reach our taps. It also provides students with valuable information on water conservation practices around the home and at school.



## Mackay South Water Recycling Facility

Council's Mackay South Water Recycling Facility is one of the largest reuse schemes in regional Australia, with about 90% of the city's effluent being recycled into Class A water for irrigation purposes. The facility protects the Great Barrier Reef from over 250 tonnes of nutrients and 150 tonnes of suspended solids each year. By providing a reliable and high quality source of recycled water, it also reduces local farmers' reliance on groundwater for irrigation.





# Water

## Integrated Demand Management Program

In 2011/12 Mackay Water Services progressed the planning of the Integrated Demand Management Program (IDMP), an innovative program designed to address the demand management issues faced by our region. Over the next 10 years, it is estimated that over \$800 million will need to be invested in building and upgrading fundamental water and sewerage infrastructure due to population growth and increased demand. If water demand can be reduced using alternative and innovative strategies such as those that form part of the IDMP, the need to build new infrastructure can be delayed, potentially saving millions.

The strategies that form the IDMP include:

- Automatic Metering Reading - allowing the water meter at individual properties to be read remotely through the attachment of a small radio transmitter. The technology is designed to assist council in improving the management of water services within the region through enhanced monitoring of the network. It also provides a means for early leak detection, reducing the amount of water wasted through undetected leaks, as well as a cost-effective way to read water meters.
- Network Monitoring improvements – allowing improved accessibility and reporting of water distribution information for planning and operating staff.
- Social Marketing Campaign - designed to encourage positive behaviour change amongst residents in order to reduce water demand.

## Our Strategic Targets

TARGET	INDICATOR REFERENCE
Reduce daily potable water consumption and peak water demand.	<b>MRC39, 40, 41, 42 &amp; 52</b>
Monitor sewage overflows into the environment and minimise harmful impacts to the natural environment.	<b>MRC44, 45, 51 &amp; 55</b>
Reduce water pollution and improve stormwater quality.	<b>MRC36-38</b>
Issue full trade waste approvals to trade waste generating businesses.	<b>MRC46</b>
Monitor reused and recycled water.	<b>GRI:EN10 MRC35</b>
Raise awareness and educate the community on water quality and conservation issues.	<b>MRC47-50</b>



## Recycling and Waste

### Our Approach

All urban areas receive weekly kerbside collection of refuse and fortnightly collection of recyclables. Some, but not all, rural areas receive a similar service and the expansion of the kerbside collection service is recognised as an issue that needs to be assessed in more detail.

Council's waste management strategy 2010-2019 guides the waste management direction for Council for the next five to ten years, and focuses on waste minimisation and resource recovery, and waste education strategies. The proposed actions for waste minimisation and resource recovery opportunities include:

- Expanding recyclables collection services and materials accepted at kerbside
- Expanding collection services to business, particularly small business
- Continue to improve the collection of data on waste quantities handled by Council
- Initiate regular waste categorisation audits
- Reducing refuse bin size to encourage recycling
- Additional education

Education for the community to help drive behaviour change and reduce waste to landfill is a key component of Council's waste management strategy. Therefore Council has implemented a number of waste education initiatives including:

**Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) tours** aimed to educate both schools and the general community

**Waste minimisation education sessions** aimed at schools and teachers

**Composting workshops** are organised and sponsored by Mackay Regional Council Waste Services. Composting workshops are performed by a permaculturist at the Mackay Community Gardens. The Mackay Community Gardens have comprehensive composting and worm farming systems in place for conducting the workshops.

Future additional actions for waste education strategies include:

- Awareness of waste management services provided by Council and how to use these services
- Litter education program
- Awareness of resource recovery and recycling services available to the community so that contamination of kerbside recyclables is reduced and resource recovery services provided at self-haul waste management facilities are used
- Discourage illegal dumping activity.

### Our Strategic Targets

TARGET	INDICATOR REFERENCE
Review the current Waste Management Strategy.	<b>MRC3</b>
Improve collaboration of waste data sharing with local waste stakeholders and industry within the Mackay region.	<b>MRC3</b>
Maintain the percentage of biosolids reused instead of sent to landfill.	<b>MRC71</b>
Raise awareness and educate the community on waste reduction and recycling issues.	<b>MRC3</b>



## Community and Lifestyle

### Our Approach

Mackay Regional Council is focussed on making Mackay a great region to live and do business in. In recent years the city has developed its community and lifestyle facilities with additions such as the Bluewater Trail, Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre and the Bluewater lagoon. These built facilities complement the stunning natural environment which is seen across the region in areas such as at Cape Hillsborough and at Eungella in the Pioneer Valley. In 2011-12 the region continued to see strong growth growing faster than the Australian and Queensland averages and this is forecast to continue for the foreseeable future. While there are a number of challenges facing Council and the community, largely driven by growth, it is an exciting time for the Mackay region with future plans and projects looking to further enhance our quality of life.

### Community Services/Facilities

Council has planned a range of new initiatives over coming years such as the development of an integrated library and community facility in the Northern Beaches and further embellishments to the Botanic Gardens and other key parks in the region. Furthermore, Council is currently embarking upon the development of a major growth strategy aimed at ensuring the enviable lifestyle we currently enjoy is not only protected but enhanced. Studies such as the Open Space, Sport and Recreational Strategy, Aquatics Strategy, Brewer's Park Masterplan, Library Review and Pioneer Valley Sporting Needs have been developed through engaging with the community to ensure that the future plans for community and lifestyle infrastructure, programs and facilities meet the community's needs and desires.

### Community Sustainability Awareness and Education

Council provides Plant-ed, water and waste conservation education programs to schools in the region as well as running festivals and events that promote healthy lifestyles and sustainable living.

### Community Resilience

Resilience and natural disaster relief and recovery is an integral part of the support and services provided by the Council to the community. The Mackay Regional Council Resilience Project which began in 2011 is a key element of this. The *Flexible Funding Program - Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements* was jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments and administered by Department of Local Government. The grant was provided to Council to implement community recovery projects to assist local communities deal with the impacts of the disasters and to contribute to their disaster preparedness and resilience.

### Cultural Diversity/Traditional owners of the land

Council encourages and facilitates partnerships with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and local government through the co-ordination of learning circles and forums that aim to support and develop cultural heritage practices and protocols, and develop actions that contribute to the process of reconciliation.



## Community and Lifestyle

### Our Strategic Targets

TARGET	INDICATOR REFERENCE
To deliver an annual sustainable living event to the Mackay community.	<b>MRC73, 74 &amp; 77</b>
To develop a sunsmart policy for all Council and community events so that festivals are held in a manner that protects residents and visitors from the harmful effects of UV damage.	<b>MRC76</b>
To develop an online community engagement portal and provide training for all Council Manager's in community engagement so that Council better equipped to engage with residents.	<b>MRC74 &amp; 80</b>
To deliver a range of community events that promote cultural diversity and heritage.	<b>MRC77</b>



## Organisational Excellence

### Our Approach

Mackay Regional Council is responsible for the effective management of the Mackay local government area. The Council strives for organisational excellence through delivering exceptional customer service, engaging its workforce and adhering to the highest standards of ethical and business practice.

Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2014 identifies Organisational Excellence as a key strategic priority and promotes the following corporate objective:

"To pursue excellence as an organisation which embraces exceptional customer service, values its staff and promotes ethical standards of practice supported by clear policies and strategies responsive to the needs of the community"

Safety is a critical aspect of how Council deliver organisational excellence. SafePlan is the Work Health and Safety (WHS) management system package designed for Local Government which Council is utilising to further enhance the systems which were in place. SafePlan includes the tools to plan, implement, evaluate, review and audit the WHS system. This includes a WHS Management Plan to identify WHS actions to be undertaken and Monthly Action Plans (MAPs) that specify when and how the actions will be completed.

In addition Council has also adopted the following policies to further promote sustainability in its activities:

- **Procurement Policy** - addresses sustainability issues through Council's consideration of strategies to avoid necessary consumption and manage demand; minimising environmental impacts over the whole-of-life of the goods and services; suppliers' socially responsible practices including compliance with legislative obligations to employees; value for money over the whole of life rather than just the initial cost of the goods and services; the cost value of money and associated payback periods.
- **Corporate Sustainability Policy** – provides a framework for Council's ongoing commitment to Sustainability at all levels and all areas.
- **Corporate Environmental Policy** – provides a framework and commitment for Council to improve its environmental performance, its responsibility to comply with all applicable environmental legislation and to adhere to the Environmental Incident Reporting Procedures and guidelines.

### Our Strategic Targets

TARGET	INDICATOR REFERENCE
Raise staff awareness of Council's Sustainability Strategy to support its implementation.	<b>GRI:PR-PA MRC3</b>
Instil a workplace health and safety culture at Council by continuing to implement the SafePlan program.	<b>GRI:PR-PA MRC83</b>
Develop a consolidated and consistent approach to business improvement practices across the Council.	<b>GRI:PR-PA&amp; PRP9, MRC82</b>
Report annually to the Mackay region on Council's sustainable achievements and progress towards the targets in the strategy.	<b>MRC81 GRI:PR-PA&amp; PRP5</b>
Update relevant Council policies and operational plans to include sustainable principles and practices to ensure consistency with the Sustainability Strategy.	<b>MRC3</b>



# Economic Growth and Development

## Our Approach

The Mackay region is often described as an economic powerhouse focused on agriculture, mining, engineering and retail. The Mackay region is one of Queensland's most robust economies, generating about \$18 billion in economic activity last year. A sustainable approach is one that balances economic growth and development with community health and wellbeing and protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Council's role in economic growth and development of the region is to act as a facilitator in regional economic development and manage the financial sustainability of the Council and its activities.

Mackay has one of the fastest growing regional economies in Queensland. The continued economic growth and development of the region is essential for ensuring a prosperous lifestyle for the Mackay community. Council views its role as a facilitator in supporting sustainable regional economic growth and development as a key element of its sustainability approach. A number of key strategies supports Council's role:

**Regional Economic Development Strategy** - The 2009 Regional Economic Development Strategy was prepared by the Mackay and Whitsunday Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDC) in collaboration with MIW stakeholders. The project evidences close collaboration between DSDIP, Mackay Regional Council economic development program, and regional organisations.

**Digital Economic Strategy** - This is being pursued as a collaborative project facilitated by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning's Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday Regional Office working in partnership with MIW local governments and other stakeholders. The project aims to develop key strategies to empower business, industry and the wider community across the Mackay, Isaac and Whitsunday region to capitalise on opportunities provided by innovation and technology.

**Financial Sustainability** - Council also has a fiscal responsibility to maintain financial sustainability in how it delivers and maintains diverse services and assets to the Mackay community. Council's continued financial viability is essential to ensure the organisation can be a leader in developing and managing the sustainability of the region.

**Table 4. Summaries the ratios which allow council to measure and report on its financial sustainability. These ratios are defined as follows:**

Working capital ratio	Measures an organisation's ability to meet commitments when they fall due, a between 1:1 and 4:1 is desirable.
Operating surplus ratio	Measures the extent to which revenues raised cover operational expenses only or are available for capital funding purposes, a positive ratio is desirable, preferably between 0 and 10 per cent.
Net financial liabilities ratio	Measures the extent to which the net financial liabilities of Council can be serviced by its operating revenues, a result below 60 per cent is desirable as it indicates an ability to use debt to fund future projects.
Interest coverage ratio	Measures the extent to which Council's operating revenues are committed to pay for interest on borrowings; this should ideally be less than 5 per cent.
Asset sustainability ratio	Indicates whether council is renewing or replacing its existing assets at the same time that its overall stock of assets is wearing out, a ratio of greater than 90% is desirable.
Asset consumption ratio	Measures the aged condition of the community's assets and provides an indication if appropriate asset management practices exist. The healthy range is between 40 and 80 per cent.



## Economic Growth and Development

### Procurement

Council spends more than \$200 million dollars annually on infrastructure, plant, goods and services to enable it to deliver its corporate objectives. In all procurement transactions, Council's assessments of submissions must take into consideration sound contracting principles as stipulated under the Local Government Act 2009 including:

- value for money
- open and effective competition
- the development of competitive local business and industry
- environmental protection
- ethical behaviour and fair dealing

To support its procurement approach, Council's Procurement Policy sets out the Council's policy for the acquisition of goods and services and carrying out of the sound contracting principles:

- Applies to the procurement of all goods, equipment and related services, construction contracts and service contracts
- Regarding local businesses, the Procurement Policy encourages the development of competitive local businesses within the region and allows for consideration to be taken of issues such as the creation of local employment opportunities

Council policy stipulates that a **10% non-priced weighting be given to 'Local Content'** in the assessment of all tenders.

### Our Strategic Targets

TARGET	INDICATOR REFERENCE
Council to play an active role in continuing to support the economic development of the region by promoting, encouraging and facilitating sustainable development.	<b>MRC3 GRI:PA8 GRI:EC9</b>
Maintain Council's working capital ratio of between 1:1 and 4:1.	<b>MRC86</b>
Target Council's operating surplus ratio of between 0 percent and 10 percent.	<b>MRC87</b>
Maintain Council's net financial liabilities ratio to the local government sector benchmark of not greater than 60 percent.	<b>MRC88</b>
Ensure Council's net interest coverage ratio is less than 5 percent.	<b>MRC89</b>
Maintain an asset sustainability ratio of greater than 90 percent.	<b>MRC90</b>
Maintain an asset consumption ratio of between 40 and 80 percent.	<b>MRC91</b>
Provide supplier information sessions to local suppliers.	<b>GRI:PA11 MRC92</b>
Provide information on tender opportunities and related information including health and safety.	<b>GRI:EC6, GRI:PA11 MRC92</b>



## GRI and Council Indicator Index

Mackay Regional Council's Sustainability Report has been prepared using the Global Reporting Initiative's G3.1 guidelines for reporting. In addition a number of Council developed indicators have been used to support the GRI indicators.

Certain indicators listed in Table 5 are not reported on in this 2011/12 report but have been included to show the intent to report on these issues in coming years. These indicators are marked with an asterix.

**Table 5 Summary of Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and Mackay Regional Council (MRC) developed sustainability indicators reported.**

Target	Target	Target
<b>Profile Disclosure</b>		
GRI 1.1	Statement about the relevance of sustainability to the organisation and its strategy by the CEO.	Mayor's and CEO's Statement
GRI 2.1	Name of the organization.	Front Cover
GRI 2.2	Primary brands, products, and/or services.	Front Cover
GRI 2.3	Operational structure of the organization, including main divisions, operating companies, subsidiaries, and joint ventures.	Annual Report
GRI 2.4	Location of organization's headquarters.	Front Cover
GRI 2.5	Number of countries where the organization operates, and names of countries with either major operations or that are specifically relevant to the sustainability issues covered in the report.	Annual Report
GRI 2.6	Nature of ownership and legal form.	Annual Report
GRI 2.7	Markets served (including geographic breakdown, sectors served, and types of customers/beneficiaries).	Annual Report
GRI 2.8	Scale of the reporting organization.	Annual Report
GRI 2.9	Significant changes during the reporting period regarding size, structure, or ownership.	About this report
GRI 2.10	Awards received in the reporting period.	Organisational Excellence
GRI 3.1	Reporting period (e.g., fiscal/calendar year) for information provided.	About this report
GRI 3.2	Reporting cycle (annual, biennial, etc.).	About this report
GRI 3.3	Contact point for questions regarding the report or its contents.	Front Cover
GRI 4.1	Governance structure of the organization, including committees under the highest governance body responsible for specific tasks, such as setting strategy or organizational oversight.	Annual Report



## GRI and Council Indicator Index

Target	Target	Target
<b>Social</b>		
<b>Focus Area: Sustainable Planning and Infrastructure</b>		
MRC 1	Council's capital expenditure.	Sustainable Planning and Infrastructure
MRC 2	Average residential lot size approved per annum against target.	
MRC 3	Policies, strategies or plans that incorporate sustainability principles developed or revised by the Council.	
MRC 4	Council land area used as regional, district and local parks for the community.	
MRC 5	Kilometres of dedicated bikeways within Council region.	
MRC 6	Kilometres of shared cycle/ pedestrian pathways within Council region.	
*MRC 7	Report on new and existing ESD projects annually.	
*MRC 8	Completion of internal ESD guidelines.	
*MRC 95	Completion of the Regional Sustainability Strategy.	
*MRC 96	Completion of the Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy.	
<b>Environmental</b>		
<b>Focus Area: Preservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity</b>		
GRI: EN13	Habitats protected or restored.	Preservation of the Natural Environment and Biodiversity
GRI: EN30	Total environmental protection expenditures and investments by type.	
MRC 9	Size of habitat areas protected in planning scheme and statutory instruments.	
MRC 10	Percentage of natural environment plan priority actions implemented.	
MRC 11	Number of volunteer coastal community activities held per annum.	
MRC 12	Per cent of annual Council budget spent on natural areas management.	
MRC 13	Amount of pesticide sprayed for mosquito control per annum.	
MRC 14	Number of baiting programs / or number of properties where baiting for feral dogs/pigs were carried out per annum.	
MRC 15	Number of complaints received for mosquitoes/midges per annum.	
MRC 16	Number of days that spraying is carried out for declared high priority weeds in a calendar year.	
MRC 17	Number of mosquitoes caught in traps per annum.	
MRC 93	Raise awareness and educate the community on the importance of biodiversity and conservation of the local fauna and flora	
MRC 74	Number of communication/community engagement plans or activities implemented by the department.	



## GRI and Council Indicator Index

Target	Target	Target
<b>Focus Area: Energy, Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change</b>		
GRI: EN5	Energy saved due to conservation and efficiency improvements.	Energy, Greenhouse Gas and Climate Change
GRI: EN6	Initiatives to provide energy-efficient or renewable energy based products and services, and reductions in energy requirements as a result of these initiatives.	
GRI: EN7	Initiatives to reduce indirect energy consumption and reductions achieved.	
GRI: EN16	Total direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions by weight.	
GRI: EN17	Other relevant indirect greenhouse gas emissions by weight.	
GRI: EN18	Initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reductions achieved.	
*MRC 18	Completion of the Energy Management Plan (Water).	
MRC 19	Total electricity use by Council.	
MRC 20	Total energy cost to Council.	
*MRC 21	Electricity use by Council Paget Works Depot.	
*MRC 22	Total energy generated annually from solar power at Paget Depot.	
MRC 23	Electricity use by Street Lighting.	
MRC 24	Per capita street lighting greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes c02).	
MRC 25	Fuel use by Council vehicles – Diesel.	
MRC 26	Fuel use by Council vehicles – Unleaded.	
MRC 27	Greenhouse gas emissions from electricity use.	
MRC 28	Greenhouse gas emissions from fuel use.	
MRC 29	Total greenhouse gas emissions from Council activities.	
MRC 30	Number of Council facilities being monitored and reported.	
MRC 31	Number of energy audits carried out on Council buildings.	
MRC 32	Percentage of four cylinder vehicles and hybrids in council fleet.	
*MRC 33	Total corporate waste greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes c02).	
MRC 34	Greenhouse gas emissions (tonnes c02) per Council staff member.	
*MRC 75	Completion of sustainable event management guidelines.	



## GRI and Council Indicator Index

Target	Target	Target
<b>Focus Area: Water</b>		
GRI: EN10	Percentage and total volume of water recycled and reused.	Water
MRC 35	Recycled water uses across region.	
MRC 36	Number of development applications per annum achieving pollution reduction targets for stormwater quality.	
*MRC 37	Report on any new and innovative offset management options/ methods used by Council.	
*MRC 38	Completion of an erosion and sediment control program.	
MRC 39	Daily water consumption per person per day from all sources residential, industrial, commercial and agricultural ((L).	
MRC 40	Percentage of meters installed with AMR device.	
MRC 41	Initiatives that provide up to date information and education to the community and staff to reduce potable water demand.	
MRC 42	Daily residential water consumption per person per day (L).	
*MRC 43	Number of demand management areas implemented.	
MRC 44	Number of sewer overflows per annum.	
*MRC 45	Completion of a Sewer Overflow Abatement Plan.	
MRC 46	Number of full trade waste approvals issued.	
MRC 47	Number of communication/community engagement plans or activities implemented by the department (include details).	
MRC 48	Number of people participating in the program.	
MRC 49	Report on water restrictions in Council's water supply areas.	
MRC 50	Report on the Waterwise Rebate Scheme, including monetary value of rebates and associated residential purchases.	
MRC 51	Total water discharge by quality and destination.	
MRC 52	Total water withdrawal by source.	
MRC 55	Percentage compliance with EPA Sewerage Licensing requirements.	



## GRI and Council Indicator Index

Target	Target	Target
<b>Focus Area: Recycling and Waste</b>		
GRI: EN22	Total weight of waste by type and disposal method.	Recycling and Waste
MRC 56	Number of Materials Recovery Facility Tours held, and number of community members attending the tours.	
MRC 57	Number of Waste Minimisation Education Sessions held, and number of community members attending the sessions.	
MRC 58	Number of Composting Workshops held.	
MRC 59	Monetary value of waste education grants.	
MRC 60	Council waste treatment and disposal expenditure (monetary value).	
MRC 61	Domestic waste bins.	
MRC 62	Domestic waste per capita.	
MRC 94	Domestic waste tonnes	
MRC 63	Commercial waste tonnes.	
MRC 64	Commercial waste per capita.	
MRC 65	Domestic kerbside waste recycled.	
MRC 66	Domestic kerbside waste recycled per capita.	
MRC 67	Total tonnage of waste to landfill.	
MRC 68	Per capita of waste to landfill.	
MRC 69	Total tonnage of waste diverted from landfill.	
MRC 70	Per capita of waste diverted from landfill.	
MRC 71	Total (biosolids) sent to landfill.	
MRC 3	Policies, strategies or plans that incorporate sustainability principles developed or revised by the Council.	
MRC 72	Total amount of waste recycled at the MRF (tonnes).	



## GRI and Council Indicator Index

Target	Target	Target
<b>Social</b>		
<b>Focus Area: Community and Lifestyle</b>		
MRC 73	Per cent of Council budget spent on cultural service events, facilities and programs.	Community and Lifestyle
MRC 74	Number of communication/community engagement plans or activities implemented by the department.	
*MRC 76	Completion of a sunsmart policy.	
MRC 77	List community festivals organised by Council.	
MRC 78	List services provided by Council to multicultural communities.	
MRC 79	Community grants provided by Council (monetary value).	
MRC 80	Number of community resilience projects implemented by Council, including details of the projects.	
<b>Focus Area: Organisational Excellence</b>		
GRI: PR-PA	Administrative efficiency.	Organisational Excellence
GRI: PR5	Practices related to customer satisfaction.	
GRI: PR9	Monetary value of significant fines for non-compliance with laws and regulations concerning the provision and use of products and services.	
MRC 81	Awards received relevant to social, ethical and environmental performance.	
MRC 82	Number of Queensland ombudsman complaints upheld.	
MRC 3	Policies, strategies or plans that incorporate sustainability principles developed or revised by the Council.	
MRC 83	Number of lost time injury incidents and number of days lost as result of these incidents.	



## GRI and Council Indicator Index

Target	Target	Target
<b>Economic</b>		
<b>Focus Area: Economic Growth and Development</b>		
GRI: PA8	Gross expenditures broken down by payment type.	Economic Growth and Development
GRI: EC4	Significant financial assistance received from government.	
GRI: EC6	Policy, practices and proportion of spending on locally based suppliers at significant locations of operation.	
GRI: PA11	Describe procurement policy of the public agency as relates to sustainable development (focuses on how these policies specifically address sustainability issues).	
MRC 84	Gross Regional Product for the Mackay Local Government Area.	
MRC 85	Percentage contribution to the Gross State Product of Queensland.	
MRC 86	Working capital ratio.	
MRC 87	Operating surplus ratio.	
MRC 88	Net financial liabilities ratio.	
MRC 89	Net interest coverage ratio.	
MRC 90	Asset sustainability ratio.	
MRC 91	Asset consumption ratio.	
MRC 92	Initiatives that continue to maintain Council's active support of economic development in the region.	





## Contact details for feedback

Council would welcome feedback and comments on the report,  
please contact Mackay Regional Council via email at  
[council@mackay.qld.gov.au](mailto:council@mackay.qld.gov.au)