

Program: Strategic Planning
Date of Adoption: 23 November 2022
Resolution Number: ORD-2022-339
Review Date: 23 November 2025

Scope

This policy applies to all Mackay Regional Council's (MRC) activities and workplaces.

Objective

This policy affirms MRC's commitment to become an industry leader in environmentally sustainable business practices and an advocate for sustainable development in the Mackay region.

Policy Statement

Environmental sustainability for Council is defined as an ongoing commitment to integrating key principles for environmental sustainability across our organisation and into our way of thinking and acting as opposed to achieving a specific end point or goal.

MRC considers that to the extent this policy engages and limits, or potentially limits, any human rights, that limitation is reasonable in that it is proportionate and justified.

This process to remain in force until otherwise determined
by Mackay Regional Council

Contents

1.0 Council’s Approach to Environmental Sustainability 3

1.1 Principles for Environmental Sustainability 3

1.2 People and Leadership 4

 1.1.1 *Fostering Sustainable Behaviours* 4

 1.1.2 *Community Leadership* 4

1.3 Governance 4

 1.3.1 *Governance* 4

 1.3.2 *Compliance* 4

1.4 Environmentally Sustainable Business Practices – Key Focus Areas 4

 1.4.1 *Climate Risk Management* 4

 1.4.2 *Corporate Strategy* 5

 1.4.3 *Natural Assets and Biodiversity* 5

 1.4.4 *Energy and Carbon Management* 5

 1.4.5 *Waste Management* 5

 1.4.5 *Water Management* 5

2.0 Definitions 5

3.0 Review of Policy 6

4.0 References 7

1.0 Council’s Approach to Environmental Sustainability

As a prominent local environmental manager and community leader, Council recognises environmental sustainability as a core business priority which underpins our organisational performance as well as our region’s prosperity, liveability and lifestyle.

By embedding principles for environmental sustainability into our operations and partnerships, we will improve efficiency, deliver better services and lead our community in the sustainable development of the Mackay region.

It is important to note that Council’s aspirations to facilitate sustainable development are currently pursued through a suite of strategies and policies that respond separately to economic, community and environmental drivers. This policy plays an integral role in this approach by outlining Council’s commitment to environmental sustainability.

Over time, it is intended that this policy will assist in bringing Council’s economic, community and environmental sustainability commitments together at a strategic level to achieve a more cohesive vision for sustainable development in the Mackay region.

1.1 Principles for Environmental Sustainability

| Outcome | Principles |
|--|--|
| Low Carbon | Council operations become low carbon to minimise our contribution to climate change. |
| Resource-efficient | Council uses resources efficiently, avoiding reliance on non-renewable resources from outside our region. |
| Productive | Council operations support local production, recycling and resource recovery processes. |
| Resilient | Council plans effectively for climate change, enhancing the resilience of our built and natural environments. |
| A Sustainable Natural Environment | Council protects and enhances essential elements of our natural environment including waterways, wetlands, coastal areas, native vegetation, animals and their habitats. |
| Smart | Council seeks new and emerging technologies to improve efficiency, service delivery and environmental sustainability performance. |
| Sustainable Transport | Council promotes connected, active, electric, and shared transport options that reduce carbon pollution, energy consumption and improve air quality. |
| Sustainable Procurement | Council purchases products and services that demonstrate value for money while also generating environmental, community and economic benefits for our region. |
| Partnerships | Council builds regional and community partnerships to strengthen our influence at state and national levels, improving environmental sustainability outcomes for our region. |

1.2 People and Leadership

1.2.1 *Fostering Sustainable Behaviours*

MRC will encourage Staff and the community to adopt sustainable living behaviours at work and at home. The Chief Executive Officer, Directors and Program Managers are responsible for leading behavioural change and ensuring this policy is implemented and understood by all MRC employees.

1.2.2 *Community Leadership*

MRC will demonstrate leadership in the management and protection of our natural and built environments by integrating environmental sustainability principles into all decision-making processes.

MRC will seek broad public involvement on environmental sustainability issues that affect the community. Engaging individuals, communities, stakeholders and businesses and adopting more open deliberations will build an understanding of environmental sustainability and promote collective responsibility.

1.3 Governance

1.3.1 *Governance*

MRC will maintain strong and effective governance arrangements that ensure cross program integration of environmental sustainability principles. MRC decisions should consider linkages between economic, environmental and community dimensions, and take account of both short and long-term impacts.

Corporate environmental sustainability targets and performance indicators will be established and monitored at the executive level to ensure continuous improvement regardless of leadership changes or short-term political influence.

1.3.2 *Compliance*

MRC will comply with all environmental legislation, regulations and licence requirements relevant to its operations and will strive for leading practice operational standards. Continuous improvement will be achieved by implementing environmental management systems within relevant MRC business units.

1.4 Environmentally Sustainable Business Practices – Key Focus Areas

1.4.1 *Climate Risk Management*

MRC will embed contemporary climate risk management practices within MRC's Enterprise Risk Management, Corporate Performance Planning, Reporting and Policy Frameworks.

1.4.2 *Corporate Strategy*

MRC will pursue a corporate strategy and governance framework that embeds corporate sustainability and sustainable development outcomes consistently across the full range of MRC's influence, including operations, service delivery, community action and through external partnerships.

1.4.3 *Natural Assets and Biodiversity*

MRC will develop a leading practice management framework to protect and enhance biodiversity and natural assets of the Mackay region.

1.4.4 *Energy and Carbon Management*

MRC will embed energy and carbon management as a business priority across all operational areas and establish a management framework to facilitate continuous improvement.

1.4.5 *Waste Management*

MRC will embed leading practice waste management practices across all operational areas and establish a management framework to facilitate continuous improvement.

1.4.5 *Water Management*

MRC will improve water efficiency and endeavour to reduce the impact of wastewater released within its area of operation. MRC will show leadership and raise awareness about water efficiency in the community to help preserve the long-term sustainability of our region's water resources.

2.0 Definitions

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

Biodiversity shall mean 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 shall mean places and spaces created or modified by people including buildings, parks, facilities, infrastructure services and transportation systems.

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

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

Council shall mean the Mayor and Councillors of Mackay Regional Council.

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

Environmental Management System shall mean a set of processes and practices that enable an organisation to reduce its environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency.

Liveability shall mean 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 activity, social stability and wellbeing, equity and access, education, cultural and recreation opportunities.

MRC shall mean Mackay Regional Council.

Natural Environment shall mean 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.

Prosperity shall mean 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.

Resilience shall mean 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.

Staff shall mean all persons employed by Mackay Regional Council on a permanent, temporary, or casual basis, or otherwise engaged by Mackay Regional Council including *those under a contract of service or a volunteer program*

Sustainability shall mean 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 government can be defined as an ongoing commitment to integrating economic, community and environmental sustainability principles and processes into Council operations as opposed to achieving a specific end point or goal.

Sustainable Development shall mean economic activity that ensures the way we live today doesn't reduce the quality of life of future generations or degrade the quality of the environment they will live in.

3.0 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

- The related documents are amended or replaced.
- Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council

Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than three (3) years.

4.0 References

National Legislation

- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007*
- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

State Legislation

- *Planning Act 2016*
- *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*
- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Water Act 2000*
- *Vegetation Management Act 1999*
- *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Fisheries Act 1994*
- *Nature Conservation Act 1992*

National Strategies

- *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030*

State Strategies

- *Queensland Climate Action Plan*
- *Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy 2017–2030 - Pathways to a climate resilient Qld*
- *Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy 2014–2024*

Internal Documents

- *Corporate Plan 2022-2027*
- *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017-2025*
- *Economic Development Strategy 2020-2025*
- *Community Development Strategy 2018-2022*
- *Mackay Region Planning Scheme 2017*
- *Enterprise Risk Management Framework*

Version Control:

| Version | Reason / Trigger | Change | Endorsed / Reviewed | Date |
|---------|------------------|--------|-----------------------------|------------|
| 2 | Review of Policy | | Endorsed by Directors & CEO | 03.07.2018 |
| | | | Adopted by Council | 25.07.2018 |
| 3 | Review | | ORD-2022-339 | 23.11.2022 |