

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Number:	4.1.10
Approved by	Council
Date Approved/Effective	17 December 2019
Date of Next Review:	1 October 2020
Related Policies:	Procurement Asset Management Open Space Public Open Space Provisions Fleet Risk Management Significant Tree Protection Nature Strip Maintenance Urban Forest Rates rebate on Land with Deed of Covenant for Conservation Purposes Asset Management Policy Waste Collection Assessment of Development in relation to potential sea level rise Investment Community Assistance Grants Program Council provision of Recreation/Community Facilities
Applicable to Unit(s):	Whole organisation
Responsible Officer:	Manager Natural Environment and Parks
Statutory Reference:	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 (Commonwealth)</i> <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> <i>Environment Protection Act 1970</i> <i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> <i>Local Government Act 1989</i> Wellington Planning Scheme

OVERVIEW

Wellington Shire council is rich in natural resources supporting industries such as agriculture, forestry, energy, tourism and fisheries. Diverse landscapes of great natural beauty and high environmental values from the Victorian Alps to the Gippsland Lakes and Bass Strait are protected in a network of parks and reserves which attract residents and visitors alike.

The *Local Government Act 1989* mandates a requirement for council decisions to consider sound financial management, promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of its region, and improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community. Accordingly, the scope of this policy pertains to all persons conducting or undertaking business on behalf of council and effectively must be considered by policy owners across council.

Council plays a key role in minimising the impact we have on our natural assets, which are fundamental to our community wellbeing and quality of life, now and into the future. It recognises that it plays a significant role in leading and supporting the community in their sustainability endeavours. This policy embeds supporting Climate Change adaptation and mitigation policy.

THE POLICY

Policy Objective

The objective of this Policy is to provide the framework for expressing Councils commitment to the incorporation of sustainability and climate change principles and practices in its service delivery, operations and community support and advocacy.

Guiding Principles

The Policy sets the guiding principles which will inform the Environmental Sustainability Strategy. The principles are:

- **Promote integration;** Pursue a 'whole of council' approach to sustainability to ensure economic, social and environmental considerations are pursued.
- **Be inclusive, get involved and participate:** We will listen to and respond to the needs of the community and form partnerships where required.
- **Be Innovative and show leadership;** We will strive to lead by example, be open and transparent and foster original and creative thinking. Sustainability and innovation are inextricably linked.
- **Adopt Precautionary Behaviour:** We will ensure that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent degradation.
- **Embed Intergenerational Equity:** present and future generations of all species should have fair and equal access to resources and opportunities
- **Informed decision-making:** Learn from our success and failures of previous actions and programs. Ongoing monitoring assesses the effectiveness of our decisions and drives improvement. Ensure we have the latest advice.

Council recognises the importance of adopting measures to conserve natural resources, reducing impacts on our environment, maintaining biodiversity, native vegetation and considering the ecological, social and economic implications of our actions.

Council will implement this policy by applying the principles and themes outlined in this policy and will ensure compliance with all environmental legislative requirements pertaining to its operations.

Policy statement

Wellington Shire Council is committed to making an equitable contribution to all aspects of sustainability for the organisation and the community. This includes:

Resilient Communities: Council supports the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change consensus on human-induced climate change and acknowledges that council plays a key role in strengthen community resilience and adaptability in the face of variable climatic conditions and its impacts.

Low Carbon Economy: Council will plan for the reduction in corporate carbon emissions in line with science-based targets to keep global warming below a 2°C rise above pre-industrial levels. It will advocate for community to do the same.

Protecting Nature: Council acknowledges the need to maintain functioning natural systems, including the water cycle, underpin the economy, society and human well-being through the provision of a range of ecosystem services. It will minimize its impact on natural systems and water cycles in its service delivery and operations.

Towards a Circular Economy: Council plays a key role, as a waste service provider, in supporting the transition to a circular economy and use of the waste hierarchy to prioritise council actions. Essentially all waste matter has resource potential.

Environmental Stewardship: Council, as a government body has the responsibility to protect the environment for the wellbeing of the global community through stewardship and advocacy, in which leading by example is a key requirement for legitimacy. Building internal capacity and literacy on sustainability and climate change is a key role.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Wellington Shire Council is committed to upholding the Human Rights principles as outlined in the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) and referred to in Council's Human Rights Policy. The Human Rights Checklist has been completed and this policy accords with Council's policy commitment to uphold human rights principles.

Related Documents

Type:	Details:
Procedure:	
Strategy:	Environmental Sustainability Strategy