

File No:

POLICY NAME: Sustainability Policy

POLICY NO: 8.14

PROGRAM: Environment

FUNCTION: Sustainability

OBJECTIVE

To help provide consistent understanding, communication and application of sustainability principles throughout Council.

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy will assist in bring Council's operations into line with the sustainability requirements of Sections 7 and 8 of the Local Government Act. It will serve to simplify the principles of sustainability and act as a foundational document against which all of Council's activities can be measured.

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STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

Sustainability Policy

The Goal

That Wollongong will become a community that can face the future with confidence because it has:

- an adequate and renewable supply of resources;
- a strong social fabric; and
- a healthy environment,

and that continual improvement in these three areas will help us preserve and strengthen all forms of life for the long term, both locally and globally.

Our Sustainability Commitment

Wollongong City Council will safeguard the economic, social and environmental well being of present and future generations. It will do this through careful planning and decision-making that aims to avoid any harmful local and global effects of its actions.

In the three interlinked areas of its environmental, social and economic activities, Council will:

Environment:-

- a) Protect and improve water, air, and soil quality;
- b) Protect and expand habitat for all forms of life; and
- c) Work in harmony with natural ecosystems.

Responsible Division: Environment & Health

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Social:-

- a) Improve the well being of all people;
- b) Ensure services, facilities and community amenities are accessible to all people;
and
- c) Encourage people to participate constructively in the community.

Economic:-

- a) Use resources efficiently and responsibly;
- b) Help reduce the impacts of poverty; and
- c) Encourage a strong local economy.

HOW WILL WE PUT OUR COMMITMENT INTO ACTION?

Environment

a) *Protect and improve water, air, and soil quality;*

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to

- control its actions, and the actions of others over which it has influence, to prevent further damage to air, water and soil resources.
- take all reasonable action to restore air, water and soil to as close to their natural state as is possible.

b) *Protect and expand habitat for all forms of life;*

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to:

- control its actions, and the actions of others over which it has influence, to prevent further damage to biological resources.
- take all reasonable action to restore biodiversity to as close to its natural state as is possible.
- to take all reasonable action to restore biodiversity to its pre-European coverage.

c) *Work in harmony with natural ecosystems.*

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to:

- fully understand the contributions that local natural and human systems make to our organisation and society and
- work within the limitations of those systems (such as the water cycle, nutrient cycle, biological systems atmospheric cycles etc), in operational and planning activities rather than modifying or exceeding them.

Social

a) *Improve the well being of all people;*

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to:

- Protect the standard of living of all people with regard to the basics of food, clothing, shelter, access to medical treatment and education as well as ensuring opportunities for leisure and relaxation, reasonable work conditions.
- Treat all people equally regardless of race, language, colour, culture, religion, sex or political beliefs and to support reconciliation with Australia's original inhabitants.
- Safeguard everyone's right to life, freedom and safety and respect personal and family privacy; and
- Respect and uphold the national and international legal rights of all people

b) *Ensure all services, facilities and community amenities are accessible to everyone; and*

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to:

- Ensure a comparable level of access for all people to services, facilities and community amenities and communicate to the community the availability of these resources.

- Identify community needs and values as a basis for ensuring a minimum standard of appropriate service delivery to the community.
- Cooperate and partner with other organisations in the provision of services, facilities and community amenities; and
- Improve the accessibility of public transport.

c) *Encourage people to participate constructively in the community.*

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to:

- Value and assist the development and expression of the opinions of groups and individuals.
- Find solutions to local problems at the local level by providing opportunities and all relevant information to community members to enable them to fully participate in local decision making.
- Encourage community integration and facilitate access to a range of education services, particularly those that encourage personal and social responsibility; and
- Work towards a built environment that improves public amenity and captures community identity and heritage.

Economic

a) *Use resources efficiently and responsibly;*

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to:

- Minimise its use of resources such as energy, water, petroleum, construction materials and office materials.
- Increase the use of renewable resources as a percentage of all materials used; and
- Factor in the environmental and social as well as financial costs of projects, plans and strategies.

b) Help reduce the impacts of poverty; and

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to:

- Identify causes of poverty in communities and take action to remove these causes.
- Cooperate with other organisations to ensure all people can meet their basic needs. such as food, clothing, affordable housing and medical treatment; and
- Facilitate community education with the goal of promoting financial self-help and self-reliance.

c) Encourage a strong local economy.

Objectives

In all its operations and activities both internally and externally Council will take all reasonable steps to:

- Encourage an innovative, diverse and competitive business community;
- Planning for future needs in order to provide modern and efficient business infrastructure and good regional transport connections; and
- Focus on local job creation by supporting existing local business and attracting businesses to the local region

ATTACHMENT A

PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH THIS POLICY IS BUILT

- **The Precautionary Principle:** Policy decisions should err on the side of caution, placing the burden of proof on technological and industrial developments to demonstrate that they are ecologically sustainable;
- **Global perspective:** A global perspective is needed to ensure that Wollongong does not simply move its environmental problems elsewhere;
- **Conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity:** Conservation of biodiversity and the protection of ecological integrity should be a fundamental constraint on all economic activity. The non-evolutionary loss of species and genetic diversity needs to be halted and the future of evolutionary processes secured;
- **Protect natural capital and "sustainable income":** Natural capital (e.g. biological diversity, healthy environments, freshwater supplies, productive soils etc) must be maintained or enhanced from one generation to the next. Only that income which can be sustained indefinitely, taking account of the biodiversity conservation principle, should be taken;
- **Limits on natural resource use:** The scale and throughput of material resources will need to be limited by the capacity of the environment to both supply renewable resources and to assimilate wastes;
- **Efficiency:** Efficiency of resource use must become a major objective in economic policy;
- **Resilience:** Economic policy needs to focus on developing resilience to external economic or ecological shocks. A resource-driven economy is unlikely to be resilient.
- **Pricing environmental values and natural resources:** Prices for natural resources should be set to recover the full social and environmental costs of their use and extraction. Many environmental values cannot be priced in monetary terms and hence pricing policies will form part of a broader framework of decision-making;
- **Inter-generational equity:** The present generation should ensure that the next generation is left an environment that is at least as healthy, diverse and productive as the one we enjoy. Owing to the massive and irreversible rate of loss of species and habitats at present, we have an additional responsibility to give the highest priority to conserving the world's natural environment and species;
- **Intra-generational equity:** Social equity within this generation must be a key principle to be applied in developing economic and social policies as part of an ecologically sustainable society;
- **Well Being:** Increases in the qualitative dimension of human welfare and not quantitative growth in resource throughput is a key objective;
- **Community participation:** Strong community participation will be a vital pre-requisite for affecting a smooth transition to an ecologically sustainable society.

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