

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

## COMMUNITY POLICY



### 1 Scope

This policy applies to all Rockhampton Regional Council activities conducted throughout Council's operations and services.

### 2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Council's commitment to continually improve its environment and sustainability performance and provide direction as Council encourages a culture of environmental sustainability among its workers and the community.

### 3 Related Documents

#### 3.1 Primary

Nil

#### 3.2 Secondary

*Biosecurity Act 2015 (Cwth)*

*Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011 (Cwth)*

*Climate Change Act 2022 (Cwth)*

*Clean Energy Regulator Act 2011 (Cwth)*

*Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*

*Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)*

*Environmental Protection Act 1994*

*Environmental Protection Regulation 2019*

*Fisheries Act 1994*

*Local Government Act 2009*

*National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (Cwth)*

*Nature Conservation Act 1992*

*Planning Act 2016*

*Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020 (Cwth)*

*Vegetation Management Act 1999*

*Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*

*Water Act 2000*

Australia's Strategy for Nature 2018-2030

Climate Risk Management Framework for Queensland Local Government

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Delegation and Authorisation Policy  
 Delegations Corporate Register  
 Disaster Management Policy  
 Enterprise Risk Management Policy  
 Environmental Authorities (licences under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*)  
 Environmentally Sustainable Design Procedure  
 Fleet Acquisition Policy  
 Purchasing Policy – Acquisition of Goods and Services  
 Queensland Climate Action Plan  
 Queensland Organic Strategy and Action Plan  
 Queensland Protected Area Strategy  
 Queensland State Disaster Management Plan  
 Queensland Strategy for Disaster Resilience  
 Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy  
 Queensland Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy  
 Rockhampton Regional Council Biosecurity Plan  
 Rockhampton Regional Council Corporate Plan  
 Rockhampton Regional Council Economic Development Strategy  
 Rockhampton Regional Council Operational Plan  
 Rockhampton Regional Council Sustainability Strategy (Towards 2030)  
 Rockhampton Regional Council Walking and Cycling Strategy  
 Rockhampton Region Local Disaster Management Plan  
 Rockhampton Region Planning Scheme  
 Rockhampton Region Resource Recovery Strategy  
 State Planning Policies

#### 4 Definitions

To assist in interpretation, the following definitions apply:

CEO	Chief Executive Officer A person who holds an appointment under section 194 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> . This includes a person acting in this position.
Circular Economy	In contrast to a linear economy that has little regard for alternatives to disposal/waste at a product's end of life, circular economy principles consider opportunities to retain and circulate resources in the economy at their highest value for as long as possible.
Contractor	A person, organisation or entity that performs a specific act or acts including the provision of services and/or materials to another person, organisation or entity under an agreement enforceable by law.
Council	Rockhampton Regional Council

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Councillor/s	The Mayor and/or Councillors of Council, within the meaning of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
Ecologically Sustainable Development	As detailed in the <i>Planning Act 2016</i> , ecologically sustainable development integrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The protection of ecological processes and natural systems at local, regional, State and wider levels;</li> <li>(b) Economic development; and</li> <li>(c) The maintenance of the cultural, economic, physical and social wellbeing of people and communities.</li> </ul>
Environmentally Sustainable Design	The design and development of property and infrastructure that seeks to minimise negative impacts on the environment and the health and wellbeing of occupants by improving building performance.
Environmental Sustainability	Ensuring our actions meet current needs without compromising the prospects of future generations.
Employees	Local government employee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The CEO; or</li> <li>(b) A person holding an appointment under section 196 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>.</li> </ul>
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Emissions released to the atmosphere as a result of direct activity or the indirect consumption of energy that affect the Earth's radiative balance. Greenhouse gases include carbon dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> ), methane (CH <sub>4</sub> ), nitrous oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O), sulfur hexafluoride (CF <sub>6</sub> ) and specified kinds of hydro fluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons.
Manager	An employee appointed to a position with a corporate band 3 or higher delegated in accordance with the Delegation and Authorisation Policy and detailed in the Delegations Corporate Register.
Region	Rockhampton Regional Area defined by the Local Government Areas of Queensland.
Volunteer	Any person, who of their own free will, offers to undertake un-paid work for Council and is accepted as a volunteer by the CEO and/or their authorised delegates.
Workers	All persons who perform work on behalf of Council. This includes an employee, contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a labour hire company assigned to work for Council, an apprentice or trainee, work experience participant or a volunteer.

## 5 Policy Statement

Council is committed to putting sustainability into action through its corporate commitments and governance arrangements; its strategies, services and operations; and its community programs and partnerships. Council seeks to align with national and state policies, whilst simultaneously strengthening our community, environmental and economic resilience.

Council works together with our local residents, communities, businesses, industries and other levels of government to:

- (a) Prioritise a healthy natural environment by protecting, maintaining and enhancing our natural assets;
- (b) Transition towards net zero emissions by accelerating local climate action;
- (c) Create a climate resilient Region by preparing our Council, Region and community to adapt and prosper in a changing climate; and
- (d) Build a low-carbon circular economy by working with business, industry and government to ensure our Region thrives.

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These strategic priorities are identified and further supported by Council’s Corporate and Operational Plans and the Sustainability Strategy (Towards 2030).

## 5.1 Guiding Principles

In applying this policy, Council seeks to embed the following principles within its operations whilst ensuring that Council also gives weight to other factors that are important to the community and the organisation:

- (a) People and leadership – Council encourages a culture of sustainability among its workers and the community. Council leads the community by example, demonstrating its commitment to sustainable practices. Council works in partnership with community and industry to promote awareness, knowledge-sharing, innovation and initiatives that benefit our Region and support a more sustainable community, environment and economy.
- (b) Governance and accountability – Council strives to carry out its operations in a sustainable manner and to integrate sustainability into its processes and decision making. Council complies with all legislation, regulations and other permit and licence requirements relevant to its operations and continues to proactively identify and manage emerging risks and opportunities. When deemed necessary, Council exercises its regulatory powers to facilitate protection of the environment and liveability of our Region.
- (c) Continuous improvement - Council continues to recognise environment and sustainability in its Corporate and Operational Plans and to set measurable objectives and targets. Council seeks to improve its environment and sustainability performance by refining training, policies, systems and procedures to ensure our workers are able to respond to their responsibilities and uphold any relevant policies and legislation.
- (d) Pollution prevention - Council strives to implement processes and practices that control the release of pollutants from its operations. If incidents do occur, Council implements pollution response procedures to minimise harm to the community, environment and economy. Every effort is made to reduce the likelihood of future occurrences.
- (e) Emissions reduction, renewable energy and energy efficiency - Council actively seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its facilities and operations in line with state and national policies and targets. Energy efficiencies, renewable energy, low carbon technologies, and innovative practices are incorporated where practicable to ensure Council’s continued transition towards net zero emissions. To maximise accountability, cost savings and long-term efficiencies, continuous improvement is monitored via regular Corporate Emissions Inventories, with carbon offsets only employed in accordance with the emissions reduction hierarchy.
- (f) Climate risk, resilience and adaptation – Council seeks to understand, acknowledge and address risks and opportunities arising from the organisation’s response to climate change. Key to this is recognition that community, environmental and economic resilience is intertwined with climate risk management, and that both climate mitigation and adaptation is a priority to ensure the continued sustainability and liveability of our Region.
- (g) Waste reduction and recycling - Council is committed to moving towards zero waste. Council strives to embrace the principles of a circular economy in all aspects of operations. This means promoting the wise use of resources and exploring opportunities to retain and circulate resources at their highest value for as long as possible. In accordance with the waste hierarchy, Council avoids waste as a first priority, after which options for reuse and recycling should be explored. Disposal is only considered when no other viable solution exists.
- (h) Water management - Council endeavours to make efficient use of water and to reduce the impact of wastewater discharge, run off and fugitive emissions within its areas of operation.
- (i) Biodiversity protection – Council works to protect, maintain and enhance the natural environments under Council’s care, with regard for the connectivity of natural systems and habitats. Council also promotes healthy and resilient natural ecosystems, such as urban forests and waterways, that support the liveability of our Region.

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- (j) Sustainable planning, design and infrastructure - To improve community resilience and reduce operating costs over the life of assets, Council encourages ecologically sustainable development and incorporates environmentally sustainable design into relevant new builds and renewal projects. This ensures buildings and facilities are designed, constructed and operated in a manner that significantly reduces negative impacts to both people and the environment.
- (k) Procuring goods and services - When procuring goods and services, Council applies the sound contracting principles set out in the *Local Government Act 2009*. In particular, regard for the environmental protection principle – as reflected and reinforced by Council’s Purchasing Policy which supports workers to make ethical purchasing decisions that consider a range of sustainability factors.

## 5.2 Responsibilities

In implementing this policy:

- (a) Councillors and managers are responsible for promoting, supporting and acting in accordance with this policy; and
- (b) Workers are responsible for working in accordance with this policy, Council’s procedures and all applicable environmental approvals, legislative and other requirements relevant to Council.

## 6 Review Timelines

This policy is reviewed when any of the following occur:

- (a) The related information is amended or replaced; or
- (b) Other circumstances as determined from time to time by Council.

## 7 Document Management

Sponsor	Chief Executive Officer
Business Owner	General Manager Community Services
Policy Owner	General Manager Community Services
Policy Quality Control	Legal and Governance



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