

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY.**

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY  
STRATEGY.**

**YEAR IN REVIEW: FY 2020-21**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Rockhampton Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live and work, the Darumbal People, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We extend that respect to the neighbouring Aboriginal peoples within our Local Government Area, the Gaangalu Nation People and Barada Kabalbara Yetimarala People, and also acknowledge the Torres Strait Islander People whose land is in the Torres Strait but who live and work on Aboriginal land.

Council also recognises the contributions of a range of organisations, individuals and the broader community who have each helped to bring the Environmental Sustainability Strategy to life and who continue to help make change happen across our Region. Key collaborators include: The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Department of Environment and Science, Local Government Association of Queensland, Department of Corrective Services, Greening Australia, CQUniversity, Fitzroy Basin Association, Fitzroy Partnership for River Health, Fitzroy River Water, Rockhampton Regional Waste and Recycling, Capricornia Catchments, Darumbal, Landcare, Multicultural Australia, Jobs Queensland, Capricorn Conservation Council, Native Plants Capricornia, Birdlife Capricornia, Central Queensland Aboriginal Corporation for Cultural Activities, local schools and kindergartens.

FY 2020-21 edition

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# CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2018-2022 provides a vision, shared objectives and pathways to advance sustainability across our Region. This Year in Review report checks in on the progress we've made to date and demonstrates some of the key actions Council is taking as we move towards a more sustainable future for the Rockhampton Region.

In FY2020-21, Council:

- Transitioned towards renewable energy, commencing construction of over 2500KW of solar systems at key Council facilities.
- Created new local economic opportunities by positioning the Rockhampton Region as a Renewable Energy Hub and delivering key outcomes as part of the Advancing Mount Morgan and Rockhampton Recreational Fishing Development Strategies.
- Took action to improve water security by completing construction of the South Rockhampton Recycled Water Scheme, finalising detailed design to increase the height of the Fitzroy River Barrage water storage and exploring the feasibility of a range of water supply options for Mount Morgan.
- Furthered the Region's transition towards zero waste by preparing to trial food organics and garden organics collection and local polystyrene processing facilities.
- Collaborated as part of a number of strategic groups including the Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program, Reef Guardian Council program, the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health, the Fitzroy Basin Working Group and Local Disaster Management Group.
- Progressed a range of initiatives designed to protect, maintain and enhance our natural assets through implementation of Council's Natural Resource Management (NRM) program, Biosecurity Plan and targeted canopy cover improvements.
- Fostered sustainable behaviours within our community through a range of programs including Bringing Nature Back, Living Sustainably, Recycling Hero Schools, Illegal Dumping Hotspots, Plastic Free CQ and Environment and Sustainability Scheme grants.
- Was recognised for its sustainability efforts with the Rockhampton Region crowned Queensland's overall winner in the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards 2020.

Council has been actively collaborating with our local residents and community partners and this is an exciting time to be working together to support the liveability and continued prosperity of our communities. I look forward to sharing many more highlights as we continue to work together in the years ahead.



**COUNCILLOR  
DONNA KIRKLAND**

Water and Environmental  
Sustainability Portfolio  
Rockhampton Regional Council

Photo: 'Woolwash Sunset'  
by Alexya Yarrow

# OUR PATHWAYS TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

Council is committed to putting sustainability into action through its corporate commitments and governance arrangements; its strategies and operations; and its community services, programs and partnerships.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy delivers on our vision for a sustainable future through four interconnected pathways. Together the pathways guide our approach to protect our natural environment, empower our community to live more sustainably, enhance the liveability of our Region, ensure that we use our resources wisely and much more. The pathways are supported by a range of strategic actions that Council are leading over the life of the Strategy.

Council recognises that strong partnerships are critical to achieving these outcomes and continues to work with a range of stakeholders to actively pursue funding and collaborative opportunities.

As part of Council's Sustainability Governance Framework, the Sustainability Strategy Executive Group meets regularly to guide implementation of Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy. They also monitor and review progress against the supporting annual action plan, work together to identify further opportunities for improvement and collaboration across Council and report this progress back to Council and the community.

**We want the Rockhampton Region to be a great place to live, work, play, learn and invest - both now and in the future.**

**- Environmental Sustainability Strategy Vision**

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

Let's work together to protect, maintain and enhance our natural environment.



## EMPOWERING COMMUNITY.

Let's work together to strengthen our community capacity to live sustainably.

## INDUSTRY & INFRASTRUCTURE.

Let's work together to create a liveable region that encourages sustainable industry and infrastructure.



## COUNCIL OPERATIONS.

Let's work together to continually improve Council's environment and sustainability performance.



# NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

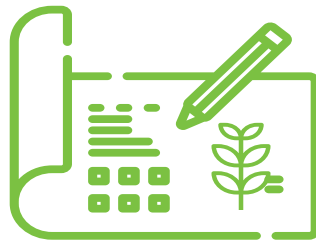
## OBJECTIVE

Let's work together to protect, maintain and enhance our natural environment.

## TARGETS

- Programs in place to maintain and enhance our natural assets, waterways and green corridors
- Programs in place to protect remnant vegetation and support local biodiversity in urban areas
- Long term trending improvement in net waterway health

## YEAR IN REVIEW



**AQUATIC ECOSYSTEM HEALTH**  
remained relatively stable, with the Fitzroy Basin estuary showing positive long term trends in the Fitzroy Basin Report Card 2021.



### VOLUNTEER HOURS

invested in natural resource management works such as planting, weeding and cleanup activities.



**18**  
**LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS**  
strengthened to help protect, maintain and enhance our natural environment.



### NATIVE PLANTS

provided to the community as part of Council's Native Plant Program in the lead up to National Tree Day.

## BRINGING NATURE BACK

Council continues to deliver a range of activities designed to connect our community with nature and protect, maintain and enhance our natural environment. As part of these activities:

- local residents celebrated National Tree Day by planting more than 4,000 native plants at home in their yards (July 2020);
- over 30 local schools participated in Schools National Tree Day activities, with Council supplying native plants to help inspire students to learn about the local environment while playing an active role in their community (July 2020);
- 162 locals made a staggering 19,386 bird sightings (136 different species) as part of Birdlife Australia's Aussie Backyard Bird Count (October 2020) – the count is one of the largest citizen science projects in Australia and helps to raise the profile of Australian birds at a local and national level;
- individuals and community groups pitched in as part of a range of CleanUp Australia Day activities held across the Region (March 2021); and
- local shutterbugs shared their photographic talents with the Region to help celebrate World Environment Day through the Rockhampton Region Nature Photography Competition (June 2021).



## FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS

Council continues to support strong community partnerships to deliver on-ground outcomes. Council's Natural Resource Management (NRM) program, works with local partners to deliver works on Council land, whilst developing skilling and employment pathways for locals.

These arrangements saw works delivered in conjunction with Multicultural Australia, Capricornia Catchments, Jobs Queensland, CQUniversity and the Central Queensland Aboriginal Corporation for Cultural Activities (CQACCA). Works were completed at Fraser Park, Eichelberger Park, Col Austin Park, Frenchville Road / Frenchmans Creek, Moores Creek, Limestone Creek, Springers Lagoon, Plover Street and Cedric Archer Park.

## PROTECTING OUR LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

As part of the Rockhampton Region's Biosecurity Plan, Council continues to manage the risk of introduced plants and animals to our environment, the economy and our community. During the year, works included feral pig baiting and trapping programs, floodplain inspection activities, prickly acacia and feral leucaena control, aquatic weed control on the Fitzroy River and targeted weed control on Council-managed land. Council has also implemented new spray intelligence equipment to improve the efficiency and accuracy of chemical application records and has been busy developing a revised Biosecurity Plan.

# IN FOCUS:

## REEF GUARDIAN COUNCIL PROGRAM

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) recognises the role that local government plays in managing the broader reef catchment and supports this role via the Reef Guardian Councils program. The program recognises that effective management and protection of the Reef requires a coordinated effort from industries, communities and all levels of government. Reef Guardian Councils have an important role in planning for sustainable population growth, encouraging environmentally sound developments and preparing the community for climate change impacts.

As part of this collaborative stewardship program, Rockhampton Regional Council is one of 19 local councils along the Queensland coast working to support a healthy and resilient Reef through local government and community actions. Participating councils commit to take actions that address the key risks to the Reef and to implement an annual action plan. They also work together to participate in regular workshops and professional development activities, whilst sharing experience and advocating for investment in collaborative projects.

The Rockhampton Region has a direct connection to the Great Barrier Reef via the Fitzroy River. What we do in our homes and yards, on our streets and across the landscape affects the health of our local waterways and the Reef. As part of our Reef Guardian commitments, Council has been implementing a range of initiatives to address the key risks to the Reef associated with climate change, coastal development, land-based run-off and direct use of the Marine Park.

One such initiative was the recent installation of a Baffle Box (also known as a gross pollutant trap) adjacent to the Fitzroy River. The Baffle Box is designed to trap pollutants such as organic debris, rubbish and sediment that might wash off our streets and down our drains. The demonstration site is designed to raise community awareness about the importance of protecting our waterways and includes a transparent lid and interpretive signage to help residents physically see and understand the connection between our streets, drains and waterways.

A number of collaborative research initiatives are also continuing to utilise data from local stormwater traps to better understand 'what's down our drains?' and prevent the various land-based sources of marine pollutants. These works are being delivered in collaboration with the Australian Government, Queensland Government, Great Barrier Reef Foundation, CQUniversity, Fitzroy Basin Association, Capricornia Catchments, Cleanwater Group, Livingstone Shire Council and Gladstone Regional Council.

A range of other Reef-related initiatives are featured throughout this report.





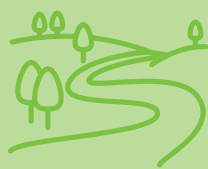


## GREAT BARRIER REEF - DIRECT THREATS



### CLIMATE CHANGE

is recognised as the greatest threat to the Great Barrier Reef.



### LAND BASED RUN-OFF

can significantly impact water quality.



### COASTAL DEVELOPMENT

and associated land clearing has the potential to cause downstream impacts.



### DIRECT USE

recreation, tourism and fishing activities place pressure on ecosystems.



# EMPOWERING COMMUNITY.

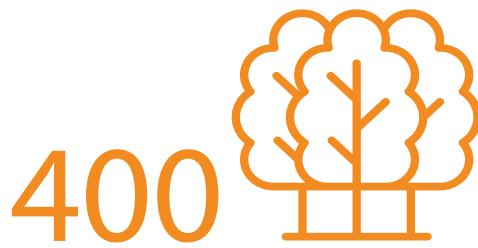
## OBJECTIVE

Let's work together to strengthen our community capacity to live sustainably.

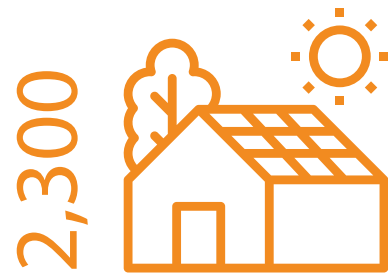
## TARGETS

- Community sustainability engagement programs in place
- Community-based environment and sustainability initiatives encouraged and recognised
- Increased canopy cover within the urban footprint

## YEAR IN REVIEW



**NEW SEMI-ADVANCED TREES**  
planted to shade and cool key parks,  
playgrounds and footpaths.



**LOCAL HOUSEHOLDS**  
subscribed to the Living  
Sustainably e-newsletter.



**COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**  
shared in \$23,800 funding  
via Council's Environment and  
Sustainability Scheme.



**RECYCLING HERO SCHOOLS**  
committed to overhaul their waste  
management systems and reduce  
waste to landfill.



Photo: Stanwell State School 'Let there be water' project has implemented a number of water-wise initiatives including this aquaponics system and was supported by Council's Environment and Sustainability Scheme grants.

## LIVING SUSTAINABLY

Council's Living Sustainably program fosters sustainable behaviour and encourages the community's wise-use of resources. The program focuses on simple actions that residents can take in their own homes and addresses 12 sustainability themes ranging from growing your own fruit and vegetables and reducing single use plastics, to improving energy efficiency and recycling right with yellow lid bins. As part of the program:

- the monthly social media spotlight shines a light on local sustainability actions and inspires thousands of local residents to live more sustainably;
- more than 2,300 households receive practical information and handy tips via the monthly e-newsletter;
- local schools participate in the annual Sustainability in Action schools calendar competition which is designed to encourage students to adopt and model sustainable behaviour within our local community and to recognise their achievements; and
- over 5,000 local families received a copy of the 2021 Rockhampton Region community calendar which featured 12 of our local 'sustainability champions'.



## ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS

As part of Council's Community Assistance Program, 11 not-for-profit groups shared in over \$23,000 worth of funding to support a range of community-based environment and sustainability initiatives. The initiatives ranged from community gardens and citizen science projects, to capability building workshops, targeted recycling programs and on-ground restoration works.



## SCHOOL RECYCLING HEROES

As we move towards zero waste, local students are leading the way with 8 new schools participating in Council's Recycling Hero Schools program. The free program helps local schools to overhaul their waste management system and to develop a student leadership opportunity using peer-to-peer teaching. Council supports schools to implement tailored behaviour changes to achieve the goals of a reduction in waste generation, an increase in recycling and less contamination. Progress is monitored by regular waste audits. Participating schools have reduced their waste to landfill by as much as 80%. Local teachers also participated in Council-hosted Professional Development workshops. Participants received a range of Council program materials and resources covering environmental sustainability, waste and water, local laws, disaster management and more.

## TACKLING ILLEGAL DUMPING

Uncontrolled waste has a significant impact on our environment. Local residents are helping to report illegal dumping via the Snap Send Solve app. Rolled out in 2021, the illegal dumping hotspots campaign includes community surveys, 14 roadside signs, 4 bus wraps, radio promotion across two local stations, various educational stalls, a mobile digital billboard and surveillance cameras at three identified hotspots.

# IN FOCUS:

## PLASTIC FREE PLACES

The Queensland Government passed legislation to ban certain single-use plastic items, such as straws, cutlery, stirrers, plates, bowls and expanded polystyrene from 01 September 2021. To help local food retailers get 'ban compliant' and remove single-use plastics from our local waste stream, Council joined forces with the Queensland Government, Boomerang Alliance and Livingstone Shire Council to launch the Plastic Free CQ program.

Plastic Free CQ is part of the national Plastic Free Places program run by the Boomerang Alliance, Australia's peak not-for-profit waste organisation. The program comprises a network of 7 communities across Australia, and has helped businesses in these communities eliminate over 8 million pieces of single-use plastic. The program directly assists food retailers to eliminate or switch away from plastics towards reusable or compostable alternatives, helping to find alternatives that suits their needs, whilst minimising costs and waste, and making it as quick and straightforward as possible. It's free for local businesses to join and they can choose their level of plastic reduction. Local businesses that eliminate 6 key plastic items (water bottles, straws, coffee cups/lids, takeaway containers, food ware and plastic bags) are then certified as a Plastic Free Champion.

Already, the Plastic Free CQ program has helped over 40 local businesses to make the switch to reusable or compostable items, eliminating over 22,274 pieces of single-use plastic and counting!

As we move towards zero waste, Council has made the switch within each of its internal lunch rooms, training rooms and customer-facing facilities. Staff are encouraged to cater smart to avoid waste, choose to reuse products from kitchens and catering kits and finally use compostable products where other reusable items are not available. Council has also established preferred supplier arrangements to ensure a standardised set of compostable products can be supplied to meet Council's event, training and other catering needs.

Council's Major Venues Team have also continued their commitment to reducing single-use plastics, making the switch to reusable items. At the Pilbeam Theatre, they've improved signage on the waste and recycling bins in the foyer, installed chilled water taps and formalised container collection in the Green Room. At the Rockhampton Showgrounds they've installed a new water refill station at the main gate which is now being regularly used by events to reduce the reliance on single-use plastic bottles.





## PLASTIC FREE CQ PROGRAM

40

### CQ BUSINESSES

joined Plastic Free CQ Program within first four months.



22,274+

### SINGLE USE PLASTIC

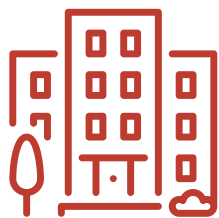
items transitioned to compostable alternatives through program as at August 2021.

STRAWS & STIRRERS  
PLATES & BOWLS  
KNIVES, FORKS & SPOONS  
POLYSTYRENE CONTAINERS



### TRANSITION TO ALTERNATIVES

to meet legislative requirements by 1 September 2021.



# INDUSTRY & INFRASTRUCTURE.

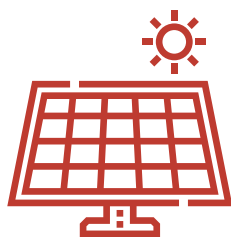
## OBJECTIVE

Let's work together to create a liveable region that encourages sustainable industry and infrastructure.

## TARGETS

- Council's planning instruments actively encourage sustainable development
- Major Council projects incorporate sustainable design and procurement considerations
- Eco-tourism ratings achieved for key local destinations
- Roadmap in place to support clean growth choices

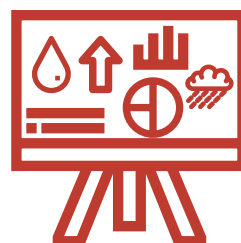
## YEAR IN REVIEW



# 5

### RENEWABLE ENERGY

projects in the pipeline as the Rockhampton Region emerges as a Renewable Energy Hotspot.



### CLEAN GROWTH CHOICES

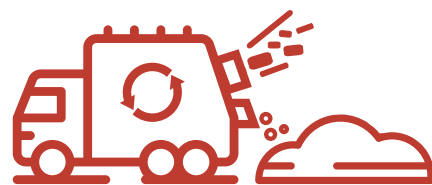
business case and terms of reference finalised to support investment in local agriculture.



# 6 KM

### NEW FOOTPATHS

constructed to link pathway networks and encourage active transport.



# ~27,000 TONNES

### CONSTRUCTION & DEMOLITION

materials diverted from landfill and processed for reuse via Council's Dale Park operations.

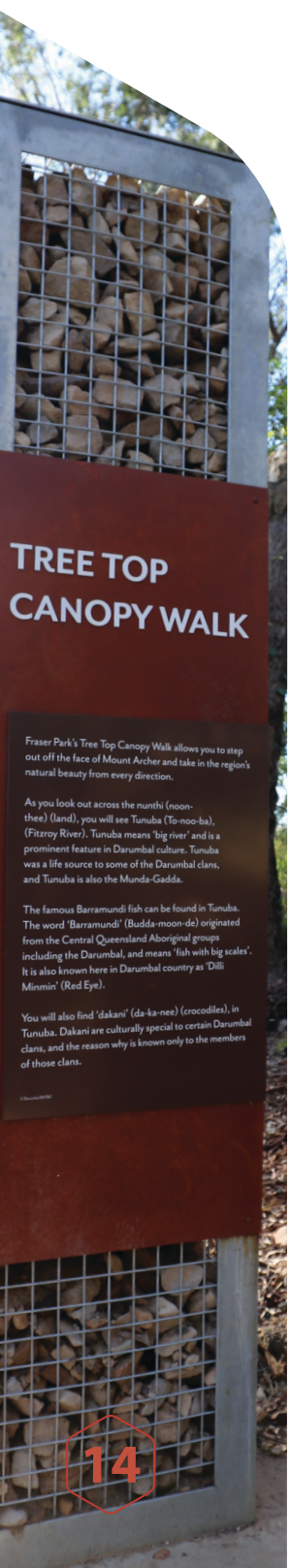


Photo: Interpretive signage at Nurim Circuit, Mount Archer.

## REGION EMERGING AS RENEWABLE ENERGY HOTSPOT

The Rockhampton Region has emerged as one of Australia's leading renewable energy generation points, with wind generators, solar generators and battery operators seeking to develop projects west of Rockhampton. The Queensland Government's goal to have 50% of the State's electricity generation coming from renewable sources by 2030 has proven to be a critical driver, with Rockhampton providing good solar and wind assets and convenient access to the electricity distribution grid.



## ACTIVE TRANSPORT, RECREATION & TOURISM

Council's Walking and Cycling Strategy seeks to ensure that we're adequately planning for upgrades to walking paths, bicycle lanes and other key infrastructure necessary to support sustainable transport. During FY2020-21, Council delivered around 6km of new footpaths to fill gaps in the existing network and enhance walking and cycling experiences across the Region. As part of Council's Recreational Fishing Strategy, Council has advocated for additional boat ramps at Inkerman and Casuarina Creek and Rockhampton's voluntary codes of practice messaging continues to be relayed to local and visiting fishers. As part of the Advancing Mount Morgan Strategy, Council completed a fish habitat rehabilitation project and constructed over 25km of new mountain bike trails at the Number 7 Dam. Explore Rockhampton's Stop, See, Stay campaign focussed on the drive market out of southeast Queensland and website and social platforms continue to promote local national parks, mountain-biking and hiking tracks, bird-watching opportunities and new self-guided walking tours.



## SUSTAINABLE DESIGN INITIATIVES

Council is taking a 10 year rolling program approach to the Botanic Gardens and Zoo redevelopment project, embedding sustainability considerations into concept, design and construction to minimise resource use, improve climate resilience, capitalise on sustainable transport opportunities, achieve education/conservation/ecology objectives and ensure long-term financial viability. Already, Council has installed several kilometres of new concrete pathways. In the process, over 160 tonnes of pavers were removed from the site, with old pavers crushed for re-use as road base. Council's Civil Operations have also progressed a range of innovative projects, one of which incorporates 5% crushed glass in asphalt projects – saving time and resources, whilst minimising the use of raw quarry materials.

## SUPPORTING LOCAL AGRICULTURE

As part of the Making Water Work (Clean Growth Choices for Communities in Transition) program, Council has been working with key stakeholders to leverage sustainable opportunities from the development of the Rookwood Weir. These approaches aim to improve supply, market dynamics and agricultural water distribution and support landholders in the Fitzroy Agricultural Corridor to prepare for these new opportunities. CQUniversity research is exploring opportunities to incorporate agricultural innovation in cropping, horticulture and beef. Continuing work with the Cooperative Research Centre for Northern Australia has also led to Rockhampton being identified as a potential aquaculture hub.

# IN FOCUS:

## RECONNECTING WITH NURIM

Nurim (Mount Archer) is one of the region's most iconic locations, loved by both locals and visitors, and it's seen an incredible transformation over the past few years. After it was battered by Cyclone Marcia in 2015, Council embarked on an ambitious plan to protect and enhance Nurim and to activate it as a significant natural and cultural asset.

Council's redevelopment project has worked in conjunction with the Darumbal people, the community, key user groups and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (managers of the adjacent National Park); with funding support from both the State and Commonwealth Governments. The outcomes seek to embed sustainable design and recognise the importance and value of yadaba nunthi – respect for country, history and values.

Building on the Mount Archer Activation Master Plan, through work finalised at the end of 2020, Nurim incorporates:

- A new welcome node and interpretive signage – As you step out from the carpark, the welcome node provides an Acknowledgement of Country and recognises the significance of the site in our Region's history – from Darumbal lores, to the settler story of the Archer Brothers and the Berserker ranges. The area also celebrates culturally significant stories, language and artwork including the clan names and images of Yugu (water lily), a plant that represents the four main clans of the Darumbal nation.
- An all-abilities walking circuit - The snake-like curvature of the Nurim Circuit weaves itself through the trees, reflecting the region's iconic Tunuba (Fitzroy River), the lifeblood of Rockhampton which is visible from the circuit. Darumbal recognise Munda-Gadda (the Rainbow Serpent) as a Creation spirit that created all the water in the land and as the keeper of all life.
- An elevated boardwalk - Nurim Circuit has been developed to walk lightly on the landscape, the long legs of the elevated boardwalk stretching some 7-8 metres above the forest floor, minimising ground disturbance and protecting the natural and cultural significance of the site).
- New facilities – The site has been upgraded with a new amenities block, energy efficient safety lighting and a nature play area that takes inspiration from local flora and fauna.
- Amphitheatre and gathering circles – Nurim is an important location for ceremonies, social activities, weddings and meetings and also hosts the annual 'Challenge the Mountain' event (bike, walk, run). It provides the major trail head for local hikes into the adjacent Mount Archer National Park. The Darumbal people's local Brolga Junior Ranger program uses the site to bring together a range of local high school students to participate in a blend of education and cultural experiences
- Bush regeneration - Community groups and local residents have assisted with bush regeneration works throughout the site. Bush tucker species have been incorporated into revegetation works particularly emphasising the cultural importance of the native raspberry, cycads and grass trees.

By embracing Nurim's natural and cultural values, recent redevelopment works have significantly increased visitation to the site and created important eco-tourism opportunities for the Region.





## NURIM (MOUNT ARCHER)



150%

INCREASE

in visitors, averaging approximately 496 vehicles per day in 2020.

REGIONAL  
PROJECT OF  
THE YEAR



Australian Institute of Architects' Central Queensland Regional Architecture Awards 2019.

#1



TRIP ADVISOR

Travellers Choice Awards 2020.



# COUNCIL OPERATIONS.

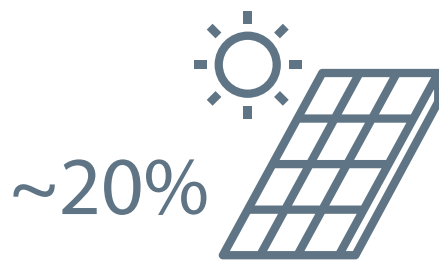
## OBJECTIVE

Let's work together to continually improve Council's environment and sustainability performance.

## TARGETS

- Internal sustainability engagement program in place
- Environmental management systems operating for nominated units
- Majority of Council's operational electricity needs sourced from renewable energy

## YEAR IN REVIEW



**RENEWABLE ENERGY**  
supplying Council's operational electricity needs.



**QUEENSLAND  
WINNER**

**KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL  
Sustainable Communities  
Tidy Towns Awards 2020**  
recognising Council's progress towards creating a sustainable future for the Region.

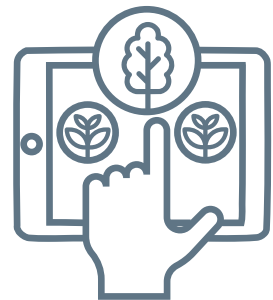


**PHASED OUT  
SINGLE USE  
PLASTIC**

STRAWS & STIRRERS  
PLATES & BOWLS  
KNIVES, FORKS & SPOONS  
POLYSTYRENE CONTAINERS

at Council facilities and embedded reusable or compostable alternatives into ongoing processes.

**eNOTICES  
TRANSITION**



launched for all rates, water and animal registration notices, taking traditional paper-based systems to digital channels.



## SECOND NATURE PROGRAM

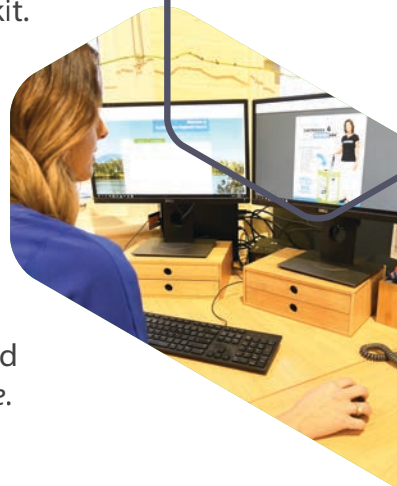
Council's Second Nature program aims to increase staff sustainability awareness and action. During the year, Council's Internal Sustainability Working Group:

- developed, trialled and launched the 'switch off before you take off' internal energy efficiency program;
- implemented campaigns focussed on composting, reducing single use plastics and diverting materials away from landfill;
- made the switch from single-use plastics within each of its internal lunch rooms, training rooms and customer-facing facilities. Staff are encouraged to cater smart to avoid waste, choose to reuse products from kitchens and catering kits and finally use compostable products where other reusable items are not available.
- identified potential eco-efficiencies (water, waste and energy savings) via ecoBiz assessments at a number of key Council facilities;
- provided input to project and design concepts, as well as policy and procedure reviews;
- developed a new Sustainability Induction video; and
- expanded resource materials available on the online staff Sustainability Toolkit.



## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AWARDS

The Rockhampton Region's sustainability efforts were recognised as part of the Keep Australia Beautiful Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards 2020. Rockhampton was crowned Queensland's Overall Winner and most Sustainable Community for 2020, also taking out the Environmental Sustainability (Water) and the Resource Recovery (Waste Management) categories. Council was also recognised as a finalist in the *Australian Sustainable Communities Awards 2021* and the *Local Government Manager's Australia (Queensland) 2021 Awards for Excellence*.



## DIGITAL TRANSITION

Council is working to make wiser use of its resources by continuing to transition traditional paper-based systems to digital channels. Council has launched eNotices for all rates, water and animal registration notices and continues to encourage uptake across the community. The transition is helping to streamline processes, whilst reducing associated paper, postage and transport requirements. Internally, Council has also achieved significant paper and printing savings through the introduction of the Beakon system for online training and inductions. Council continues to use FSC certified, 100% recycled Australian made A4 paper and encourages all staff to think before they print.

## IMPROVING WATER SECURITY

Fitzroy River Water constructed the South Rockhampton Recycled Water Scheme and have finalised detailed design to increase the height of the Fitzroy River Barrage water storage. During FY2020-21, with water levels at the Mount Morgan Dam falling to critical levels, Council implemented Level 6 Water Restrictions in Mount Morgan and begun trucking water to the community. Council continues to work with the community and key stakeholders to explore the options for improving water security in Mount Morgan.

# IN FOCUS:

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

Just like it's good practice to monitor and look for savings on your home electricity bill, Council is always working to improve efficiencies, reduce costs and transition to more renewable energy sources within our own operations.

Council is committed to sourcing a majority of its operational electricity from renewable energy sources. In FY2020-21, Council made some big steps towards this target, with over 2,500kW of Council-owned solar systems installed or under construction. This includes:

- a 2MW (2,000kW) solar energy facility at the Glenmore Water Treatment Plant - Once completed, the new solar system will minimise the Plant's reliance on grid supplied electricity, reduce carbon emissions and deliver significant operational savings. The innovative new system aims to maximise power generation capacity by utilising single-axis tracking and bifacial (double-sided) solar panels combined with crushed recycled glass as a ground treatment to increase solar reflection.
- 500kW of small-scale solar systems at key Council facilities – Council has awarded contracts for the installation of small-scale solar systems at the Rockhampton Museum of Art, Animal Management Centre, North Rockhampton Library, Bauhinia House, Memorial Gardens, Heritage Village, Rockhampton Showgrounds, the Dooley Street Depot and a number of other key Council sites.
- continued purchase of 10% green energy in Council's contestable electricity contract.

In addition to the major solar installations, Council has also implemented a range of other energy improvements. Council:

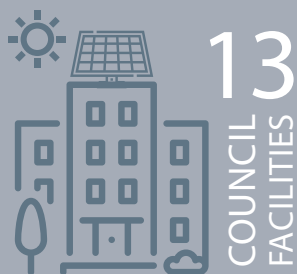
- commissioned the Lakes Creek Road landfill gas extraction system which enables Council to capture landfill gas to generate carbon credits and electricity from this site for the next 20 years.
- implemented a significant energy efficiency project at the Pilbeam Theatre, switching to a range of LED fixtures that are 70% more efficient than the conventional lighting.
- continues to encourage operational areas to adopt full electric or hybrid vehicles where appropriate, installing a fast charger for Fleet vehicles at Dooley Street Depot and working with commercial providers to explore potential sites for future community electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- has been systematically implementing a range of initiatives to reduce energy usage at its major pump station and treatment plant sites to improve environmental outcomes whilst also delivering operational cost savings.
- continues to achieve energy efficiencies by reviewing assets as facilities and fixtures reach end-of-life, replacing conventional fixtures with more efficient pumps, motors and LED lighting as appropriate.

Council continues to align with Queensland Government's renewable energy targets and to improve its environment and sustainability performance.





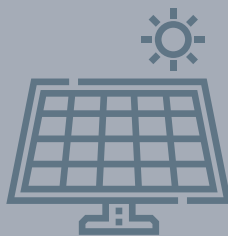
## RENEWABLE ENERGY



**13**  
COUNCIL  
FACILITIES

have solar installed  
or currently under  
development.

**2,500 KW**



solar systems installed,  
supplying up to 10,000  
kWh per day.

QUEENSLAND  
GOVERNMENT

**TARGET**



to reach 50% renewable  
energy by 2030.

# LOOKING FORWARD.

Whilst Council has made some significant progress in FY2020-21, Council is committed to creating a sustainable future for our region and there is always more that can be done.

Looking forward to FY2021-22, Council is planning to:

- Advocate for region-wide renewable energy projects and local content supply that positively benefit the Rockhampton Region.
- Significantly increase the proportion of Council's operational electricity needs which are sourced from renewable energy by continuing to install Council-owned solar systems at key Council facilities and incorporating renewable energy in contracts.
- Move towards zero waste by progressing key recycling and organics solutions.
- Explore circular economy opportunities that improve utilisation of local resources and deliver more sustainable outcomes.
- Take action to improve the Region's climate adaptation and resilience.
- Continue to expedite the community's transition from single-use plastics by supporting the Plastic Free CQ program.
- Explore opportunities to incorporate innovative sustainability approaches within major projects such as the Airport and Botanic Gardens & Zoo redevelopments.
- Commence implementation of the new Reconciliation Action plan.
- Explore opportunities to improve water security and the resilience of the Region's water storage assets.
- Continue to increase Council's understanding and action on climate related risks and opportunities.
- Continue to actively participate in the Reef Guardian Council program to support community and industry partnerships working to improve Reef Health.
- Support community partners to continue to deliver training, development and on-ground conservation and land management by growing the Natural Resource Management program.
- Prioritise local planting improvements via an urban greening strategy that will help to enhance amenity and shade and cool our Region.
- Reduce the impact of invasive species on the environment by finalising and implementing an updated Biosecurity Plan.
- Progress key projects that encourage improved flood resilience and waterway health.
- Encourage positive environmental outcomes by developing an Environmental Offsets Policy for development activities that are unable to avoid environmental impacts.
- Foster sustainable behaviour and encourage the community's wise use of resources through continuation of the Bringing Nature Back and Living Sustainably programs.
- Support and encourage a range of community-based environment and sustainability initiatives via Council's Environment and Sustainability Scheme.
- Continue to promote sustainable recreation and tourism via the Rockhampton Recreational Fishing Development Strategy and Advancing Mount Morgan Strategy.
- Promote sustainable transport options by improving walking and cycling routes and trialling e-scooters.
- Continue to improve Council's approach to sustainable events.
- Continue to embed environment and sustainability considerations in Council's operational practices and procedures.

**Let's continue to work together to make the Rockhampton Region a great place to live, work, play, learn and invest.**



Photo: 'Blue Sunset' by Jun Woo Jo

## BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!



[rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au/EnvironmentalSustainability](http://rockhamptonregion.qld.gov.au/EnvironmentalSustainability)



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Cover photo: 'Mt Archer Sunset'  
by Clint Yarrow