

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide Council operations to implement environmental best practise.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all Council decisions and activities. Our role includes:

- land use planning and development assessment;
- developing, implementing and regulating environmental policy and standards;
- supply of water and wastewater services;
- waste management;
- stormwater management which includes conveyance to the receiving waters and treatment before discharging into receiving waters;
- construction and maintenance of public infrastructure;
- providing public amenities, parks and gardens;
- conserving and enhancing the region's environmental assets including bushlands, waterways, catchments, air and flora and fauna.

Policy Statement

Whitsunday Regional Council will incorporate environmental principles into our decision making processes, services which we provide and activities which we undertake to ensure that our area has a healthy environment and is a prosperous place to live.

To achieve our Policy and our vision, we will:

1. Comply with all Commonwealth and State legislation, regulations, standards, policies and initiatives.
2. We will continually seek to improve our environmental performance.
3. Encourage local businesses to adopt good environmental practises.
4. Minimise and where possible prevent any adverse environmental impacts from our activities, work, and decision making.
5. Recognise that as an organisation we can influence and improve environmental outcomes from our operations and activities.
6. Prevent and minimise pollution affecting our waterways and marine ecosystems.
7. Pursue waste minimisation projects, initiative and planning to reduce the amount of waste that is disposed of in the landfill, and encourage the reuse, recycling and reallocation of waste products.
8. Facilitate the purchasing of more environmentally friendly or pollution reducing materials, infrastructure and products.

9. Develop a reference to select contractors and suppliers who demonstrate that their products and services minimise impacts on the environment and relevant demonstrate a commitment to the principles of Ecological Sustainable Development.
10. Communicate the Environmental Policy to the Council staff, contractors and Councillors and provide suitable training to ensure that they are fully aware of their obligations and are empowered in their decision making and actions.
11. Encourage the community to support the Environmental Policy and assist them to explore how they can implement the principles and actions described in this Policy.
12. Develop and implement an Environmental Management System to identify and monitor the environmental impacts of Council services, actions and decision making.
13. That our planning and engineering decisions will always consider environmental values, act to minimise environmental impacts and seek alternative solutions that will minimise impacts on our natural systems.
14. Ensure that all planning decisions take into account good environmental practise, best management practise and the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD).
15. Manage Council land so that impacts are minimised, and where possible the environment is enhanced.
16. Raise awareness of the values of our wildlife and their habitats.
17. Remediate instances of adverse environmental impacts emanating from Council works.
18. Strive to provide a safe, healthy, prosperous place to live while ensuring that the impacts of future population growth is minimised.
19. Explore and where feasible implement activities, purchase products and goods that reduce our use of electricity and non-renewable fuels.
20. Modify existing policies that contradict or conflict with the Environmental Policy.
21. Actively promote land management practise that reduce impacts on the soil, air, vegetation and water resources.
22. Actively encourage and engage with organisations which have an interest in enacting and pursuing activities which are consistent with the principles of ESD.
23. Undertake projects, work and activities which improves and maintains the Shire's natural resources.
24. Consult the community on environmental issues and seek their input into future projects and initiatives.
25. Promote examples of environmental best practise.

26. Develop workplace procedures to assist Council to meet the goals and aspirations of the Environmental Policy.
27. To actively reduce the instances of exotic and noxious animal and plant pests.
28. Recognise and protect locally important indigenous cultural areas.
29. Ensure that bushfire hazard is appropriately managed on Council land

Whitsunday Regional Council will endeavour to implement this Policy to the best of its available resources and aims to become recognised in Queensland as a Council who not only cares for its own environment but actively seeks to improve it for local residents but also our numerous interstate and overseas visitors. It should be noted that Council's Policy on Climate change is reflected in the following documents:

- Climate Change Adaption Policy - 2016
- Climate Change Mitigation Policy - 2019

Applicable Legislation

Queensland Environmental Protection Act 1994 (EPA)

Queensland Environmental Protection Regulation 2019

Queensland Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011(WRRA)

Queensland Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2011

Queensland Planning Act 2016

Queensland Local Government Act 2009

Commonwealth Clean Energy Act 2011

Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Biosecurity Act 2014

Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2019

Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2019

Definitions

Biodiversity shall mean the diversity and interconnectedness of all life forms including plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain and the ecosystems they form and comprises of:

- Genetic diversity (the variety of genes in any population)
 - Species diversity (the variety of species)
 - Ecosystem diversity (the variety of communities and ecosystems). Community shall mean consideration of the social and cultural consequences of decision making. This includes how people relate, work, live, socialise as a society as well as their beliefs and values.
- Council or WRC shall mean the Whitsunday Regional Council.

- CEO refers to the Chief Executive Officer of the Whitsunday Regional Council appointed in accordance with the Local Government Act 2009.
- Ecological Footprint shall mean the 'measure of humanity's demand on nature'. It measures how much land and water area a human population requires to produce the resource it consumes and to absorb its carbon dioxide emissions and waste products.

Ecological Sustainable Development or ESD shall mean using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, are enhanced'.

- Ecosystem shall mean are the dynamic interactions between plants, animals, and microorganisms and their environment working together as a functional ecological unit.
- Employee refers to any employee, contractor, volunteer etc. of the Council
- Environment shall mean the Earth, made up of its natural features and resources and the ecosystems that sustain life and all life forms. It must be understood that everything on the planet is interconnected and interdependent and the continuance of life on earth is reliant on maintaining healthy biodiversity and eco-system processes including the naturally evolved plants and animals, clean air, fresh water, climate, soil, minerals and energy.
- Environmental Impact shall mean possible adverse effects caused by a development, industrial, or infrastructural project or by the release of a substance in the environment. Environmental Incident shall mean any event that may result in harm to the environment and requires some action to minimise the impact or restore the environment.
- Environmental Management System or EMS shall mean a set of processes and practices that enable an organisation to reduce its environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency
- Environmental Risk shall mean actual or potential threat of adverse effects on living organisms and environment by effluents, emissions, wastes, resource depletion, etc., arising out of an organisation's activities.

Related Documents

Erosion and sediment Control Policy

Flying Fox Management Policy

Bushfire Management Policy

Human Rights Compatibility Statement

This Policy has been assessed as compatible with the Human Rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

Environment Policy

Community Services - Natural Resources & Climate
COMM_13

COUNCIL POLICY			
Date Adopted by Council	22 June 2022	Council Resolution	OM2022/06/24.14
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Responsible Officer(s)	Coordinator Natural Resource Management and Climate	Revokes	N/A
Public Consultation: Yes / No			