COUNCIL POLICY	
Corporate Environmental Sustainability Policy	
POLICY NO	062
DEPARTMENT	Development Services
PROGRAM	Parks, Environment & Sustainability
ADOPTED BY COUNCIL	25 July 2018 - Folio 58243

1.0 Scope

This policy applies to all Mackay Regional Council's (MRC) activities and workplaces.

2.0 Purpose

This policy affirms MRC's commitment to become an industry leader in environmentally sustainable business practices and an advocate for sustainable development of the Mackay region.

3.0 References

National Legislation
- *Biosecurity Act 2015*
- *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007*
- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

State Legislation
- *Planning Act 2016*
- *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*
- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Water Act 2000*
- *Vegetation Management Act 1999*
- *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Fisheries Act 1994*
- *Nature Conservation Act 1992*

National Strategies
- *Climate Sustainability Plan 2016-2020 (Mackay, Whitsunday, Isaac)*
- *Australia's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030*
- *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development 1992*

State Strategies
- *Queensland Waste Avoidance and Resource Productivity Strategy 2014–2024*
- *Queensland Climate Transition Strategy - Pathways to a clean growth economy*
- *Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy 2017–2030 - Pathways to a climate resilient Qld*

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Internal Documents
- *Mackay Region Community Plan 2011-2031*
- *Strategic Risk Register*
- *Corporate Plan 2016-2021*
- *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022*
- *Economic Development Strategy 2015-2020*
- *Community Development Strategy (Draft)*
- *Mackay Region Planning Scheme 2017*
- *Waste Management Strategic Plan 2014-2018*
- *Water Services Business Plan 2016-2021*

4.0 Definitions

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

Biodiversity: *The variety of all life forms including the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part.*

Built Environment: *Places and spaces created or modified by people including buildings, parks, facilities, infrastructure services and transportation systems.*

Climate Change: *The observed century-scale rise in the average temperature of the Earth's climate system and its related effects.*

Climate Change Adaptation: *Proactively managing risks associated with climate change through a planned approach that takes into consideration the best available science and local climate projections.*

Council shall mean the Mayor and Councillors of Mackay Regional Council.

Climate Change Mitigation: *Activities to reduce the extent of human induced climate change, primarily through eliminating or reducing carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.*

Environmental Management System: *A set of processes and practices that enable an organisation to reduce its environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency.*

Liveability: *The combination of factors that lead to a community's quality of life now and into the future. Important factors affecting liveability include the built and natural environments, economic activity, social stability and wellbeing, equity and access, education, cultural and recreation opportunities.*

MRC shall mean Mackay Regional Council.

Natural Environment: *The physical and biological surroundings in which plants, animals and people live and interact. It encompasses water, soil, air, plants, animals and the ecological and physical processes that affect them.*

Prosperity: *Refers to a state of abundant opportunity, good fortune and social status. Prosperity often encompasses wealth but is underpinned by other factors independent of wealth such as happiness and the health of the natural environment.*

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Resilience: The capacity of individuals, communities and environmental systems to survive, adapt, and grow despite experiencing chronic stresses and acute shocks. Resilient communities turn vulnerabilities into opportunities

Sustainability: Ensuring the way that we live today doesn't reduce the quality of life of future generations or degrade the quality of the environment they will live in.

Sustainability for local government can be defined as an ongoing commitment to integrating economic, community and environmental sustainability principles and processes into Council operations as opposed to achieving a specific end point or goal.

Sustainable Development: A term used to describe economic activity that ensures the way we live today doesn't reduce the quality of life of future generations or degrade the quality of the environment they will live in.

5.0 Background

As a prominent local environmental manager and community leader, Council recognises environmental sustainability as a core business priority which underpins our organisational performance as well as our region's prosperity, liveability and lifestyle.

By embedding principles for environmental sustainability into our operations and partnerships, we will improve efficiency, deliver better services and lead our community in the sustainable development of the Mackay region.

It is important to note that Council's aspirations for sustainable development are currently pursued through a suite of strategies and policies that respond separately to economic, community and environmental drivers. This policy plays an integral role in this approach by outlining Council's commitment to environmental sustainability.

Over time, it is intended that this policy will assist in bringing Council's economic, community and environmental sustainability commitments together at a strategic level to achieve a more cohesive vision for sustainable development of the Mackay region.

6.0 Policy Statement

Environmental sustainability for Council can be defined as an ongoing commitment to integrating the following principles across our organisation and into our way of thinking and acting as opposed to achieving a specific end point or goal.

6.1   Principles for Environmental Sustainability

Outcome	Principles
Low Carbon	Council operations become low carbon to minimise our contribution to climate change.

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Outcome	Principles
Resource-efficient	Council uses resources efficiently, avoiding reliance on non-renewable resources from outside our region.
Productive	Council operations support local production, recycling and resource recovery processes.
Resilient	Council plans effectively for climate change, enhancing the resilience of our built and natural environments.
A Sustainable Natural Environment	Council protects and enhances essential elements of our natural environment including waterways, wetlands, coastal areas, native vegetation, animals and their habitats.
Smart	Council seeks new and emerging technologies to improve efficiency, service delivery and environmental sustainability performance.
Sustainable Transport	Council promotes connected, active, electric, and shared transport options that reduce carbon pollution, energy consumption and improve air quality.
Sustainable Procurement	Council purchases products and services that demonstrate value for money while also generating environmental, community and economic benefits for our region.
Partnerships	Council builds regional and community partnerships to strengthen our influence at state and national levels, improving environmental sustainability outcomes for our region.

6.2 People and Leadership

Fostering Sustainable Behaviors

MRC will encourage staff and the community to adopt environmental sustainable living behaviours at work and at home. The Chief Executive Officer, Directors and Program Managers are responsible for leading behavioural change and ensuring this policy is implemented and understood by all MRC employees.

Community Leadership

MRC will demonstrate leadership in the management and protection of our natural and built environments by integrating environmental sustainability principles into all decision-making processes.

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MRC will seek broad public involvement on environmental sustainability issues that affect the community. Engaging individuals, communities, stakeholders and businesses and adopting more open deliberations will build an understanding of environmental sustainability and promote collective responsibility.

6.3 **Governance**

Governance

MRC will maintain strong and effective governance arrangements that ensure cross program integration of environmental sustainability principles. MRC decisions should consider linkages between economic, environmental and community dimensions, and take account of both short and long-term impacts.

Environmental sustainability performance indicators will be established and monitored at the executive level to ensure continuous improvement regardless of leadership changes or short-term political influence.

Compliance

MRC will comply with all environmental legislation, regulations and licence requirements relevant to its operations and will strive for leading practice operational standards. Continuous improvement will be achieved by implementing environmental management systems within relevant MRC business units.

6.4 **Environmentally Sustainable Business Practices - Key Focus Areas**

Climate Change Mitigation & Energy

MRC will monitor and reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with its operations by adopting sustainable energy practices and pursuing low emission technologies.

Built Environment

MRC will encourage sustainable design and practices related to building and infrastructure
projects. New infrastructure will incorporate tropical design principles, energy and water efficiency, sustainable materials and smart technology to reduce operating costs, resource consumption and aim to become carbon positive.

Natural Environment

MRC will protect, enhance and expand the region's conservation estate using leading practice biodiversity and conservation metrics and planning tools. MRC will build lasting partnerships with local community groups to achieve long-term biodiversity conservation outcomes.

Planning & Climate Change Adaptation

MRC will embed climate change adaptation into strategic planning functions and incorporate environmental sustainability principles into land use, infrastructure, and development planning.

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<u>Waste & Recycling</u>

MRC will consistently pursue waste reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery options prior to disposal to landfill. Continuous improvement will be achieved by regular review of Council's waste management plan.

<u>Water Management</u>

MRC will improve water efficiency and endeavour to reduce the impact of wastewater released within its area of operation. MRC will show leadership and raise awareness about water efficiency in the community to help preserve the long-term sustainability of our region's water resources.

7.0   Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related documents are amended or replaced.
2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council

Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than three (3) years.

Version Control:

Version	Reason / Trigger	Change	Endorsed / Reviewed	Date
2	Review of Policy		Endorsed by Directors & CEO	03.07.2018
			Adopted by Council	25.07.2018

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