

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

- Intent** The intent of this policy is to continue to embed sustainability into the operational function of the organisation by:
- Maintaining and restoring the natural environment
 - Using our resources more efficiently
 - Reducing our environmental impact
 - Responding to the challenge of climate change
 - Displaying strong leadership to the community
 - Reducing financial losses associated with inefficient energy and resource consumption

This policy demonstrates Council's commitment to work towards a sustainable future. It encourages staff to understand the role they play in achieving workplace sustainability and encourages them to apply it. It commends the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) as defined below and their consideration in projects, partnerships and operations.

The key areas of focus for the delivery of this policy include:

- Building design and construction
- Capital works projects
- Procurement
- Decision making and reporting
- Urban form and land-use
- Events and community programs

Scope This policy is applicable to all of Council and its employees in all decisions and activities.

PROVISIONS

Cairns Regional Council commits to applying the principles of sustainability to all decision making and activities while providing exemplary leadership to the Cairns regional community.

Council will develop and maintain frameworks that ensure continuous improvement is integrated as a core part of Council's strategic and operational management. This will be achieved via effective management plans, action plans, training, communication, monitoring and reporting.

Council will review its internal policies, Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) performance, processes and practices to further build the organisation's capacity to deliver improved quadruple bottom line performance within its own operations.

Principles

The National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development was adopted by all levels of Australian Government in 1992.

The following principles align with existing commitment and should be considered as part of every Council decision:

- **Integrated decision making** - integrate both long and short-term economic, environmental, social and equity considerations when making decisions.
- **The precautionary principle** - that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environment damage, lack of full scientific certainty should be used for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.

In application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:

- careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment and
 - an assessment of the risk weighted consequences of various options.
- **Inter-generational equity** - the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for future generations.
 - **Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity** - conservation and restoration of the natural environment should be a fundamental consideration **“Think global act local”** – Demonstrate leadership around sustainability by taking local action as part of a global effort.
 - **Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms** - environmental factors should be considered in the valuation of assets and services such as:
 - Polluter pays - those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance and abatement
 - Life cycle costing - the users of goods and services should pay prices based on the full life cycle of providing goods and services including the use of natural resources and assets and the ultimate disposal of any waste
 - Environmental goals - once established, environmental goals should be actively pursued in the most cost effective way by establishing incentive structures, including market mechanisms, that enable those best placed to maximise benefits or minimise costs to develop their own solutions and responses to environmental problems.
 - **Community engagement** - decisions and actions should provide for broad community involvement on issues which affect them. Effective and inclusive community engagement should be encouraged to facilitate the understanding of sustainability and promote collective responsibility.

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This Policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

General Manager Responsible for Review:

Planning & Environment

ADOPTED: 13/11/2013

DUE FOR REVISION: 13/11/2017

REVOKED/SUPERSEDED: