



Environmental Policy

Environmental Protection Act 1994

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Townsville City Council (Council) recognises environmental sustainability as a guiding principle in its Corporate Plan and is committed to either avoiding or minimising and mitigating adverse environmental impacts associated with its operations.

Council will continually improve its environmental performance, seeking opportunities to achieve positive environmental outcomes, reduce impact and waste and encourage a culture of sustainability among its workers and the community.

Council is committed to creating a sustainable future for Townsville through the protection, maintenance and enhancement of our unique, natural and built environment. To achieve this Council will:

1. Plan, design and deliver sustainable development and support this by actively managing the natural environment and increasing green energy and infrastructure, at a city, suburb and place level.
2. Develop and implement long term waste and water security solutions that are socially, financially and environmentally sound.
3. Champion sustainable solutions, environmental systems and innovative technologies, which encourage resilience.

2. PRINCIPLES

Council is committed to:

- demonstrating environmental leadership and encouraging its workers and the community to adopt more sustainable lifestyles;
- effective management and protection of the natural and built environment through the implementation of sustainable growth and development patterns; and,
- carrying out its operations in an environmentally sustainable manner and integrating sustainability into its processes and decision making.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors, Council workers and all Council operations.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

Director of Community, Environment & Lifestyle and Managers within Sustainability and Environmental Services are responsible for ensuring that this policy is understood and adhered to by all.

5. DEFINITIONS

Council Operations – means any action performed by or on behalf of Townsville City Council.

Ecological sustainability is a balance that integrates:

- (a) the protection of ecological processes and natural systems at local, regional, state and wider levels;
- (b) economic development; and
- (c) maintenance of the cultural, economic, physical and social wellbeing of people and communities (*Section 3(2) Planning Act 2016*).

Manager – includes persons appointed to positions including with the title, Team Manager, Lead, General Manager, Principal, Director and Chief.

Workers – includes employees, contractors, volunteers and all others who perform work on behalf of Council.

WSC – means Water Sensitive Cities.

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6. POLICY

6.1. PEOPLE AND LEADERSHIP

FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOURS

Council will encourage its workers and the Townsville community to adopt a culture of environmental responsibility at work and at home and promote sustainable practices such as energy efficiency, water conservation, sustainable transport, waste reduction and recycling.

Council will include environmental awareness training as part of its induction process.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Council will work in partnership with the community and industry stakeholders to promote environmental awareness, protection and sustainability initiatives.

In accordance with Council's commitments towards implementing its Reconciliation Action Plan, Council will seek to involve traditional owners, first nations people and aboriginal and Torres Straight Islands people in decision making affecting our environment and ecological land management.

6.2. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

Council will comply with the environmental legislation, regulations and other permit and licence requirements relevant to its operations and will strive to achieve best practice in environmental management. Council will endeavour to follow the guidance provided by the Environmental Management Standard ANZ/ISO14001 and where appropriate, relevant sections and high-risk operations can obtain certification. When deemed necessary, Council will exercise its regulatory powers to facilitate environmental protection.

PREVENTION OF POLLUTION

Council will strive to implement processes and practices, provide services and products to control the release of pollutants from its works. If incidents do occur, Council will implement pollution response procedures to minimise environmental harm and take action to reduce the likelihood of future occurrences.

CONTINUAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT

Council will continue to review policies, procedures, processes and systems to maintain and improve environmental management practices and will continue to set environmental objectives and targets in its Operational Plan.

Council will use its Integrated Environmental Management System Framework to record its progress and will report in the quarterly performance reports and the annual report.

6.3. PRACTICES AND PROCESSES

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

Council will promote a circular economy through efficient use and recycling of resources by applying the principles of waste reduction: which will avoid, reduce reuse, recycle, recover, treat with disposal being the least preferred options. Council will increase its use of sustainable materials and use of recycled materials in products.

GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION

Council will work to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with its operations through sustainable energy practices and investigate options using data driven processes (e.g. Environmental Data Integrator) to optimise and utilise low emission technologies e.g. white roofs, solar, LED lighting. Council will work to reduce landfill emissions and support methane mitigation strategies in accordance with best practice.

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY, DEMAND MANAGEMENT, BEHAVIOUR CHANGE, RENEWABLES AND SMART TECHNOLOGY

Council will utilise systems thinking and action-based frameworks and projects to manage energy costs and boost energy productivity (whilst reducing carbon emissions) through data-driven approaches, innovative solutions and human-technology integration and whole-of-electricity system optimisation and increased renewable energy and storage mix.

INTEGRATING RISK MANAGEMENT WITH SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING, RESILIENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Council recognises that climate change may exacerbate some risks and/or present new risks. Council includes climate change in its risk management processes and will consider the impacts of climate change through resilience and sustainability principles and practices in its strategic land use, infrastructure, development planning, transportation and coastal management.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND RESILIENCE OF PROJECTS

Council will undertake sustainable tropical design and practices relating to building, infrastructure and maintenance projects to include energy and water efficiency, sustainable materials and use of energy reduction technologies to reduce maintenance and operating costs over the life of the asset and improve sustainability outcomes.

PLANNING, DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT OF WATER, WASTEWATER AND STORMWATER

Council will use Water Sensitive Cities (WSC) strategies and practices to help preserve the long-term sustainability of Townsville's water resources. To achieve this, Council will endeavour to:

1. Strive to improve its urban planning, delivery and management of the Council's water supply and consumption;
2. Reduce the impact of wastewater discharge and run off within its areas of operation in accordance with legislative requirements;
3. Manage and optimise water infrastructure including reducing energy use and using sensing and analytics;
4. Incorporate water sensitive design principles and practices in urban planning; and,
5. Raise awareness and encourage water efficiency and behaviour change in the community.

SUSTAINABLE PLANNING AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

Council will consider the potential impacts of climate change as well as ecological sustainability principles in its strategic land use, infrastructure, and development planning to improve community resilience and facilitate the protection of natural and urban environments, and places of heritage significance.

BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Council will work to manage and protect native flora and fauna and natural environments under Council care through land, vegetation, water and pest management practices. Council will raise awareness and encourage community participation in local biodiversity conservation and seek to support and enable local landcare, coastcare and catchment groups.

PURCHASING GOODS AND SERVICES

When purchasing goods and services, consideration should be given to the effective, efficient use of materials and resources to minimise environmental impact using the guidance of ISO 20400:2017 – Sustainable Procurement.

Council expects high standards of environmental management from its suppliers and contractors. For high value contracts, certification of products and services may be required.

7. LEGAL PARAMETERS

National

Australian National Registry of Emissions Units Act 2011

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Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Act 2011
Clean Energy Act 2011
Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995
Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007
State
Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995
Environmental Protection Act 1994
Fisheries Act 1994
Local Government Act 2009
Local Government Regulation 2012
National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007
Nature Conservation Act 1992
The Biosecurity Act 2015
Planning Act 2016
Vegetation Management Act 1999
Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011
Water Act 2000
Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area Conservation Act 1994
Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 2003

8. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Council Documents

Enterprise Wide Risk Management Policy
Enterprise Wide Energy/Environmental Management System (EEMS)
Infrastructure and Operations Environmental Management System
Investment Policy
Integrated Environmental Management System Framework (TCC)
Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)
Townsville City Council Energy and Resource Management Framework (ERMF)
Townsville City Council Energy and Carbon Management Framework (TECMF)
Townsville City Council Corporate Plan
Townsville Natural Environment Recovery Framework
Townsville City Council Operational Plan
Townsville City Council Procurement Policy
Townsville City Council Water Demand Management Strategy 2015-2025
Townsville Local Disaster Management Plan
Townsville Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan 2020-2024
Townsville Smart Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy Framework

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Townsville Solar City Renewable Energy Framework
 Townsville Water and Waste Integrated Management System
 Vision and Transition Strategy for a Water Sensitive Townsville
 Townsville City Council Reef Guardian Council Action Plan 30 June 2022 – 30 June 2024
 Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan

External Documents

Advanced Ecotourism Certification for Environmental Education Eco-Catchment Tours
 Australia’s Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2030
 ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management Systems
 ISO20400:2017 Sustainable Procurement
 NQ Regional Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan
 Plastic Free Places Initiative
 Queensland Local Disaster Management Guidelines
 Queensland Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy
 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 – Pathway to a climate resilient Qld
 Queensland Ecotourism Plan
 State Planning Policies - (relevant to council operations)
 Sustainable Packaging Guidelines 2019
 Wet Tropics Management Plan

9. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date	Version	Amendment	Reviewer	Approved
22/11/23	5	Administrative content & clarity on responsible officers.	Chief Sustainability Officer	Full Council

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