

Warringah Council Policy

Policy No. STR-PL 830

Environmental Sustainability Policy

1 Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 To provide clear direction for Council to incorporate environmental sustainability into all elements of its business. Incorporating sustainability means considering environmental, economic and social impacts concurrently.
- 1.2 To work towards fulfilling the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* in terms of considering ecologically sustainable development.
- 1.3 To protect and enhance the natural environment.
- 1.4 To raise awareness of environmental sustainability and increase community participation.
- 1.5 To support strategic directions identified in Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

2 Policy Statement

Council is committed to working towards environmental sustainability.

Council is committed to establishing, promoting and maintaining a culture of sustainability and environmental responsibility by the Council, staff and the community. The Council and staff will work together with the community to consider and minimise the impact of our activities on the environment and work towards environmental best practice.

Council commits to undertake its business in an environmentally sustainable manner. Council strives to exceed the requirements of environmental laws and regulations. This commitment to environmental sustainability will be specifically supported in all of Council's plans, strategies and services. This Policy was developed in line with AS/NZS ISO 14004:2004.

3 Principles

- 3.1 Councillors and Council staff will consider the principles of ecologically sustainable development when carrying out their duties, as required under Section 7(e) of the *Local Government Act 1993*. The principles to be considered are:
 - a. The precautionary principle;
 - b. Inter-generational equity;
 - c. Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity; and
 - d. Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms.
- 3.2 Council will lead the community by example by implementing environmental sustainability.
- 3.3 Council will progressively and continually improve its environmental performance and outcomes.
- 3.4 Council will set targets and objectives to achieve environmental sustainability. This will be done in Council's key corporate plans including the Strategic Plan, Management Plan, and any operational plans or strategies as is relevant.

- 3.5 Council will report on the State of the Environment and its environmental programs, as set out in the *Local Government Act*. This reporting will include regular monitoring, assessment and reporting of social, environmental and economic indicators.
- 3.6 Policy and management decisions of the Council will be undertaken with regard to environmental, as well as social and economic considerations and impacts.
- 3.7 The cost and impact of environmental externalities will be considered in decision-making.
- 3.8 All Council purchases must consider environmental criteria. All Council contracts and tenders must include environmental criteria. All contractors and suppliers must be made aware of Council's environmental commitments.
- 3.9 Achieving environmental sustainability is one of Council staff's core behaviours and is included in the staff induction sessions and appropriate training sessions.
- 3.10 All new Council buildings and facilities will be developed in line with sustainability principles and incorporate good environmental performance. This includes consideration of energy, materials, waste and water at the design stage.
- 3.11 Council will work with, assist and, where necessary, require its community to:
 - a. Prevent pollution of the environment;
 - b. Conserve and use energy, water and natural resources wisely and responsibly;
 - c. Comply with the requirements of environmental laws and regulations and Council's plans and policies, as a minimum;
 - d. Strive for best practice environmental management; and
 - e. Support environmental programs implemented by the Council.

4 Risk Assessment

When applying this policy, Council will consider the Risk Enterprise Risk Management Framework Policy PL 700.

5 Authorisation

This Policy was adopted by Council on 13 February 2007

It is due for review on May 2017

6 Amendments

This Policy was last reviewed on 28 May 2013

7 Who is responsible for implementing this Policy?

All Council staff are required to consider environment, economic and social outcomes and impacts in their work.

Strategy and Policy are responsible for:

- a. Reviewing and updating the policy;
- b. Promoting the policy among staff to ensure it is implemented throughout Council; and
- c. Ensuring that new staff are informed of the policy during induction.

8 Document owner

Deputy General Manager, Environment



9 Legislation and references

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991

Local Government Act 1993

Warringah Council, *Enterprise Risk Management Framework Policy – PL 700* (2012)

Warringah Council, *Environmentally Sustainable Design and Management of Council's Built Assets - CS OMS 030* (2007)

Warringah Council, *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* (2012)

AS/NZS ISO 14004:2004 *Environmental Management Systems – General Guidelines on Principles, Systems and Support Techniques*

10 Definitions

Ecologically sustainable development as defined in the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*:

“ecologically sustainable development requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. Ecologically sustainable development can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

- a) *the precautionary principle—namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
In the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:
 - i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and
 - ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options,*
- b) *inter-generational equity—namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations,*
- c) *conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity—namely, that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration,*
- d) *improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms—namely, that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, such as:
 - i) polluter pays—that is, those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance or abatement,
 - ii) the users of goods and services should pay prices based on the full life cycle of costs of providing goods and services, including the use of natural resources and assets and the ultimate disposal of any waste,
 - iii) environmental goals, having been established, should be 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.”*

