

# Operations Sustainability Policy

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<b>Strategic Pillar</b>	Natural & Built Character
<b>Responsible Branch</b>	Natural Landscapes & Health

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## 1 OUTCOMES

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to provide a clear statement of Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council's (QPRC) commitment to reducing the environmental impact of our operations.

## 2 POLICY

- 2.1 Council acknowledges it has a responsibility and key role to play in promoting and implementing sustainable development (operations and practices).

Council will strengthen, adjust and build internal management frameworks that ensure that the quadruple bottom line is integrated as a core part of Council's strategic and operational management. This will be achieved via effective integrated management plans, specific action plans, standard operating procedures, training, communication, monitoring and reporting. To this end, this policy includes sustainability performance related targets. Council will strive to meet these targets and report on performance annually within the State of the Environment Report (SOER).

## 3 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 This policy applies to Council operations only.

## 4 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 *ESD* – Ecologically Sustainable Development - development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability, sustainable development and ESD are used interchangeably.

Sustainable development refers to all our operations and practices and is much broader than the term 'development' used to describe the use of land and work on buildings. Principles underpinning ESD are:

- Precautionary principle
- Inter-generational equity
- Biodiversity and ecological function, and
- An economic framework / valuation which includes environmental factors.

Quadruple bottom line - is a concept which seeks to broaden the focus on the financial bottom line by organisations to include social, environmental and governance responsibilities. It is a measure of a company's degree of social responsibility, its economic and governance values and its environmental impact.



## 5 LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS AND/OR RELEVANT STANDARDS

Some of the legislation relevant to this policy includes:

### 5.1 Local Government Act 1993 No 30

The following principles apply to decision-making by Councils (subject to any other applicable law).

- Section 8(2c) “Councils should consider the long term and cumulative effects of actions on future generation”.
- Section 8(2d) “Councils should consider the principles of ecological sustainable development”.

### 5.2 Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016

Section 1.3 “The purpose of this Act is to maintain a healthy, productive and resilient environment for the greatest well-being of the community, now and into the future, consistent with the principles of ecological sustainable development”.

### 5.3 Biosecurity Act 2015

Section 22 imposes a duty to prevent, eliminate or minimise a biosecurity risk, including the control of pest plants and animals on council land and avoiding the spread of weed material.

### 5.4 Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

The objects of this Act, which are reflected in Council’s environmental planning instruments that council development activities often must comply with, include:

- Section 1.3(b) “to facilitate ecologically sustainable development in decision-making about environmental planning and assessment”;
- Section 1.3(e) “to protect the environment, including the conservation of threatened and other species of native animals and plants, ecological communities and their habitats”; and
- Section 1.3(f) “to promote the sustainable management of built and cultural heritage (including Aboriginal cultural heritage)”.

### 5.5 Pesticides Act 1999

Part 2 specifies controls on the use of pesticides in accordance with labels and to prevent harm to non-target plants or animals, and material harm to endangered, vulnerable or protected animals.

### 5.6 Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997

Administered by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The objects of the Act include to protect, restore and enhance the quality of the environment having regard to ecologically sustainable development. The EPA regulate all scheduled activities with licence requirements such as landfills and wastewater treatment plants. They are also the Appropriate Regulatory Authority (ARA) for all Council activities to ensure environmentally compliance.

### 5.7 QPRC Procurement Policy

Council acknowledges that it has a vital role to play at the local level in promoting sustainable development and can make a contribution towards meeting the global challenges of creating a sustainable society.

### 5.8 Water Management Act 2000

The objects of the Act are to provide for the sustainable and integrated management of water sources, such as the use of water at council's facilities and for irrigating urban landscapes and roadworks.

### 5.9 Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001

Council is expected to contribute to meeting the targets in the NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy.

## 6 CONTENT

6.1 Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council will work to lead the region in sustainable practices. In relation to environmental impact and in relevance to this policy, this will include (but not be limited to): water use, energy use, waste management, fleet management, natural resource management, and parks management.

Council's commitment to applying the principles of sustainability to all decision making, functions and activities is underpinned by the principles adopted by all levels of government in Australia in the 1992 ESD National Strategy. These are:

- decision making processes should effectively integrate both long and short-term economic, environmental, social and equity considerations
- where 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
- the global dimension of environmental impacts of actions and policies should be recognised and considered
- the need to develop a strong, growing and diversified economy which can enhance the capacity for environmental protection should be recognised
- the need to maintain and enhance international competitiveness in an environmentally sound manner should be recognised
- cost effective and flexible policy instruments should be adopted, such as improved valuation, pricing, and incentive mechanisms

- decisions and actions should provide for broad community involvement on issues which affect them
- the quadruple bottom line impacts of any new process or procedure shall be investigated so as to prevent any harm

## **7 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed every four years or earlier as necessary if:
- a) legislation requires it, or
  - b) Council's functions, structure or activities change.