

Corporate Environment Policy

Policy 282

Background

This Policy will assist councillors, managers and staff to make environmental sustainability a driving value for the organisation by providing a framework for delivering on Council's commitment to environmental sustainability. This Policy has been developed following a review of the previous Environmental Policy adopted in February 2007.

Objective

This Policy has been developed to assist councillors, managers and staff in understanding their personal responsibilities in achieving Council's environmental objectives. It supports Council's Corporate Strategy by building upon the existing business principles:

- the Guiding Principle of a Sustainability and Community Focus: We care about social, economic and environmental sustainability for our city and focus on delivering good outcomes for our communities.
- the Strategic Priority for Business Processes: [We will] demonstrate leadership in sustainability (triple bottom line).

The Policy provides a framework for developing environmental objectives, targets, action plans and procedures, and for developing performance measures for our environmental achievements through Council's Balanced Scorecard.

The Policy will also be integrated into Council's annual Management Plan, which includes a vision for sustainability underpinning everything we do.

Scope

This policy applies to all aspects of Council's activities undertaken by councillors, managers, staff and contractors at Parramatta City Council (PCC).

Relationship to legislation

Council has a responsibility under the *Local Government Act* to "properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development." This policy will assist Council to meet that responsibility.

Related Strategies, Plans and Policies

Our process for realising the commitments in this Policy is set out in our Environmental Action Plan which contains objectives, targets and actions.

The Environmental Action Plan provides the framework for Council's other corporate sustainability policies and plans, including:

- Green Building Policy (pending)
- Sustainable Purchasing Policy (pending)
- Travel Policy and Plan (pending)

The following plans are linked to both the Environmental Action Plan and Council's city-wide strategy document, Parramatta Twenty25:

- Biodiversity Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Contaminated Land Policy
- Parramatta River Estuary Plan
- Parramatta River Foreshore Plan
- Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Plan
- Waterways Plan (and associated Waterways Rehabilitation Masterplans, Stormwater Management Plans and Floodplain Risk Management Plans)

Policy

Parramatta City Council recognises that its operations have both a direct and indirect impact on the local and global environments.

We aspire to deliver continual improvement in our environmental performance by incorporating environmental considerations into all aspects of Council's business activities.

To deliver on our environmental commitment, our policy is to focus on:

- **Intergenerational equity** – We recognise the rights of future generations as equal to our own and will therefore act responsibly to leave a healthy and diverse natural environment for all generations to enjoy.
- **Preventing harm** – We will act within our abilities to prevent harm to the public and environment and, where knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
- **Innovation and leadership** – We will explore creative solutions for sustainable outcomes that inspire change in the world.
- **Legislative compliance** - We will endeavour to exceed minimum environmental expectations and comply with all environmental legislation.
- **Efficient use of resources** – We will strive for sustainability and minimise our contribution to climate change by using water, energy and other resources as efficiently as possible, including through minimising waste generation and disposal to landfill.
- **Total lifecycle assessment** - We will engage with suppliers, service providers and stakeholders to reduce the total lifecycle impact of our operations and assets.
- **Conservation of biodiversity** – We will work to maintain and, where possible, enhance the range of native plants, animals and their habitats to protect the health of our natural environment.
- **Green building** – We will seek to ensure that the spaces we occupy are designed, constructed, operated and maintained sustainably for the benefit of the environment, people's health, our heritage, local visual amenity and commercial viability.
- **Urban design excellence** – We will build healthy and vibrant communities using sustainable design principles and materials.
- **Pollution prevention** – We will act to prevent pollution at its source and continually improve Council's response to any pollution incidents we cause to minimise their impacts and occurrence.

To support our commitment to our environmental policy, we will:

- **Inform stakeholders** – We will communicate this policy to all employees, councillors, contractors, suppliers, community and other stakeholders.
- **Empower staff** – We will provide our employees with the awareness, skills, leadership and support to meet our environmental commitments and make informed decisions to reduce their corporate and personal lifestyle impacts.

- **Evaluate our progress** – We will regularly monitor, review and report publicly on the environmental performance of the organisation.

Responsibilities

The responsibility for implementing this Policy lies with all Parramatta City Council councillors, managers, staff, contractors and suppliers working for or on behalf of Council.

Employee Responsibilities

All employees have a responsibility to assist Council in working toward environmental sustainability and must take all reasonable steps to ensure the best outcome for the environment in undertaking their duties. Employees are expected to:

- As a minimum, comply with all legal environmental requirements.
- Attend basic environmental training and any job-specific environmental training as required by a supervisor.
- Use water and energy wisely.
- Take personal responsibility for minimising waste generation and for correctly separating waste at collection points.
- Ensure all electronic devices not needed outside office hours, including computers, are shut down at the end of the working day.
- Report all pollution incidents to the immediate supervisor in a timely manner.
- Take into consideration any relevant natural, indigenous and other cultural heritage items in carrying out the duties of employment.
- If environmental damage occurs, make every effort to reduce its impact immediately and provide assistance as needed to those seeking to repair the damage.
- Seek to use environmentally responsible products where choice is available.
- Take a proactive approach to improving Council's practices to reduce the environmental impact of our services.
- Promote and assist all stakeholders to understand and implement this Policy.

Manager and Team Leader Responsibilities

In addition to the general employee responsibilities, managers and team leaders are expected to:

- Lead by example in adopting and implementing environmental principles.
- Ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to enable them to fulfil their environmental responsibilities.
- Proactively identify environmental hazards and eliminate or manage the risks to as low as reasonably practicable.
- Work with staff and managers to implement pollution prevention strategies.
- Report all pollution incidents to Council's Regulatory Services in a timely manner.
- Work to reduce and, where possible, eliminate the use of products and services that cause environmental damage or risk.
- Work to correct unsafe practices.
- Strive to ensure positive environmental outcomes from every project undertaken by Council and document these in project proposals.
- Incorporate environmental considerations into staff performance reviews and recognise staff who have demonstrated commitment to environmental excellence.

Executive Responsibilities

In addition to the responsibilities listed above for all employees, executive staff have a responsibility to demonstrate leadership in environmental sustainability in the following manner:

- Regularly review environmental objectives and targets.
- Formally monitor, audit, review and report annually on our environmental performance against agreed objectives and targets.
- Ensure PCC has the resources and skills necessary to deliver on agreed environmental commitments.
- Provide sufficient resources to ensure employees are educated about the environmental impacts associated with their duties as well as the consequences of improper performance.

Councillor Responsibilities

Council has a legal obligation to operate in a manner consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Councillors must therefore:

- Consider environmental objectives and targets for adoption.
- Undertake duties consistent with environmental legislation, this Policy and adopted objectives and targets.
- Consider the environmental implications of all decisions.

Contractor and Supplier Responsibilities

Council depends on suppliers and service providers to help us to meet our environmental obligations and commitments. We therefore have the following expectations of our contractors:

- Comply with all relevant environmental legislation.
- Understand the environmental impacts of the service or product and the choices available for minimising those impacts.
- Be proactive in helping us to improve our environmental performance in line with this Policy.
- Comply with any specific instructions provided for the relevant contract.
- Report all pollution incidents to Council's Contract Manager in a timely manner.
- Use competent and trained staff.
- Ensure appropriate environmental risk management measures are in place at all times.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Adopted by Council 23 November 2009 Minute Number 11133.