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# Green Roofs and Walls Policy

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## Purpose

Green roofs and walls provide numerous social, environmental and cultural benefits and contribute to making the City of Sydney a more climate change resilient, liveable and beautiful city.

The objective of this policy is to support an increase in the installation of green roofs and walls in the City of Sydney local government area. Increasing green roof and wall numbers will provide multiple benefits including:

- slowing and cleaning stormwater;
- reducing the impacts of the Urban Heat Island effect;
- creating additional space for urban greening, food production and private open space;
- improving air quality;
- improving amenity and liveability of the city;
- increasing the absorption of carbon dioxide;
- increasing habitat to support biodiversity;
- improving building efficiency through heating, cooling and sound insulation;
- improving the efficiency of solar panels; and
- extending roof life.

## Scope

This Policy provides direction for Council in order to promote and foster better understanding and use of green roofs and walls across the residential and commercial sectors in Sydney. The Policy is also intended to support the green roofs and walls industry sector in Sydney.

This policy supports the strategic directions set out in:

- Sustainable Sydney 2030;
- Green Roofs and Walls Strategy;
- Greening Sydney Plan;
- Decentralised Water Master Plan;
- Urban Forest Strategy; and
- Urban Ecology Strategy.

## Definitions

The green roofs and green walls definitions set out below were adopted by Council as part of the Green Roofs and Walls Strategy 2012.

Term	Meaning
Green Roof	A green roof is vegetation covering at least 30% of available rooftop space - that is, space which is not occupied by structures housing plant, equipment or stairway accesses. A green roof should provide measurable environmental benefits to the City of Sydney. The green roof includes a vegetated layer, growing medium, and a waterproof membrane. Plants grown in sectioned lots are acceptable, however, potted plants/planter boxes which cover less than 30% of available rooftop space are not considered as a green roof. Additional to the minimum 30% vegetation cover, a green roof can include facilities for renewable energy, water collection infrastructure, walkways, furnishings and the like.
Green Wall	Green walls are either free-standing or part of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation. The wall may incorporate soil and/or inorganic material as the growing medium. There are two main types of green wall: green façades and living walls. Green façades are made up of climbing plants either growing directly on a wall or on specially designed supporting structures. The plant's shoot system grows up the side of the building while being rooted in the ground. With a living wall, modular panels are affixed to the wall and geo-textiles, irrigation and a growing medium combine to support a dense network of plants.

### Policy statement

The City of Sydney encourages the installation of quality green roofs and walls through a range of activities. The City of Sydney will:

- Play an active leadership role to raise awareness of the many benefits of green roofs and walls in the City of Sydney and nationally;
- Address key barriers to the uptake of green roofs and walls, including developing resources that will fill gaps in technical and general information;
- Support sustainably designed green roofs and walls through research, education and the development of guidelines and standards;
- Continue to engage and collaborate with stakeholders including the Green Roofs and Walls Technical Advisory Panel, service providers, industry representatives and the broader community;
- Promote the benefits of green roofs and walls through the provision of training, community and business presentations and educational opportunities;
- Develop and support research partnerships which contribute to local knowledge about green roofs and walls;
- Develop evidence and approaches which encourage and support the recognition of green roofs and walls in existing systems including the development application process, local planning controls, Environmental Upgrade Agreements and sustainability rating tools for buildings;
- Take an active leadership role by implementing and promoting green roof and wall infrastructure on Council owned buildings, including investigating the potential for a green roof and wall demonstration site; and
- Monitor the number and quality of green roof and green wall installations in the City of Sydney to measure the potential impact of this Policy.

## Policy Implementation Plan

In order to meet the policy objectives, a Policy Implementation Plan has been developed which provides specific activities and time frames for the implementation of the Policy objectives.

## Responsibilities

Key responsibility for this policy lies with the Strategic Planning and Urban Design unit at the City of Sydney.

## Consultation

This Policy has been developed in consultation with Council's Green Roofs and Walls Technical Advisory Panel, comprising representatives from academia, state government, peak industry group, architects and designers. This policy is also consistent with the findings and recommendations from the Green Roofs and Green Walls Perception Study 2012.

The Draft Green Roofs and Walls Policy was placed on public exhibition from November 2013 to January 2014 and feedback integrated into this final policy.

## Approval status

Council approved this policy on 7 April 2014.

## Approval history

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy	7 April 2014	Approved by Council	2014/151481
Review	26 April 2017	Fit for purpose. No change. Endorsed by the Executive	2017/233485
Next review	30 December 2021		

## Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	Senior Project Officer, Green Roofs and Walls
Owner	Executive Manager Strategic Planning and Urban Design
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	City of Sydney Council