

# Environmental Sustainability Policy

## Purpose

The City of Sydney declared a climate emergency in June 2019, stating that climate change is a risk to the people of Sydney. The declaration followed a decade where we demonstrated environmental leadership through strong and effective action in response to climate change.

We respond to the climate emergency by taking bold steps to reduce our environmental footprint and promote an ethical and equitable transition to a zero-carbon and regenerative economy. We plan for the sustainable growth of our city. We promote the move to clean energy and transport and reduce resource consumption in an equitable and inclusive way with no-one being left behind or bearing an unfair burden because of long-term structural change to jobs and industries. This policy supports the implementation of the forthcoming Environmental Strategy 2021-2025.

## Scope

The policy applies to City employees, contractors, service providers, suppliers, leasers, customers, grant recipients and volunteers working with us or on our land.

This policy is to be implemented across all council functions, activities and decision making.

## Definitions

Term	Meaning
Circular economy	Economic activity that is decoupled from the consumption of finite resources. A circular economy aims to keep resources in the economic system for as long as possible and phase waste out of the system. Circular economy initiatives can protect natural resources, clean the air that citizens breathe and the water they drink, whilst also making cities more efficient, prosperous and competitive.
City employees	Any person engaged in work for the City of Sydney in any of the following capacities: full-time, part-time, casual, temporary and fixed term employees, agency staff, volunteers, students on placement, and for the purposes of this policy, Councillors
Net zero	Carbon emissions are balanced by an equivalent amount of carbon offsets from projects that reduce emissions or draw down emissions from the atmosphere through sequestration. The priority is to reduce emissions first through efficiency, use of renewable energy and avoiding pollution. Any residual emissions should be offset through projects with multiple co-benefits like bush and land regeneration.
Regenerative economy	Designed so development increases the size, health and resilience of natural systems, while improving human health and life quality.

Term	Meaning
Sustainability	Meeting the social, environmental and economic needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, through robust governance.
Sustainability impacts	Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• climate change impacts</li> <li>• depletion of natural resources</li> <li>• land health</li> <li>• biodiversity</li> <li>• water quality</li> <li>• air quality</li> <li>• social inclusion</li> <li>• diversity and equality</li> <li>• economic or social benefits for our communities</li> </ul>

## Policy statement

We respond to the climate emergency within our own operations by:

- ensuring City actions are inclusive, ethical and equitable in the transition to a zero-carbon and regenerative economy
- working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and investing in knowledge and practices that restore natural equilibrium by caring for Country
- integrating climate emergency assessment into our decision making to build resilience into our functions, activities and asset management
- minimising environmental lifecycle impacts through procurement including prioritising low or zero carbon products, services and assets
- ongoing commitment to remain a carbon neutral organisation certified by the Climate Active program
- ensuring everyone who works for or with the City has a strong awareness of this policy and are empowered to act on these commitments.

We embed climate emergency principles into our engagement with our community and our stewardship of our local area by:

- committing to a water sensitive city by increasing the use of recycled water, managing potable water use, improving the quality of waterways and reducing local flood risk
- championing a circular economy to eliminate waste, minimise raw material use and treat waste as a valuable resource to regenerate natural systems
- reducing emissions by changing the way people travel, with less private vehicle travel and more use of walking, bicycle riding, public transport and ride share. We also promote and facilitate zero emissions transport
- increasing canopy cover on public and private land to enhance greening and urban cooling
- improving the city’s urban ecological value by preserving and reinstating Indigenous plants and promoting biodiversity

- respecting and caring for the natural environment, taking a no harm approach that ensures compliance with legislative requirements, demonstrates best practice and continual improvement of environmental performance
- communicating the latest reliable climate science and projections, being transparent about our environmental performance and sharing our successes to demonstrate environmental leadership
- partner with our communities, businesses, state and federal government agencies to take positive climate action.

## Responsibilities

### All employees will:

- comply with the policy

### Managers or supervisor/team leaders will:

- be responsible for implementing this policy within their units
- ensure that employees have a strong awareness of and comply with this policy.
- ensure that appropriate activities and responsibilities are set out in the relevant position descriptions, to deliver on the policy and relevant strategies and action plans.

### The Sustainability Director will:

- maintain this policy
- provide appropriate and regular training to staff to empower and support them to apply the policy
- ensure business unit managers are aware of their responsibilities

## Consultation

The units consulted were:

- City Projects and Properties
- City Services
- City Life
- City Planning, Development and Transport
- People, Performance and Technology
- Finance
- Legal and Governance.

## References

### Laws and Standards

- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
- Commonwealth Procurement Rules 2012
- NSW Procurement Policy Framework (2015)
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)
- Coastal Management Act 2016 (CM Act)

**Laws and Standards**

- Contaminated Land Management Act 1997
- Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)
- Product Stewardship Act 2011
- Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020
- Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 No 58
- Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2014
- NSW Electricity Supply Act 1995
- NSW Electricity Supply (General) Regulation 2014
- NSW Energy Savings Scheme Rule 2009
- NSW Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020
- NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (Building Sustainability Index: BASIX) 2004
- NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (Design and Place)
- NSW Draft Clean Air Strategy 2021
- ISO14001 Environmental Management System

**Policies and Procedures**

- Environmental Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025
- Climate Emergency Response
- Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan 2020-2023
- Sustainable Event Guidelines
- Sustainable Procurement Policy
- Sustainable Procurement Guidelines
- Sustainable Design Technical Guidelines

**Review period**

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years.

**Approval Status**

The Council approved this policy on 26 July 2021.

**Approval History**

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM
Original Policy	26 July 2021	Policy developed to support the implementation of the Environmental Strategy 2021-2025.	2021/342465
Commence Review Date	26 October 2024		

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM
Approval Due Date	26 July 2025		

**Ownership and approval**

Responsibility	Role
Author	Manager Environmental Projects
Owner	Sustainability Director
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	City of Sydney Council