

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Number:	4.1.10
Approved by:	Council
Date Approved:	December 2025
Date of Next Review:	December 2026
Applicable to:	Councillors, council employees and temporary staff, volunteers, contractors and consultants engaged by Council
Responsible Officer:	Manager Natural Environment and Parks
Related Policies:	Asset Management Policy Community Assistance Grants Program Policy Council Provision of Recreation/Community Facilities Policy Open Space Policy Rates rebate on Land for Conservation Purposes Policy Risk Management Policy Significant Tree Protection Policy Investment Policy Procurement Policy Waste Collection Policy
Related Documents:	Sustainability Strategy Fleet Guidelines Greening Wellington Municipal Health & Wellbeing Plan Public Open Space Provisions Significant Tree Register Environmental Sustainability Checklist Urban Biodiversity Plan Wellington Planning Scheme
Statutory Reference:	<i>Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994</i> <i>Climate Change Act 2017</i> <i>Environment Protection Amendment Act 2018</i> <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> <i>Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988</i> <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> <i>State Environment Protection Policy</i> <i>Water Act 1989</i>

OVERVIEW

Sustainability is defined as meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability requires balancing environmental, economic and social needs and must consider climate change mitigation and adaptation as a key feature, due to its broad implications across council business and service delivery.

Australia is committed to the 2030 Agenda including the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a universal, global undertaking to protect human wellbeing. Local government plays a key role in delivering outcomes for the goals, and in particular SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities and SDG 13 – Climate Action.

The *Local Government Act 2020* mandates a requirement for Council decisions to consider sound financial management, promote the social, economic and environmental viability and sustainability of its region, and improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community. Accordingly, the scope of this policy pertains to all persons conducting or undertaking business on behalf of Council and effectively must be considered by other policy owners across Council.

The *Climate Change Act 2017* also outlines local government responsibility in having regard for climate change for specific decisions and actions and in the preparation of a Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan. These legislative instruments are a key driver of climate change related duty of care and risk management obligations of decision makers within council.

THE POLICY

The objective of this Policy is to provide the framework for expressing and delivering Council's commitment to the integration of sustainability and climate change principles and practices in its service delivery, operations and community support and advocacy, in line with legislative directions, Community Vision 2041 and the Council Plan 2025-2029.

Guiding Principles

The policy sets the guiding principles which will inform any sustainability strategy or governance framework. The principles are:

- promote integration;
- be inclusive, get involved and participate;
- be Innovative and show leadership;
- adopt Precautionary behaviour;
- embed intergenerational equity;
- informed decision-making;
- limit our impact on natural systems.

Application of the policy

Council will:

- prepare a consecutive four-yearly environmental sustainability strategy and action plan that incorporates internal operational and community objectives in line with the guiding principles and the relevant United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and must include:
 - short and long-term greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in line with science-based evidence or legislation; and
 - a climate-change mitigation and adaptation response or plan.
- provide publicly available annual sustainability reports including bi-annual carbon account data; and
- ensure all Council policies, strategies and decision-making processes meet the intent of this policy on environmental sustainability and climate change.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Wellington Shire Council is committed to upholding environmental and climate change principles as outlined in the *Local Government Act 2020*, *Climate Change Act 2017* and referred to in the Council's Sustainability Strategy 2020-2024. The Environmental Sustainability Checklist has been completed and this policy accords with Council's policy commitment to uphold sustainability principles.

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2022	No changes applicable at this review.
1.1	December 2023	Date of Next Review updated to December 2024. Minor formatting changes.
1.2	December 2024	Date of Next Review updated to December 2025.
1.3	December 2025	Date of Next Review updated to December 2026. Updates made to reflect current statutory reference, strategy and plan titles eg. Community Vision 2041, Council Plan 2025-29, Council's Sustainability Strategy 2020-2024. Minor word changes.