

Cessnock City Council Climate Change Policy

Date Adopted xx/xx/2020 Revision: 1

1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 1.1. This Policy sets out Council's position on climate change, the objectives of this Policy are to:
- 1.1.1. enable Council to align its operational and strategic planning with NSW State policy;
 - 1.1.2. provide a whole of Council commitment to managing climate change risks within the Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA);
 - 1.1.3. support community initiatives to deal with climate change;
 - 1.1.4. empower Council as a leader for action on climate change;
 - 1.1.5. ensure that the risks to the environment and community associated with climate change are understood and managed by Council;
 - 1.1.6. inform core functions and operations of Council – climate change must be considered in strategic decision making, planning processes and day to day operations;
 - 1.1.7. provide direction on climate change for Council and the Cessnock community; and
 - 1.1.8. commit Council to the Policy Commitments outlined in clause 5.

2. POLICY SCOPE

- 2.1. This policy applies to all Council functions and operations, and Council Officials.
- 3.1. The NSW and Australian Governments have made commitments regarding Greenhouse Gas Emission reduction targets. In 2015, 195 countries signed on to the United Nations Paris Agreement (Paris Agreement) on climate change. The main objective of this agreement was to reaffirm the goal of limiting global temperature increase to well below 2 degrees, while actively pursuing efforts to limit the rise to 1.5 degrees. By limiting the rise to 1.5 degrees, the global community could avoid some of the most damaging impacts of climate change. The Paris Agreement aims to achieve net zero emissions globally by the second half of the century.
- 3.2. The Australian Government ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016. The current targets for Australia are to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 26 – 28% below the 2005 levels by 2030.
- 3.3. The NSW Government endorsed the Paris Agreement in 2016. The NSW Government, through the *Climate Change Policy Framework*, has set NSW the target

of achieving zero net emissions by 2050. This target was reiterated in the *Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036* (Metro Plan).

- 3.4.** All NSW councils are required to prepare local plans that are consistent with NSW State policies. This Policy demonstrates that Council is meeting its State legislative obligations in regards to climate change, by adopting the NSW Government's target of achieving zero net emissions by 2050.

- 4.1.** Council shall integrate the following principles into its business as usual operations and decision making processes:

- 4.1.1. Principle 1:** Council endorse the principles of *Ecologically Sustainable Development* (ESD) by integrating social, economic and environmental considerations in decision making through the implementation of the four ESD principles:

- a) The precautionary principle - If 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;
- b) The principle of inter-generational equity –the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations;
- c) The conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision making; and
- d) Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.

- 4.1.2. Principle 2:** Council adopts a *Collaborative Decision Making* approach, partnering with the community, business and other stakeholders in planning and implementing climate change actions through learning and shared responsibility.

- 4.1.3. Principle 3:** Council implement a program of *Continuous Improvement* in relation to improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- 4.1.4. Principle 4:** Council implement *Evidence Based* decision making to respond, to adapt and build resilience to climate change. Recognising the need for continually evolving response to the threat of climate change based on the best available scientific knowledge.

- 4.1.5. Principle 5:** Council implement a *Flexible and Proactive* approach to managing the complex challenges posed by climate change.

- 5.1.** Council supports the people of the Cessnock LGA and the sustainable, fair and equitable transition to a net zero emissions region. Following the adoption of this policy, Council's decision making shall be guided by the following policy commitments:

- 5.1.1. Governance**

- 5.1.1.1** Adopt a Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction target of net zero emissions by 2050, in line with the NSW Government's target.

5.1.1.2 Develop a Climate Change Strategy by June 2021, which addresses climate change mitigation and adaptation and identifies actions for building climate resilience.

5.1.1.3 Recognise the importance of shared responsibility across all levels of government, Council, community and businesses in addressing climate change and transitioning towards a net zero emissions region.

5.1.1.4 Identify and develop systems and relevant planning mechanisms to consider Council's corporate climate change risks, ongoing disaster response and recovery activities. Integrate climate change planning within Council's Integrated Management System.

5.1.2 **Collaboration**

5.1.2.1 Engage with the community and other stakeholders in the development of the Climate Change Strategy.

5.1.2.2 Establish partnerships between Council and the community with the goal of identifying investment opportunities for economic stability and sustainable growth.

5.1.2.3 Support initiatives and education programs to enhance the community's understanding and resilience to climate change risks.

5.1.2.4 Council will provide support and advice to those in the community who want to build resilience to climate change (i.e. people wanting to build resilience on their own property).

5.1.3 **Managing Risks & Building Resilience** Consider climate risks in Council's strategic planning process - including land use planning, the development of planning controls and the development of guidelines to facilitate local investments.

5.1.3.2 Capture climate change planning within Council's IP&R framework.

5.1.3.3 Establish a holistic and systematic approach to monitor and understand climate change risks and their impact on ecological, social, economic and physical built forms.

5.1.3.4 Actively pursue funding opportunities for projects within the Cessnock LGA that build resilience to climate change.

5.1.3.5 Identify and pursue climate resilience opportunities through advancing technology, innovation and continuous improvement in the planning and management of existing built and natural assets, infrastructure projects and renewable resources.

5.1.4 **Energy Efficiency & Emissions Reductions**

5.1.4.1 Develop a Cessnock Greenhouse Gas Emissions inventory using regional data and establish baselines for an incremental pathway to meet the net zero emissions target by 2050. Undertake regular monitoring so that Council can know if the strategies being employed to reduce emissions are succeeding.

5.1.4.2 Undertake an annual corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions inventory including Scope 1 (direct) and Scope 2 (indirect) emissions utilising the *National Greenhouses and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (Cth)*.

- 5.1.4.3 Prepare a Renewable Energy Strategy to encourage government and private sector investment in renewable energy projects (in suitable locations) and encourage the renewal of Council's energy using asset.
- 5.1.4.4 Commit to continually improving energy efficiency, reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and improving climate change resilience at all Council sites/assets. When replacing assets, more efficient and low greenhouse gas emitting assets shall be selected.
- 5.1.4.5 Review and update Council's Carbon Management & Energy Reduction Strategy and continue to implement.
- 5.1.4.6 Review Council's procurement processes in an effort to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the production, use and disposal of goods.

6.1 All Council Officials

- 6.1.1 All Council Officials are responsible for:
 - a) familiarising themselves with this policy;
 - b) considering climate change in the IP&R framework, decision making, and day to day operations; and
 - c) Integrating the five principles and policy commitments into day to day operations and decision making processes.

6.2 The General Manager

- 6.2.1 The General Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy and ensuring regular reports are provided to the elected Council.

6.3 Directors and Managers

- 6.3.1 All Directors and Managers are responsible for supporting Council Officials to apply the strategies in this policy and for ensuring compliance with this policy.

6.4 Reporting

- 6.4.1 No additional reporting is required.

6.5 Records management

- 6.5.1 Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in accordance with Council's [Records Management Policy](#).

Council	means Cessnock City Council.
Council Officials	includes Councillors, members of staff of a council whether be employees or contractor, administrators, Council committee members, delegates of Council, Council advisors and volunteers.
Climate Adaptation	means consideration of the actions on an on-going basis for preparation in dealing with the impacts of climate change.
Climate Mitigation	means consideration of the actions to reduce the impacts of climate change.
Climate Resilience	means building capacity to cope with climate change, to recover from the impacts of climatic changes and to adapt using a combination of sustainable adaptation and mitigation measures.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	means emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride, a hydrofluorocarbon gas, a perfluorocarbon gas or any other gas prescribed by the legislation for the purposes of this definition.

IP&R Framework	Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
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8 POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Business Group	Planning and Environment
Responsible Officer	Manager Strategic Planning
Associated Procedure (if any)	Three years from the date of adoption unless legislated otherwise
Policy Review Date	Three years from date of adoption unless legislated otherwise
File Number / Document Number	DOC2019/067227
Relevant Legislation	<p>This policy supports Council's compliance with the following legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)</i> ▪ <i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i> ▪ <i>National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (Cth)</i>
Relevant desired outcome or objectives	<p>A sustainable and healthy environment</p> <p>Objective 3.1: Protecting & enhancing the natural environment & the rural character of the area.</p> <p><i>e.g. A connected, safe and creative community</i></p> <p><i>Objective 1.3: Promoting safe communities</i></p>
Related Policies / Protocols / Procedures / Documents	<p>The following policies, protocols and procedures are related to this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carbon Management & Energy Reduction Strategy. ▪ Records Management Policy ▪ The Paris Agreement 2016 ▪ Cessnock Development Control Plan 2010 ▪ Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011 ▪ Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 ▪ NSW Government Climate Change Policy Framework

9 POLICY AUTHORISATIONS

No.	Authorised Function	Authorised Business Unit / Role(s)
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1	NIL	NIL
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10 POLICY HISTORY

Revision	Date Approved / Authority	Author	Description Of Changes
1	<<Enter text...>> <i>Must include the ELT or Council minute number</i>	<i>Emma McDermott</i>	<i>New policy adopted</i>

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