

CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Owner: Group Manager Built and Natural Environment	
Date Last Adopted/Amended: 8 November 2022	Review Date: 8 November 2024

1. Policy Statement/Objective(s)

Shellharbour City Council recognises that the risk of human induced climate change is one of the greatest threats of our time. As a coastal community Council acknowledges their role in building climate resilience and sustainable practices into our business decisions for our current community and future generations.

Shellharbour City Council is committed to achieving its long-term operational target of net zero emissions by 2035, and to do its part in transitioning to a low-carbon economy to mitigate the impacts of climate change. In addition, Shellharbour City Council is committed to supporting the community to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and building a resilient and adaptive community, for the long-term sustainability of Shellharbour City.

This Policy enables Council to align operational and strategic planning with NSW state policy and transition towards a net zero region by 2050. The objectives of this policy are to embed sustainability principles into all business decision making, in order to:

- Achieve Council's net zero operational and community targets.
- Build climate resilience within Shellharbour City for now and into the future.
- Promote environmental sustainability and protect the ecological values of Shellharbour City for the health and wellbeing of the community.
- Engage with the community throughout the net zero journey to educate, support and empower sustainability action from all Shellharbour residents.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all areas of Shellharbour City Council strategic and operational activities and will be implemented across all Council functions.

3. Relevant Legislation

- 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)
- 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
- ISO20400 Sustainable Procurement

4. External/Internal Consultations

The following internal stakeholders were consulted for the development of this Policy:

- Procurement Manager
- Governance Manager
- Manager Environment
- Chief Financial Officer
- Executive manager

5. Definitions

Climate Active (Carbon Neutral Standard)	A standard for making carbon neutral claims; maintained by Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy; sets rules for measuring, reducing, validating and reporting emissions. The standard is available for organisations, products and service, buildings, precincts and events. (Previously National Carbon Offset Standard).
Climate adaptation	Consideration of the actions on an on-going basis for preparation in dealing with the impacts of climate change.
Climate change	A change of climate over an extended period, typically decades or longer, which is caused by human activity or natural climate variability that have direct and indirect impact on the environment, community and Council business.
Climate mitigation	In relation to climate change, refers to efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases.
Climate resilience	Building capacity to cope with climate change, to recover from the impacts of these climatic changes and to adapt using a combination of sustainable adaptation and mitigation measures.
Greenhouse gases (GHG)	The atmospheric gases responsible for causing global warming and climate change. The Kyoto Protocol lists six greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide (CO ₂), methane (CH ₄), nitrous oxide (N ₂ O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs) and sulphur-hexafluoride (SF ₆) – with the addition of nitrogen trifluoride (NF ₃) from the beginning of the protocol's second commitment period.

COLLABORATION

ACCOUNTABILITY

INTEGRITY

RESPECT

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Low-carbon economy	An economy based on energy sources that produce low levels of GHG emissions.
Net zero emissions	Refers to when the net emissions associated with an activity are equal to zero because emissions have been reduced and/or offset to fully account for all emissions. Usually offsets are created through purchasing carbon credits to make up the difference. The best practice approach is to reduce, or avoid, carbon emissions first, then offset any unavoidable emissions.

6. Variation and Review

Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy.

Review History –

Date Policy first adopted – version 1	8 November 2022
Date amendment adopted – version 2	

7. Policy

7.1. Shellharbour Council Sustainability Principles

Shellharbour City Council is committed to ensuring that all operational and financial decisions are ethical and equitable in the transition to a low-carbon economy. This will be achieved by applying the following sustainability principles into decision-making processes across the organisation:

- Integrating climate risk assessment into decision making to build resilience into strategic planning, development activities, projects and asset management.
- Demonstrating leadership by achieving Council's net zero targets for operations and gaining carbon neutral certification through the Climate Active program.
- Minimising environmental impacts of operations via sustainable procurement practises including prioritising low or zero carbon products, services and assets.
- Working with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and investing in knowledge and practices to support sustainability in all areas.
- Ensuring all staff working for Shellharbour City Council are inducted on this policy and are empowered to act on these commitments.
- Partnering with the community, businesses and state and federal government agencies to take positive action on climate change mitigation, building resilience and promoting environmentally sustainable living.

7.2. Commitment to Net Zero Emissions

Shellharbour City Council has committed to achieving;

- Procurement of 100% of electricity from renewable sources by 2025
- Net zero emissions for Council operations by 2035
- Net zero emissions for our Community by 2050

The above target/s will be achieved by following the latest credible climate science and projections, being transparent about Council's sustainability performance and demonstrate leadership by sharing successes with the community. Council will undertake actions to reduce the community's greenhouse gas emissions as well as lead and support the community to participate on this journey.

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7.3. Climate Resilience

Shellharbour City Council is committed to building resilience across Shellharbour City for current and future generations in the face of a changing climate. This will be achieved by addressing the various factors that contribute to climate resilience as outlined in the 2017 Shoalhaven Illawarra Enabling Regional Adaptation (SIERA) Report. These include:

- Working towards the principles of 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 within and outside Council operations to minimise waste to landfill, reduce raw material use and support businesses and economies that re-use / recycle waste as a valuable resource.
- Supporting sustainable travel within Shellharbour City, by reducing reliance on private vehicle use and promoting / providing more walking, bicycle riding, public transport and ride share facilities and zero emissions transport.
- Promoting and endorsing sustainable development in the city through the uptake of greater efficiency and sustainability in new and improved buildings, homes and infrastructure.
- Increasing canopy cover on public and private land to enhance liveability of neighbourhoods and prevent tree losses, via an urban greening plan for Shellharbour City.
- Improving the city's ecological and environmental values through a stronger emphasis on biodiversity conservation and natural area management for the health and longevity of the community.

7.4. Sustainability Education

Shellharbour City Council is committed to increasing awareness, education and engagement with the community in regard to sustainability and sustainable living. This will be achieved by promoting opportunities for engagement, education and action on climate change and sustainability for the community, customers, Council and councillors.

8. Related Forms/Documents

- Zero Emissions Shellharbour Strategy
- Operational Emissions Reduction Plan
- Community Emissions Reduction Plan

Note: Related forms can be located Online under "Forms"

9. Attachments

Attachment 1: NIL

Policy Authorised by:

Name: Council Resolution 223

Date: 8 November 2022