

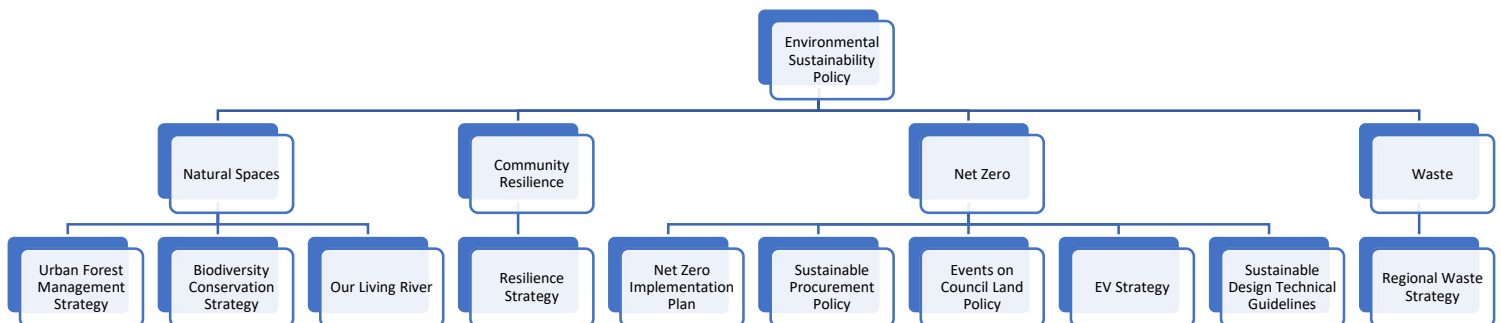


POLICY NO.	CPES2
POLICY TITLE	Environmental Sustainability Policy
STATUS	Council
SERVICE	Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability
DOCUMENT ID	757796

POLICY STATEMENT

Hunter's Hill Council (Council) adopted an Environmental Sustainability Strategic Framework in July 2023.

This Policy is the top-tier document of that framework, where all Council's functions, services, events and activities will be obligated to adhere to this commitment, ensuring environmental sustainability remains a key consideration at all times.



PURPOSE

This Policy outlines Council's commitment to:

- facilitate sustainable development and the protection of the environment,
- increase understanding of the key considerations of sustainability,
- provide guidance in the application of the principles of sustainability to Council decision making and activities, and
- integrate sustainable practices into all Local Government functions, services, events and activities.

COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT

Council will demonstrate leadership and commitment to environmental sustainability and regards the application of strong and effective action as critical in achieving the objectives outlined in its 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan and Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020.

This Policy aims to provide the guiding criteria and principles that will underpin Council's plans, policies and procedures to ensure Council actively reduces greenhouse gases emissions, reduces waste and manages aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems according to the overarching theme of 'Environment, Sustainability & Open Space' in the Community Strategic Plan.

Considering ecologically sustainable development is a requirement of the *Local Government Act 1993* and embedding sustainability into all functions and services is necessary for the long-term protection of the environment that this community so passionately values. To achieve this Council will:

- Adopt an evidence-based approach to decision making processes and ensure reviews of plans, strategies, targets and benchmarks (as required) to ensure they remain consistent with the most recent knowledge and best available science regarding sustainability opportunities and challenges.
- Comply with legislation, ensuring sustainability principles are applied to the planning, design and decision-making process. Innovation and continuous improvement are encouraged with a risk managed approach.
- Support procurement practices across the whole organisation to procure goods and services that minimise environmental risk and maximise positive sustainable opportunities and benefits for the environment and circular economy.
- Work to improve the sustainability awareness of team members, Councillors, contractors and community through regular communication including reporting on plans, strategies and targets where appropriate.

Reducing our carbon footprint

Council is committed to supporting the NSW Government target of net zero emissions by 2050 including:

- 50% emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2030 and
- 70% emissions reduction on 2005 levels by 2035

This will be achieved through innovation, efficient use of resources and community empowerment across all areas that impact on emissions reduction (including active travel).

Reducing waste to landfill

Council acknowledges the importance of considering the waste hierarchy in our services, events and activities where avoidance and reduction of waste takes precedence where appropriate.

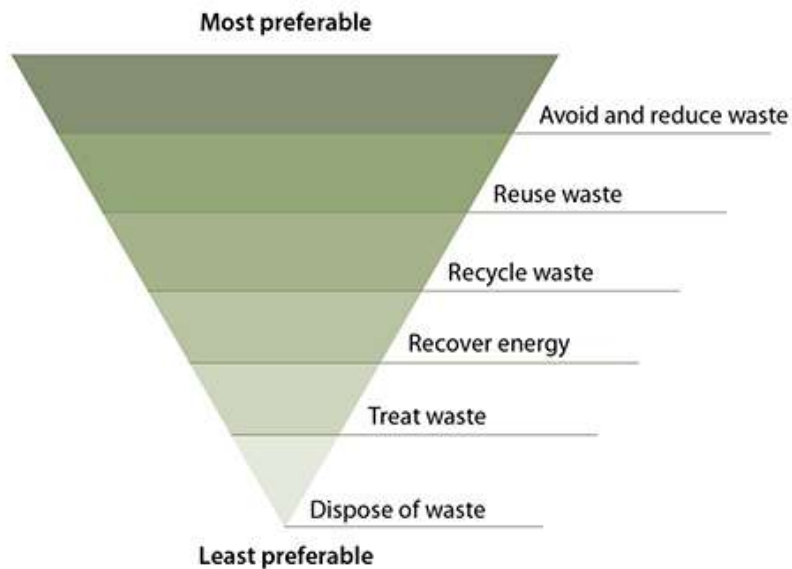


Image 1: Waste Hierarchy – source NSW EPA

Council is committed to reducing waste to landfill and recovering resources to support the circular economy through advanced waste and resource recovery processing solutions with proven and efficient technologies.

Council is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing food and organic waste to landfill and achieving better outcomes for community, economy and environment through waste reduction.

Council is committed to reducing waste to landfill and recovering resources to support the circular economy through promotion of reuse initiatives.

Protect, enhance and promote local biodiversity

Council is committed to the protection, enhancement and promotion of local biodiversity through bush regeneration, habitat restoration and increasing tree canopy cover in suburban areas to 40% by 2045 across the LGA together with fire and feral animal management.

Council is committed to best practice aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem management for the protection of biodiversity, natural areas and waterways recognising our stewardship of important sections of the Great North Walk and significant harbour coastline.

Council is committed to working with the community to increase native planting in natural areas and embedding Aboriginal cultural heritage in natural and open space planning and management.

Improve local waterway health

Council is committed to applying best practice ecological principles to the management of catchments and waterways through water sensitive urban design principles and development controls to minimise erosion and run-off and achieve healthy and clean waterways.

Council is committed to working with the community delivering programs that celebrate and teach the importance of healthy waterways as well as water conservation and re-use.

SCOPE

The *Local Government Act 1993* mandates a requirement for Council decision making to consider the sound financial management, investment in responsible and sustainable infrastructure, principles of ecologically sustainable development and social justice principles. Accordingly, the scope of this Policy applies to all Council team members.

PROVISIONS

Council will ensure all team members have access to, and awareness of, the Policy and its objectives and is committed to circulating and enabling access to necessary training through the Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils and other providers as they arise.

PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

On 24 February 2020, Council passed a resolution declaring a climate emergency, calling for a greater response to our changing climate.

Climate change is recognised as the greatest health threat of the 21st century and has significant impacts on physical and mental health and psychosocial wellbeing. In August 2024, a [report released in Canberra by the group 'Doctors for the Environment'](#), detailed the significant and expansive human health risks of fossil fuel pollution that is associated with killing more people per year than smoking.

Beyond disease, growing mental health and psychosocial impacts of climate change (including extreme weather events ranging from mild stress responses to chronic stress and significant mental health problems) are being experienced in communities. The most common mental health problems are PTSD, depression, complicated grief and other anxiety disorders. The most common psychosocial responses are heightened distress, loss of identity, grief at loss of place, social isolation and reduced participation in enjoyable activities.

Many people may feel seriously concerned, frightened, angry, pessimistic or guilty in response to climate change. Qualitative research outlines feelings of helplessness, loss and frustration due to a person's inability to feel they are making a difference in slowing climate change.

Building a community's resilience and providing tools for citizens to make proactive behaviour changes are critical strategic pathways available to Local Government in managing the psychosocial risks of a changing climate.

DEFINITIONS

Biodiversity	Variety of all living things; the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, the genes and the ecosystems or habitats they form.
Circular economy	Based on conserving resources by keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible, designing out waste, pollution and resource inefficiency. Maximising the use and value of resources brings major economic, social and environmental benefits.
Climate change	Long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns (storms, floods, heatwaves). Since 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change primarily due to burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas).
Ecologically sustainable development (ESD)	Development that aims to meet the needs of society today while conserving ecosystems for the benefit of future generation.
Environment	Ecosystems and their constituent parts including people and communities, natural and physical resources and the qualities and characteristics of locations, places and areas.
Greenhouse gases	Include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and water vapour, emitted naturally or by human activity, that trap heat in the atmosphere making the planet warmer via the greenhouse effect.
Net zero	Achieving a balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions remove from the atmosphere. Achieving net zero requires supporting a range of initiatives, efficiencies and technologies such as renewable energy, electric vehicles, reducing waste to landfill and tree planting.
Sustainability	Addressing the needs of current and future generations through integration of social justice, economic prosperity and environmental protection, in ways that are transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible.
Sustainable procurement	Meeting the needs for goods, services, utilities and works with a view to maximising sustainable benefits for Council and the wider community.
Team members	Any person engaged in work at Council in any of the following capacities: full-time, part-time, casual, temporary, fixed term employees and volunteers.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Council will comply with its duty of care obligations under the following Acts:

Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (NSW)

Biosecurity Act 2015 (NSW)

Clean Energy Act 2011 (Commonwealth)

Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007 (Commonwealth)

Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023 (NSW)

Coastal Management Act 2016 No. 20 (NSW)

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth)

Fisheries Management Act 1994 (NSW)
Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Act 2021 No. 31 (NSW)
Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 (NSW)
Recycling and Waste Reduction Act 2020 No. 92 (NSW)
Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001 No. 58 (NSW)
Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)

RESPONSIBILITIES

Every team member is responsible for considering environmental sustainability and the objectives of this Policy as part of all functions of their work.

There is expectation that any consultants and contractors engaged to operate under Council's guise are similarly to have been procured utilising a form of assessment of their environmental procedures as well as a commitment they will operate under Council's expectations whilst performing their work.

CONSULTATION

Developed by the Sustainability & Waste Coordinator in consultation with Council and community stakeholders.

Activity detail – Council's Connect page
Public Exhibition period – 19 December 2024 to 23 February 2025 (66 days).

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Hunter's Hill Council Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032
Hunter's Hill Council Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020
Hunter's Hill Council Net Zero Implementation Plan 2025
Hunter's Hill Council Urban Forest Management Strategy 2025
Hunter's Hill Council Draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2021-2026
Hunter's Hill Council Procurement Manual
NSW Circular Economy Policy Statement: Too Good to Waste 2019
NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030
NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041
Parramatta River Masterplan

POLICY AUTHORITY

General Manager

REVIEW

To be reviewed by March 2028 or as required.

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL/EXECUTIVE:

DATE: 24 March 2025

RESOLUTION NO: 034/25

VERSION CONTROL TABLE

DATE	VERSION	RES. NO.	KEY CHANGES	AUTHOR
March 2025	1.0	034/25	New Policy as committed to developing by Council in July 2023	Sustainability & Waste Coordinator