



Sustainability Strategy 2021 DRAFT

city of
PALMERSTON
'A Place for People'



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SUSTAINABILITY AND COUNCIL



1.1 WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

To achieve sustainability, an organization must consider environmental, social, and economic elements

The concept of sustainability is complex, crossing disciplines and work streams, with success reliant on an integrated approach. Environmental stewardship is an integral part of sustainable development but not the only consideration. Intertwined with it are the dimensions of society, culture and economy.

Sustainability is often thought of as a long-term goal, while the term sustainable development refers to the processes and pathways to achieve it. A report introduced by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) provided an early and still widely accepted definition for sustainable development, being 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The report concluded with a call to action that promoted balanced economic, social and environmental needs.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental outcomes are most frequently associated when discussing matters around sustainability. Environmental sustainability itself is still widely encapsulating. It's often thought of as the trees, water and air we breathe, the resources we rely on. However, it extends to much more, defining how we live, work and play. It captures all our surrounds, influencing how we interact with one another, how we travel and where we stay.

This strategy retains a focus on outcomes specific to environmental sustainability, looking at our relationship to and impact on our surroundings. It seeks to preserve our natural assets, reduce our collective impacts and evolve our practices, so that livability and opportunities for future generations are not compromised.

1.3 CITY OF PALMERSTON & OUR COMMUNITY

As the fastest growing centre in Northern Territory, containing an estimated population of nearly 40,000, Palmerston play as vital role in supporting and contributing to the Greater Darwin region. This will continue to evolve as development envisioned in surrounding centres under the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan (2015) occurs.

Balanced decision-making is increasingly important as influence broadens and impacts on our environment become more evident. As an organization, Council has a responsibility to lead with influence and integrity, recognizing our reach within the community and the services we provide.

Our responsibility to the community aligns with priorities set out in the Community Plan. Steeped within this plan, developed by members of the community, are elements of sustainability. Six outcomes contained within the City of Plamerston Community Plan.

1.4 OUR SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESS

The development of this strategy builds upon the previous Sustainability Strategy, formulated in 2013, supporting objectives developed within the Community Plan. It is a continuation of the City of Palmerston's commitment to sustainable development, highlighted by a number of initiatives Council has already implemented.

These initiatives demonstrate the importance of sound governance and leadership, supporting Council to deliver sustainable services to the community.

Highlight Initiatives

- Solar on Council's buildings Recreation Centre and Library
- Smart technology control lights installed across the municipality
- Livable Cities initiative focused on increasing canopy cover and greening

Community Plan Outcomes

1. Family & Community
2. Vibrant Economy
3. Cultural Diversity
4. Future Focused
5. Environmental Sustainability
6. Governance



2.1 COUNCIL'S OBJECTIVE

Support and empower growth in Palmerston by working with the community, government and industry; to ensure our environment and livability is protected and enhanced for current and future generations.



2.2 COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council staff and management will be guided by this objective and focus on sustainable development through:

- An attitude towards continual improvements
- Recognizing our position to facilitate sustainable behaviours within the community
- Leading with integrity and purpose to deliver outcomes
- Asking critical questions at the right times
- Leveraging our diverse skillsets and internal consultation opportunities
- Ensuring balanced decision-making

2.3 DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY

The strategy developed around the quadruple bottom line approach to decision making previously discussed. This being consideration of environmental, economic, community (social) needs alongside governance. This is illustrated on the below diagram.

In developing the strategy and future actions, 4 themes evolved, reflecting council's sphere of influence on environmental outcomes. These priority themes are detailed below and are presented as the framework of the strategy on the following page.



SUMMARY OF THEMES AND PRIORITIES



PRIORITIES



Ecological preservation

Protection and restoration of natural ecosystems



Parks and Green Spaces

Equitable access to sustainable infrastructure and community green space



Urban heat mitigation

Urban heat mitigation and increased canopy cover



Engaged with sustainability

Community wide sustainability through education, awareness and engagement



Connected communities

Enhancing movement within our communities & to our green infrastructure



Sustainable events

Council events demonstrate sustainable practices & integrate with environment



Resource consumption

Limit environmental impacts and expenditure associated with council's consumption



Waste diversion

Waste diverted from landfill and reduce waste generated from council activities



Responsible investment and procurement

Supporting local businesses and industry through investment & procurement



Lead initiatives

Demonstrating sustainable initiatives to the community and for the community



Support industry & innovations

Incentivize and support local businesses

THEMES & PRIORITIES



Protecting our urban ecology and natural environment

Ecological
Preservation



Parks and Green
Space



Urban Heat
Mitigation



A healthy natural environment is the corner stone of day-to-day living. It provides the air we breathe, the water we drink, the recreational spaces we enjoy and the foundations of our economy.

We recognize that all human activity has an impact, and that the decisions we make today determines our tomorrow. This relates not only to matters of preservation but to developing greater resilience in our built environment for future generations.

Palmerston is home to rich environmental eco-systems, and as stewards of the local environment there is a responsibility to ensure we are managing the environments we call home. These should be recognized as vital assets that not only support livability of our current community but offer unique growth opportunities.

Increasingly, the role of useable green space is seen to correlate to individual and community health. Which is why protecting and enhancing our public open spaces, supports our future generations health.

Climate in the top end is distinctive, and while it supports the unique landscapes, it also presents challenges to our relationship within the built environment. Urban heat effects are well documented, and to support livability of future generations we must focus our efforts now on mitigating these effects.

Key Documents

Edible Pocket Gardens (Policy)

Preserving Our Urban Forest
(Policy)

Lake Management Plan

ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION

BACKGROUND

Palmerston has developed as a largely urban centre, nestled in rich environmental surrounds. The Mitchell Creek Catchment area is an environmental asset which much of the recent decades urban development intersects. Due to significant urbanization within this area, and ongoing management issues around fire and weed invasion, several priority actions focus on restoration of this asset.

With large portions of this land owned by Northern Territory Government, collaboration becomes a key approach to resolving actionable next steps. Similarly, impacts on and from use of our water systems require partnering with relevant NTG agencies, and exploring outcomes the environment can sustain.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Recently the City of Palmerston adopted its Lakes Management Plan. Next steps involve implementation of this plan to increase the health of these bodies alongside regular maintenance issues.

Council is undertaking a natural assessment project to understand the current landscape within key areas of the Mitchell Creek Catchment, including where to focus environmental strategies.



Goal 1(a) Protection and restoration of natural ecosystems

Actions

- Implement Lakes Management Plan
- Partner with NTG to monitor ground water use and explore strategies around Council bore use
- Review findings of the Mitchell Creek Catchment Natural Assessment Project and develop an Environmental Management Program for the catchment area.
- Map, monitor and manage declared weeds across LGA
- Review of current planting procedures and update of planting programs
- Advocate within future land use planning for protection where suitable of environmental corridors
- Review and update Council tree species list to include pollinator species, edible species, and habitat trees

PARKS & GREEN SPACE

BACKGROUND

Parks and green spaces provide spaces for community to connect, social bonds to build and offers wellbeing benefits.

With this in mind, not only is there a need to retain and improve our spaces, but also ensure there is equitable access across our municipality. Placing higher social and economic value on our green spaces recognizes their role in the community.

Having a predominately urban form brings with it a need to ensure accessibility in our environment and elevates the importance of public open space. This means open space that considers useability, access and integrates with the daily needs of the community. Whilst Palmerston caters to significant proportion of young families, a diverse set of open space opportunities must continue to be explored.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

The City of Palmerston Playground and Play Space Strategy will guide future improvement works of play spaces in the municipality. Amongst other considerations the strategy considers equitable access to diverse play experiences.

Goal 1(b): Equitable access to sustainable infrastructure and community green space

Actions

- Development of a movement and connectivity plan that facilitates increase community uptake of alternative transport and outdoor recreation connections
- Implementation of the Playground and Play Space Strategy to focus park expenditure
- Promote community ownership of green space and natural elements through programming
- Develop communication tools for use online and at Council facilities that promote use of natural areas in Palmerston
- Focus on park facilities such as end of trip facilities within our parks to encourage users to stay
- Promote to community abilities to grow edible plants in sections of their local park
- Interactive opportunities for community engagement with indigenous and edible plant species
- Review strategies to support priority areas for green infrastructure rollout based on NTG and Council planning documents

URBAN HEAT MITIGATION

BACKGROUND

Urban heat effects occur where green cover is lost to concentration of hard surfaces, often in the form of bitumen roads and car parks, which as dark surfaces absorb, store and radiate heat.

Developing areas are particularly susceptible, with urban development clearing existing canopy cover levels whilst simultaneously adding this grey cover of hard surfaces.

Increasing the coverage of tree and other green cover, works to reduce surface temperature of our urban environments, providing shade and working to cool and clean the air.

Complexities in our environment, growth and development trends highlight that greening our city must take a coordinated approach, with mix of land tenures and interests.

Focusing efforts now on mitigating effects, supports livability challenges faced by future generations.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Liveable cities has been a Major Project by Council, seeking to increase green cover through tree planting and supporting amenity upgrades.

Council produced our Urban Forest Policy, to manage risk and requests relating to tree removal, highlighting the importance on maintaining existing cover.

Key Statistics

625
trees planted in 2019

320
participants in verge
beautification

Goal 1(c)

Urban heat mitigation and increased canopy cover

Actions

- Develop partnerships with CSRIO, NTG and other LGA's, to improve use of datasets in decisions making around tree planting,
- Develop a City of Palmerston Greening Strategy, that supports canopy cover monitoring, opportunities for temporary and permanent greening and considers future transport and movement programming
- Expand community planting programs through partnerships with local businesses, community groups and non-for profit organisations.
- Continue and expand on the 'Verge Assistance' program, to increase resident maintained green infrastructure on verges
- Coordinate pathway replacement and repair programs with tree planting program to increased shading across Palmerston's walking networks
- Develop community awareness programs and work with institutions to understand improvements on communicating key messages around tree preservation
- Undertake a baseline study to determine monitoring approaches to urban heat and allow measurement of progress

As our community grows and our environment changes, there are inevitably challenges presented. Alongside these challenges there are opportunities to evolve our usual way of doing things and embed sustainable approaches in our daily behaviors.

Promoting sustainable behaviours occurs across the board, through various government, non-profit and advocacy bodies. Council has a role in facilitating local opportunities to engage, allowing residents to see their local changes as part of the collective.

As a community facing organization there is opportunity to empower and support our community alongside our core delivery of services.

Serving a predominately urban area presents opportunities in connecting our community. Better connectivity from where we live, work and play encourages more sustainable transport uptake. A built environment that supports this is crucial, particularly when facing challenges of climate and existing car centric development.

Council delivers a range of programming and events for Palmerston residents. Doing so sustainably, offers a chance to model to the community examples of how we can reduce environmental impacts. It acknowledges our role as part of the collective efforts to make these necessary changes.

Key Documents

Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility Framework

Empowering & connecting our community



Engaging with Communities



Connected Communities



Sustainable Events



ENGAGED WITH COMMUNITIES

BACKGROUND

Community-wide shifts to more sustainable practices has altered consumption behaviours. Individuals are driving change not only for themselves but for their wider local community.

Council's role is to promote these sustainable behaviours across a spectrum of the community and facilitate the collective impacts of Palmerston residents. Whether this be creating awareness for those wanting to implement new sustainable behaviours, or empowering those well equipped with this knowledge and wanting to do their own work. It's important to ensure messaging of Council priorities and activity is translated to the community.

An example is the focus retaining urban tree canopy. In conjunction with Council programming and policy, community messaging needs to support these outcomes. Implications and collective impacts are not just restricted to our public spaces, but extend to the entire environment, regardless of land tenure.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Waste education campaigns are ongoing and help reinforce or introduce behaviours that support recycling and diversion rates.

Environmental Grants are offered by Council to support projects where there is a demonstrated improvement that can be achieved in the environment.

Goal 2(a)

Community wide sustainability through education, awareness and engagement

Actions

- Provide free sustainability community workshops utilizing a variety of mediums (webinar, newsletter, participatory), and organizations
- Develop information packages and tools to assist community members achieving sustainability aspirations, such as uptake in solar energy alternatives. Monitor level of engagement with these tools.
- Integration of IDA framework in delivery of community messaging
- Recognize and celebrate community achievements in sustainability on Council's web and social media pages
- Investigate sustainable programs to roll out at Council run facilities and key community interface points
- Expand on the current Environmental Benefits Grants program to encourage schools, businesses, community groups and non-for-profit to undertake tree planting on private property

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

BACKGROUND

Enhancing the appeal and attraction of alternative transport options to cars promotes a number of sustainable benefits. These are well-established, supporting environmental and livability outcomes as well as social and economic value in our local community.

The public realm is crucial in facilitating this. The top end climate is distinct and facing a landscape of increasing temperatures we must look to better adapt to local conditions. Greening initiatives work in conjunction with enhancing movement capabilities, as does supporting safety and prioritisation pedestrian movement over car.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Increased our focus on aligning pathway programming, with tree planting and tree establishment.

Focus on minimum pathway widths to better facilitate movement.

The Central Palmerston Area Plan (CPAP) prioritizes walking and pedestrian activity through our city centre.



Goal 2(b)

Enhancing movement within our communities and connecting to our green infrastructure

Actions

- Coordinate pathway replacement and repair programs with tree planting program to increased amenity and comfort of our network
- Develop online tools to promote ease of access to council Parks and Play Spaces
- Investigate programming and strategies (such as movement strategy) that facilitate alternative travel mode choices within the municipality
- Support establishment of Green Connection Priorities within the CPAP, and connections to surrounding uses and areas
- Continue to promote the utilization of outdoor and open space areas for community event programming
- Develop connections between the Escarpment Walk, and other recreational uses.
- Improve end of trip facilities at key sites, including secure bicycle storage facilities



SUSTAINABLE EVENTS

BACKGROUND

Council has an expansive range of programming we undertake each year for the community, ranging in size and frequency. These events take considerable amount of planning, and provide popular opportunities for the community to gather, eat, play and work.

By promoting sustainable approaches during our planning and execution of events, causes of environmental concerns can be raised within the community. Events can exhibit high waste-generating behaviours and resource consumption or model potential the alternative possibilities.

Outdoor event programming enables a direct association to our environment, and provides a landscape for people to see what reducing their environmental impacts seeks to preserve.

It's important to ensure messaging of council priorities and activity are translated to the community.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Council delivers a range of events for the community in our outdoor spaces, connecting community to our natural and built environments. These include our events on Frances series, Brekkie in the Park, and Flicnics.

Goal 2(c)

Council events demonstrate sustainable practices and integrate with environmental surrounds

Actions

- Introduce a ban on single use plastics from all events held on Council land including markets
- Introduce recycling bins into all Council events
- Develop and implement a Sustainable Events Authorized Statement to be reviewed annually and promote wider sustainable event practices
- Prepare annual report monitoring sustainable events statement with achievements and areas to address
- Increase outdoor events and support programming engaging with nature and open space areas, that demonstrate sustainable practices
- Develop an Event Planning Guide that supports community organizations implement their own sustainable events

A focus on efficiencies and continual improvement is central to the long-term goal of sustainability. It emphasizes how we can reduce our impact, by constantly looking to what we can do better.

It's crucial Council understand how we consume energy, water and emissions we directly produce. Through monitoring and measuring these impacts we can work on management strategies. Ultimately it supports investigating methods that demonstrate transitioning to cleaner energy reserves and builds resilience to our current a future environment.

Council manages a range of assets for community use. Limiting resource-consumption and looking to evolve the way we do things can reduce environmental impacts and deliver more sustainable operating costs.

Key Documents

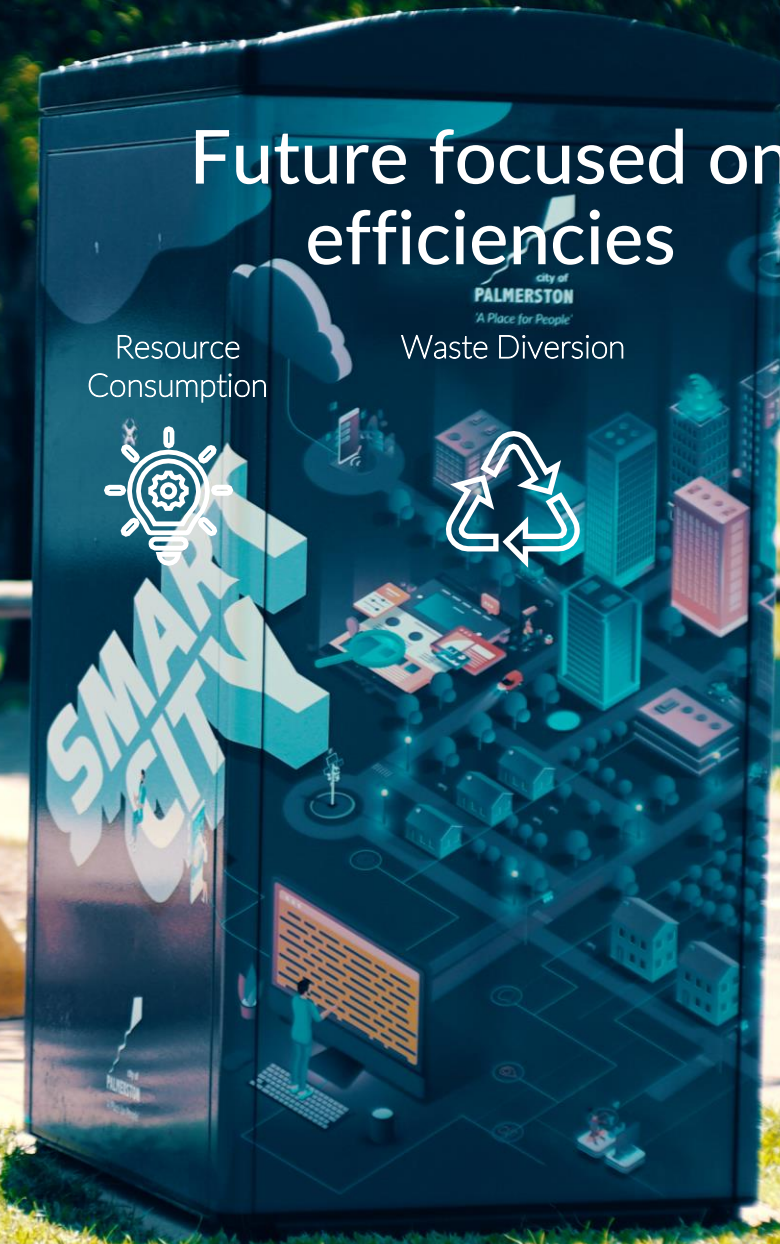
Asset Management Plan

Future focused on efficiencies

Resource Consumption



Waste Diversion



RESOURCE CONSUMPTION

BACKGROUND

Council operations contribute to municipality's total water consumption, predominately in managing our parks and green spaces. These spaces provide a range of benefits for the community, and play an integral role in supporting the wellbeing and development of our population.

Similarly, other resource consumptive uses such as the Recreation Centre and Library are valuable investments for our growing community. Managing these areas more sustainably benefits both in terms of cost to the community, and the environment.

While efficiencies can vary in size and scale, all contribute when collective impacts are considered. Minor changes to daily processes compound for larger benefits and have the ability to create more indirect effects.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Council has already undertaken significant work within this goal. A focus on reducing ongoing costs and energy consumption is evidenced through recent installation of smart controlled lights in our streets.

Council have also implemented solar at its facilities, including the Recreation Centre and Library.

Key Statistics

517%
annual savings from smart
control lights installed

17%
GHG emissions reduction
2018-2021

13%
energy use reduction
2018-2021

Goal 3(a)

Limit environmental impacts and expenditure associated with Council's consumption of energy and water

Actions

- Investigate current Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Council operations and identify reduction and mitigation strategies
- Increase irrigation efficiencies to reduce potable water use in Council Public Open Space
- Develop and implement a Water Saving Action Plan
- Continue with energy efficiency upgrades across Council facilities and buildings
- Routinely audit of energy consumption of council's facilities
- Energy Savings Action Plan that identifies energy consuming assets and develop cost-effective and administrative energy savings.
- Increase proportion of energy used from renewable energy sources at Council owned facilities.

WASTE DIVERSION

BACKGROUND

Humans high rate of consumption and access to goods has led to other issues around how we manage these products at their end of life. Increasingly focus is being placed on circular economy approaches. This entails opportunities at the end of a products life cycles to be reused, refurbished/remanufactured or recycled.

Issues around management of local waste arises due to products that end up stored in landfill, as well as cross contamination of products intended for recycling.

Council provides the Waste Management Facility at Archer. The facility provides an important point for Palmerston residents to allow for responsible disposal and support other strategies to better manage our community knowledge and attitude to waste.



EXISTING INITIATIVES

Five new rubbish trucks have been rolled out utilizing AI technology to manage collection.

Empowerment of community attitudes to waste are supported through the reboot your loot and youth recycling campaigns.

Key Statistics

2,612
tonnes of waste diverted
from landfill in 2019

Goal 3(b)

Improve waste diversion from landfill within the community and reduce waste generated from Council activities

Actions

- Expand waste education campaigns and diverse audience delivery
- Improve Archer Waste Management Facility to increase diversion rates.
- Investigate sustainable programs to roll out at council run facilities
- Reduce amount of waste generated by council activities
- Introduce recycling waste receptacles into Council's key parks.

Lead with purpose

Investment &
Procurement



Lead Initiatives



Support to
industry



As a major employer and purchaser of services, we must demonstrate the possibilities of sustainable initiatives. While supporting community sustainable practices we can also make direct change through the way we conduct our business.

This captures how we support industry focused on sustainable development. Considering sustainable principles in our procurement processes supports longer term aspirations and recognizes local capacity building benefits. It also demonstrates that as purchaser of services, we are responsible in doing our best to support those within industry committed to sustainable development.

Our organizational reach is not only limited to physical assets, but our staff who take stewardship of implementing actions under this strategy.

We can also look for opportunities to work with industry, to support their own innovations in sustainability. Just as the community plays an important role, industry to has their part to play as a consumer and provider

Key Documents

Procurement Policy

RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT & PROCUREMENT

BACKGROUND

In providing diverse services for our community, council is a significant consumer of goods and services.

We can further sustainable development initiatives through our procurement practices, building capabilities of suppliers operating sustainably. Alongside value for money and local capacity, consideration of wider environmental impacts provide an important lens to view where and who Council ultimately invests in.

Our desires to showcase sustainability initiatives to the community, must extend to our investment procedures, and relationships with suppliers.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Council procurement is guided by our policy, which amongst other things provides consideration to environmental and social sustainability.

This ensures the implications of procurement across the life cycle of the product are assessed, alongside environmental performance of prospective suppliers.

Goal 4(a)

Supporting local businesses and industry through council investment and procurement decisions

Actions

- Broaden tender and quotation assessment criteria that gives preference to businesses that proactively foster green businesses, green jobs, and green practices.
- Measure and report on the sustainability of procurement practice,
- Develop procurement guidelines and tools to support staff engagement with sustainable procurement

LEAD INITIATIVES

BACKGROUND

Showing how sustainability can be implemented day to day and within our organisation, inspires best practice.

As a council these initiatives provide locally relevant examples to the community, which are part of a much wider global discussion. While showing what can be done, we can also demonstrate what benefits this directly brings.

Leading is also about showing local business that we prioritize sustainable development within our business. We want to inspire surrounding local governments to see what's possible, as well as learning from their experiences through better collaboration.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

Council is increasing its proportion of sustainable fleet vehicles, purchasing hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles.

These are supported by a new plug-in charging station available for free use within the city centre.

Key Statistics

5
of the 22 fleet vehicles are
hybrid variations

Goal 4(b)

Demonstrating sustainable initiatives to the community and for the community

Actions

- Monitor council's heavy plant fleet and investigate alternatives
- Develop sustainable policy/authorized statement around internal purchasing of stationary within the organization
- Investigate use of recycled plastics and sustainable life cycle processes in furnishing within council open space
- Support installation of more EV Charging Stations
- Provide E-waste recycling at council facilities
- Council consultation and engagement processes consider sustainability in their communications plan

SUPPORT INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS

BACKGROUND

Businesses in Palmerton are important partners to engage with to deliver city wide sustainability.

Some businesses are well equipped with their own sustainable development practices. Engaging with businesses through partnerships and incentives, provides a value-add approach, which benefits our community.

Driving council's own innovations, allows business to better tap into benefits, whether direct or indirect. This includes making data more accessible and continuing to evolve our smart city initiatives.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

The Palmerston Local Economic Plan is nearing completion. This plan will outline how we will strengthen economic outcomes, and what our focus areas are. It is expected that elements of the Plan are reflected within aspirations of this Strategy.

Goal 4(c)

Incentivize and support local businesses to drive innovation and capacity

Actions

- Provide incentives and education opportunities for SMEs to improve energy and water efficiency in their operations
- Promote and encourage partnering with the Australian Business Energy Service, which offers energy audits and consultation on ways to save.
- Encourage the development of solar energy generation operations through Power Purchasing Agreements, provision of Council land for solar farms, rate incentives to 'Solar Based Businesses'.
- Investigate development of retrofit program for existing tenanted/community buildings to improve energy and water use efficiencies, reducing business overheads
- Promote, encourage, and enhance City of Palmerston's Open Data Hub, so that local investors can make data driven decisions when undertaking local investment
- Continue to evolve smart city initiatives that focus on improvements on sustainability
- Local Economic Plan outcomes around working groups and business engagement, promotes sustainable development within agendas

