



SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Council respectfully acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we meet – the Larrakia People - and pay respect to their elders, past, present, and future. The Larrakia people are the traditional owners of the Darwin region.

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City of Palmerston and sustainability

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental outcomes are frequently associated when discussing matters around sustainability. The environmental dimension of sustainability is widely encapsulating with concepts including our immediate surrounds, life-support systems and sources of livelihood. Outcomes in Palmerston influence how we live, work and play. A liveable environment refers to one that is clean, safe, provides access to basic needs, and enables a sense of place and community.

This Sustainability Strategy retains a focus on the environmental dimension, dimension, looking at our interaction with the natural and built environment. It seeks to preserve our natural assets, reduce our collective impacts and evolve our practices, so that liveability and opportunities for future generations are not compromised.

CITY OF PALMERSTON AND OUR COMMUNITY

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

Balanced decision-making is increasingly important as our population grows and environmental impacts become increasingly evident. Climatic conditions are rapidly changing, and our positioning here in the Top End provides vulnerabilities with these changes. As an organisation, 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, are elements of sustainability.



OUR SUSTAINABILITY PROGRESS

This Strategy replaces the previous Strategy formulated in 2013, now developed in alignment with the Community Plan. It is a continuation of the City of Palmerston's commitment to sustainable development, highlighted through a number of initiatives Council has implemented.

HIGHLIGHT INITIATIVES

- Solar power at Council facilities
- Waste diversion improvements through Archer Waste Management Facility upgrades
- Smart technology control lights installed across the municipality
- Liveable 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



COUNCIL'S OBJECTIVE

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

COUNCIL'S ROLE

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

- An attitude towards continual improvements.
- Recognising 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.
- Facilitate and involve community in decisions.

SUSTAINABILITY FRAMEWORK



In developing the strategy and future actions, four 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

THEME	PRIORITIES
1. Protecting our urban ecology and natural environment	1.1 Ecological preservation Protection and restoration of natural ecosystems and reduce threats to biodiversity
	1.2 Parks and green space Equitable access to sustainable infrastructure and community green space
	1.3 Urban heat mitigation Urban heat mitigation and increased canopy cover
2. Empowering and connecting community	2.1 Engaged with sustainability Community wide sustainability through education, awareness and engagement
	2.2 Connected communities Enhancing movement within our communities and to our green infrastructure
	2.3 Sustainable events Council events demonstrate sustainable practices and promote our environmental surrounds
3. Future focused on efficiencies	3.1 Resource consumption Limit environmental impacts and expenditure associated with Council's consumption
	3.2 Waste diversion Waste diverted from landfill and reduce waste generated from Council activities
4. Lead with purpose	4.1 Responsible investment and procurement Supporting local businesses and industry through investment and procurement
	4.2 Lead initiatives Demonstrating sustainable initiatives to the community and for the community
	4.3 Support industry and innovations Incentivise and support local businesses

Themes and priorities

THEME 1: PROTECTING OUR URBAN ECOLOGY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

A healthy natural environment is the corner stone of day-to-day living, with ecosystem services underpinning human well-being. It influences the air we breathe, the water we drink, the recreational spaces we enjoy and the foundations of our economy.

We recognise 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 recognised as vital assets that regulate our surrounds and support lifestyle of our current and future community.

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 liveability of future generations we must focus our efforts on mitigating these.

PRIORITIES

1. ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION



2. PARKS AND GREEN SPACE



3. URBAN HEAT MITIGATION



KEY DOCUMENTS

- Edible Pocket Gardens (Policy)
- Preserving Our Urban Forest (Policy)
- Lake Management Plan



1.1 ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION

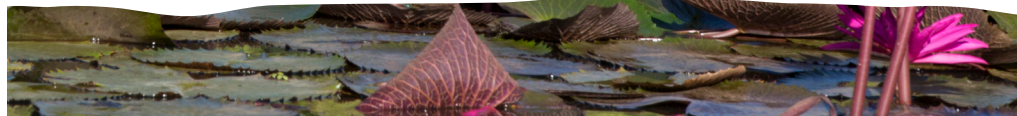
BACKGROUND

Palmerston has developed into a largely urban centre, nestled in rich environmental surrounds. The Mitchell Creek Catchment area is an environmental asset that has been somewhat intersected with urban development over the past decade. Due to significant urbanisation 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 (NTG), 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.



Goal: Protection and restoration of natural ecosystems and reduce threats to biodiversity



EXISTING INITIATIVES

Implementing Council's Lakes Management Plan seeks to increase the health of these water 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.

ACTIONS

- Implement Lakes Management Plan.
- Partner with NTG to reduce reliance groundwater resources and explore strategies around Council water consumption.
- Implement recommendations resulting from 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.
- Develop weed and fire management plans.
- Review and update of planting and vegetation management programs which provides a focus on species density and diversity.
- Advocate within future land use planning for protection where suitable of environmental corridors.
- Investigate opportunities to expand the Council tree species list include pollinator species, edible species, habitat trees and threatened species.



1.2 PARKS AND GREEN SPACE

BACKGROUND

Parks and green space provides communal areas to connect and socialise supporting the wellbeing of the community.

With this in mind, there is a need to retain and enhance the use of these spaces, and ensure equitable access across our municipality. Placing higher social and economic value on our green spaces recognises the role they have in the community.

Having a predominately urban form elevates the importance of public open space and entails a need for accessibility across our open space network. This means 'open space' considers the useability, accessibility and the integration required for daily community needs. 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 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 and improving inclusion and accessibility outcomes of play spaces.

Goal: Equitable access to sustainable infrastructure and community green space

ACTIONS

- 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.
- Look to develop further community garden and edible planting, with effective planning on project locations and governance.



307HA

of open space, parks and gardens



1.3 URBAN HEAT MITIGATION

BACKGROUND

The effects of urban heat 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 urban areas, such as Palmerston, are particularly susceptible to storing and radiating heat. With the 'development' comes clearing of the existing canopy whilst simultaneously adding grey cover of hard surfaces which then limits the existing and future planting abilities.

Additionally, hazard events such as cyclones and storms have a significant affect on the 'green coverage'. Increasing the amount of green space within the municipality works to reduce surface temperature of our urban environments, providing shade and working to cool and clean the air.

Complexities in our environment, and growth and development trends highlight that greening our city must take a coordinated approach, due to the mix of land tenures and interests. Focusing efforts now on mitigating effects, supports liveability 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 has an Urban Forest Policy to manage risk and requests relating to tree removal, highlighting the importance of maintaining existing cover.

Goal: Urban heat mitigation and increased canopy cover

ACTIONS

- Develop partnerships with CSIRO, NTG and other Local Governments, to improve use of datasets in decision making around greening.
- Develop a Greening Plan, that supports canopy cover monitoring and considers future movement programming.
- Undertake a baseline study to determine monitoring approaches to urban heat and allow measurement of progress.
- Expand community planting programs through partnerships with local businesses, community groups and non-for-profit organisations.
- Develop community awareness programs and work with institutions to improve community messaging around tree preservation.

888

trees planted
in 2020/21

365

participants
in verge
beautification

THEME 2: EMPOWERING AND CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY

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

Promoting sustainable behaviours is a coordinated effort, involving various government, non-profit and advocacy bodies. Council plays a key role in linking local systems to wider stakeholders. This involves facilitating local opportunities to engage, allowing residents to see their local changes as part of the collective.

As a community facing organisation there is opportunity and responsibility to empower and support our community.

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 critical, particularly when facing a changing climate and challenges of an existing car-centric development.

Council delivers a range of programming and events for Palmerston residents. Doing so sustainably models to the community how environmental impacts can be reduced. It acknowledges our role as a main service provider which is part of the collective effort.

PRIORITIES

1. ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES



2. CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



3. SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



KEY DOCUMENT

- Inclusive, Diverse and Accessible Policy Framework



2.1 ENGAGING 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 already leading within their communities.

It's important to ensure messaging of Council priorities and activity is translated to the community. Strong engagement and activity under this theme is crucial for implementation of the wider strategy.



Goal: Community wide sustainability through education, awareness and engagement

EXISTING INITIATIVES

- Waste education campaigns are ongoing and help reinforce or introduce behaviours that support recycling and diversion rates.
- In 2021 Council supported Student Voice Positive Choice (SVPC) through funding for student designed recycling bin stickers.
- Environmental Grants are offered by Council to support projects where there is a demonstrated improvement that can be achieved in the environment.

ACTIONS

- Provide free sustainability community workshops utilizing a variety of mediums (webinar, newsletter, participatory), and organisations.
- 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 on environmental sustainability.
- Actively promote and review successes of the Environmental Benefits Grants program to encourage uptake from schools, businesses, community groups and non-for-profits.
- Develop community engagement toolkit to address urban tree coverage and sustainable irrigation practices, both relevant to public as well as private land.
- Explore opportunities to integrate and promote Indigenous knowledge systems and languages within open space environments.
- Support relationships with schools to grow existing programs targeting environmentally sustainable outcomes.



2.2 CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

BACKGROUND

Enhancing the appeal and attraction of alternative transport options promotes a number of sustainable benefits. These are well-established, supporting environmental and liveability 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 prioritising pedestrian and alternative transport movement over cars.

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) prioritises walking and pedestrian activity through our city centre.

Goal: Enhancing movement within our communities and connecting to our green infrastructure

ACTIONS

- Coordinate pathway programming with tree planting opportunities to increase useability of our network.
- Develop online tools to promote ease of access to Council Parks and Play Spaces.
- Development of a movement and connectivity plan that facilitates an increase in community uptake of alternative transport and outdoor recreation connections.
- Review strategies and program opportunities to support priority areas for green infrastructure rollout based on NTG and Council planning documents.
- Continue to promote the utilization of outdoor and open space areas for community event programming.
- Develop trails and connections between pathway networks and community, environmental and recreational assets to activate sites and encourage use.

2.3 SUSTAINABLE EVENTS



BACKGROUND

Council has an extensive list of programs and events each year 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, impacts of environmental concerns can be raised within the community.

Events can either exhibit high waste-generating behaviours and resource consumption or model potential alternatives.

Outdoor event programming connects community to the environment and provides a landscape for people to see what reducing their environmental impacts seeks to preserve.

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: Council events demonstrate sustainable practices and promote our environmental surrounds

ACTIONS

- Introduce a ban on single use plastics from all events held on Council land including markets
- Recycling bins available at all Council events
- Develop and implement a Sustainable Events Authorized Statement to be used for Council planned events and review annually.
- Develop an Event Planning Guide that supports community organisations implement their own sustainable events.



THEME 3: FUTURE FOCUSED ON EFFICIENCIES

A focus on efficiencies and continual improvement is central to the long-term goal of sustainability. It emphasises 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 this will support transitioning to a greater proportion of clean energy reserves and ensure we are doing our part to mitigate impacts on our environment.

Council manages a range of assets for community and organisational use. Limiting resource consumption and evolving our processes can reduce environmental impacts and deliver more sustainable operating costs.

PRIORITIES

1. RESOURCE CONSUMPTION

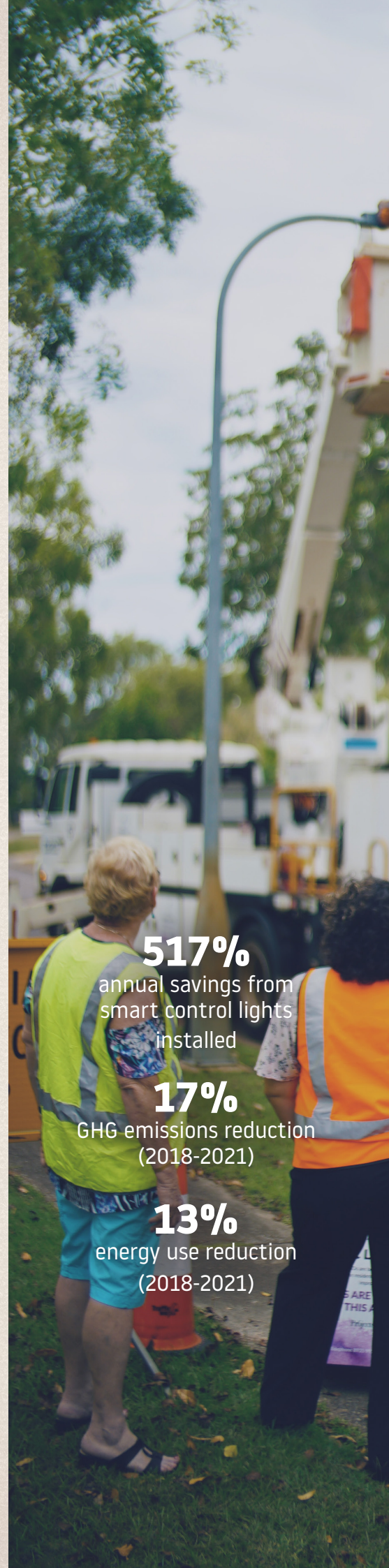


2. WASTE DIVERSION



KEY DOCUMENT

- Asset Management Plan



517%
annual savings from
smart control lights
installed

17%
GHG emissions reduction
(2018-2021)

13%
energy use reduction
(2018-2021)



3.1 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. However, there are also opportunities to reduce water usage in areas not providing active use benefits, recognizing the environment of the top end and issues of water security.

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 City of Palmerston both in terms of cost to the community, and the environment.

While efficiencies can vary in size and scale all contribute when considered collectively. 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 has implemented solar at its facilities, including the Recreation Centre and Library, and expanding upon parking shade structures at other facilities.

ACTIONS

- Investigate current Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Council operations and identify reduction and mitigation strategies.
- Reduce irrigation of non-activated lawn areas, such as median strips and explore other focus areas to target irrigation changes.
- Support irrigation and energy efficiencies with coordinated community information and messaging.
- Develop and implement a Water Saving Action Plan.
- 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.
- Develop internal processes and capabilities for monitoring of resource consumption, and integrate with environmental sensors.

GOAL

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



3.2 WASTE DIVERSION



BACKGROUND

The increase 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 supports other strategies to better manage our community knowledge and attitude to waste.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

- Five rubbish trucks have been rolled out utilising AI technology to manage collection.
- Empowerment of community attitudes to waste are supported through the Reboot your Loot and youth recycling campaigns.
- Youth recycling campaigns, such as the SVPC (Student Voice Positive Choice) recycling bin sticker campaign.

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

ACTIONS

- Investigate sustainable education and awareness to roll out at Council facilities, particularly focused on plastic.
- Reduce amount of waste generated by Council activities, involving community events and community engagement
- Engage with business on how Council can support more sustainable waste behaviours from both customers and businesses.

2612

tonnes of waste diverted from landfill in 2019

12%

diversion rate achieved in 2020

SMART CITY

city of
PALMERSTON
'A Place for People'



city of
PALMERSTON
'A Place for People'

THEME 4: LEAD WITH PURPOSE

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 recognises local capacity building benefits. It also demonstrates that as a purchaser of services, we are responsible in doing our best to support those within industry committed to sustainable development.

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

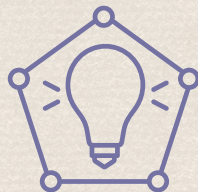
We can also look for opportunities to work with industry, to support their own innovations in sustainability. Just as the community plays an important role, industry to has their part to play as a consumer and provider

PRIORITIES

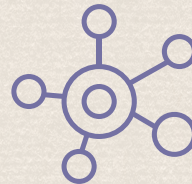
1. INVESTMENT AND PROCUREMENT



2. LEAD INITIATIVES



3. SUPPORT TO INDUSTRY



KEY DOCUMENT

- Procurement Policy

4.1 INVESTMENT AND PROCUREMENT



BACKGROUND

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

We can further our sustainable development initiatives through procurement practices, building capabilities of suppliers that operate 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 desire to showcase sustainability initiatives to the community must extend to our investment procedures and relationships with suppliers.

EXISTING INITIATIVES

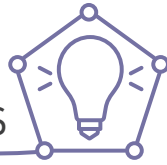
Council procurement is guided by our policy, which amongst other things provides consideration to environmental and social sustainability. This ensures the implications of procurement across the life cycle of the product are assessed, alongside environmental performance of prospective suppliers.



Goal: 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.
- Develop procurement guidelines and tools to support staff engagement with sustainable procurement.



4.2 LEAD INITIATIVES

BACKGROUND

Demonstrating how sustainability can be implemented day to day and within and by our organisation, inspires best practice. As a Council these initiatives provide locally relevant examples to the community, who are part of a much wider global discussion. While showing what can be done, we can also demonstrate what benefits this directly brings.

Leading in this regard is also about showing local business that we prioritise 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 collaboration. We can also look for other examples of best practice, leveraging both local government and industry experiences.

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.

Goal: Demonstrating sustainable initiatives to the community and for the community

ACTIONS

- Monitor Council's heavy plant fleet and investigate alternatives.
- 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.

6
of the 22 fleet
vehicles are
hybrid variations



4.3 SUPPORT INDUSTRY INNOVATIONS



BACKGROUND

Businesses in Palmerston 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.

Goal: Incentivise and support local businesses to drive innovation and capacity

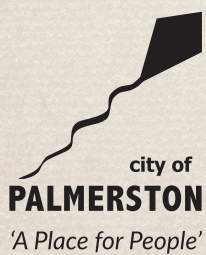
EXISTING INITIATIVES

The Palmerston Local Economic Plan has been completed. This plan outlines how we will strengthen economic outcomes, and what our focus areas are. Elements of the Plan are reflected within aspirations of this Strategy.

ACTIONS

- Provide incentives and education opportunities for small to medium enterprises 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 development of solar energy generation operations, and explore opportunities for rate incentives for '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 improved sustainability, including developing user dashboard.
- Local Economic Plan outcomes around working groups and business engagement, promotes sustainable development within agendas.





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