

Overarching Sustainability Policy

Shire of Augusta Margaret River



May 2023

This policy was adopted by Council to set governing principles in place that align with the community vision through all four key focus areas of the Strategic Community Plan 2040.

Objectives

The Shire recognises that our current way of life is not sustainable and that we have entered a period of ecological overshoot. We acknowledge our responsibility to current and future generations and the ecosystems that sustain us to rapidly transition to a more sustainable and regenerative society.

The objectives of the Policy are to:

- Protect, enhance and regenerate our environment, build climate resilience and rapidly reduce our carbon emissions
- Ensure equity, justice and inclusion for our community
- Support the transition to a circular, diverse and resilient local economy

Application

The application of this policy will have due regard for the following guiding principles:

- Integration of the needs, rights and wisdom of Traditional Custodians into Shire decision making
- The rights of nature to exist, thrive and evolve
- Applying the “Precautionary Principle” to decision-making processes
- Measuring and sharing information about our sustainability performance
- Addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the local context
- The role of advocacy to drive sustainability beyond our borders and responsibilities as a Shire

This policy applies to with all Councillors, staff, volunteers and contractors of the Shire of Augusta Margaret River. The policy is to be reviewed every three years.

Definitions

“**ecological overshoot**” occurs when the demands on the natural world exceed the capacity for renewal of those ecosystems.

“**precautionary principle**” is the idea that when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not yet fully established scientifically.

“**rights of nature**” is the idea that nature has the right to exist, thrive and evolve and that it has inherent worth beyond its resource value to humans.

OVERARCHING SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

“sustainability” means meeting the needs of current and future generations through an integration of environmental protection, social advancement, and equitable economic prosperity.

“sustainable development” is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations and ecosystems to meet their own needs.

Policy

The Shire recognises that all life has intrinsic value, is interconnected and that biodiversity and ecological integrity are part of the irreplaceable life support systems upon which the Earth depends. The Shire supports the transition towards a regenerative culture where we strive to continually restore and protect our environment whilst rapidly reducing our carbon emissions; ensure equity, justice and inclusion for our community; and transition to a circular, diverse and resilient local economy.

The Shire will at all times:

1. Protect, enhance and regenerate our environment, build climate resilience and rapidly reduce our carbon emissions by:

- 1.1 Protecting, rehabilitating and celebrating our ecosystems, with areas co-managed with Wadandi and Pibelmen peoples and greater acknowledgement and integration of their knowledge and connection to boodja in regeneration projects.
- 1.2 Reaching our target of net zero emissions by 2030, with electricity sourced from 100% carbon free renewable energy.
- 1.3 Practicing sustainable land-use planning to successfully balance population changes in the region with environmental protection and regeneration.
- 1.4 Celebrating and promoting the region’s reputation as an eco-tourism destination, attracting locals, businesses and visitors to the region with shared appreciation and care for the unique healthy, clean, green environment and community.
- 1.5 Supporting community adoption of sustainable house design and water, energy, transport and waste practices.
- 1.6 Ensuring climate change mitigation, and adaptation (including disaster response) are informed by principles of equity, justice and inclusion to ensure that climate action leaves no one behind.
- 1.7 Being a nationally recognised leader in climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- 1.8 Valuing our ecosystems by protecting remaining intact native habitats from further damage and rehabilitating and restoring systems.

Performance indicators

- Wadandi and Pibelmen peoples feel acknowledged and their knowledge and connection to boodja inform regeneration projects.
- Overall improvement in ecosystem health and net increase in hectares of protected and regenerated land
- On track to meet our net zero emissions target by 2030

- The Shire is viewed as a local and national leader in sustainability and climate action
- Locally, regionally and nationally recognised eco tourism
- Waterways have a 50m native vegetation buffer either side
- All vegetation types are well represented in reserves and actively managed
- Natural corridors are enhanced and maintained across landscapes
- No species are lost
- All vegetation types are well represented in reserves and protected
- Connected wildlife corridors are created and maintained across landscapes
- Clearing of endemic vegetation is minimised

2. Ensure equity, justice and inclusion for our community by:

- 2.1 Incorporating, respecting and acknowledging Aboriginal knowledge and wisdoms into our operations, Council decisions and relationship to boodja including through dual naming conventions.
- 2.2 Fostering a resilient, welcoming, safe, and inclusive community that contributes towards social justice and equity for all, delivering greater opportunities for local employment, affordable housing and liveability.
- 2.3 Providing a place where people have access to health and wellbeing support and services which allow our community to continue to flourish in a changing world.
- 2.4 Facilitating opportunities for community-led collaborations and participatory engagement in the region, ensuring a connected, engaged and thriving grassroots community is at the heart of our region.
- 2.5 Develop vibrant, sustainable places which maintain their diversity and distinctive unique character, are cared for in a way which sees them thrive in an environmental and agricultural context, and which supports a local economy that is resilient, equitable and sustainable.
- 2.6 Engendering a culture of stewardship to actively care for the unique environment.

Performance indicators

- Increased visibility and integration of Wadandi & Pibelmen culture in our community through place names, cultural celebrations and representation in local democratic processes
- All ages, nationalities and gender identities are represented in local democratic processes
- Residents have access to comfortable, affordable, secure and sustainable housing
- Communities are vibrant, welcoming and people feel safe
- Residents are engaged in productive and meaningful work, with sufficient time for community participation in sport, volunteerism and skill sharing
- Households have access to resources sufficient to meet their needs
- A sense of reciprocity or custodianship is created amongst residents and visitors

3. Transition to a circular, diverse and resilient local economy by:

- 3.1 Supporting a thriving local economy and community where local businesses, enterprises and industry are sustainable, climate resilient, innovative and responsive, and backed by a local circular economy.
- 3.2 Supporting regenerative land use principles and practices across the Shire from agricultural land to public and private gardens and natural areas.
- 3.3 Facilitating a sharing and repairing economy which minimises resource use and focuses on renewing and upgrading rather than building or buying new.
- 3.4 Deliver greater opportunities for young people to be supported to live, work and thrive where they grew up.

Performance indicators

- Regenerative practices result in environmental improvements over time
- Money and resources circulate through the local economy multiple times
- Resources are used in a sustainable and equitable way

Relevant legislation

Nil

Related documents

Strategic Community Plan 2040

Climate Action Plan: Part 1 – Towards Zero Emissions 2020-2030

Environmental Elements of Sustainability Strategy

Strengthening Community Capacity Plan

Sustainable Economy Strategy

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