



Ku-ring-gai Council

Climate Change Policy

Version Number 3

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Climate Change Policy

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Controlled Document Information

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Related Document Information, Standards & References

Related Legislation and Policies:	<p>Commonwealth Ecological Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</p> <p>NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 Local Government Act 1993 The Greater Sydney Region Plan – A Metropolis of Three Cities² The North District Plan NSW Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020–2030</p> <p>Ku-ring-gai Local Strategic Planning Statement Towards Net Zero Emissions - 2030 Action Plan</p>
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Version History

Version Number	Version Start Date	Version End Date	Author	Details and Comments
1	13/10/2009	24/11/2015	Peter Davies	First version
2	25/11/2015	29/07/2020	Marnie Kikken	Updated objectives and greenhouse gas emission reduction targets Updated implementation program
3	29 July 2020		Jacob Sife	

Policy Statement

As of 2018, global heating had reached approximately 1°C above pre-industrial levels due to anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases (IPCC 2018). This has coincided with a trend of increasing intensity and frequency of a number of climate and weather extremes (IPCC 2018, p177). The scientific literature indicates a high level of confidence that the magnitude, frequency and intensity of heatwaves will escalate if global heating continues (IPCC 2018, p210), and that drought, flooding, and intense storm events increase as anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases increase. Observed climate and extreme weather trends may have already led to significant ecological responses within Australia (Harris 2018) and have the potential to lead to catastrophic impacts in the future with extensive economic, environmental, and social costs for local communities.

The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) states, “*Climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat to human societies and the planet*” (IPCC 2018). In recognition of this, the overwhelming majority of countries around the world, including Australia, adopted the Paris Agreement in December 2015. Article 2 of the Paris Agreement commits signatories to -

Holding the increase in the global average temperatures to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

In response to the Paris Agreement, the IPCC produced the *Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C* (SR15). This report acts as a scientific guide for governments, policy makers, and communities to respond to the challenge of the Paris Agreement objectives, and to understand the implications of global heating at 1.5°C and higher.

Ku-ring-gai Council commits to appropriately respond to the challenge of Climate change and play a leading role in the community. Further, Council will provide resources and support for residents and businesses to reduce community emissions towards the goal of reaching net-zero GHG emissions.

The goal of net-zero emissions cannot be met through the actions of Local Government and the community alone, but will require commitment from state and federal governments, and the business sector. However, local government must play its part, and Ku-ring-gai Council will take significant and economically responsible measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change and to build resilience and adaptation measures within the community and across the organisation.

Ku-ring-gai Council recognises taking a leading role in response to climate change will also put Ku-ring-gai in a good position to take advantage of technological and economic opportunities of the future. This Policy is supported by the Towards Net Zero Emissions - 2030 Action Plan which provides a framework for Council and the community to continue to progress towards net zero. The Action Plan is based on currently available and proven technologies. However, Council recognise there will be unexpected developments in technologies over the coming decade, just as we have seen over the past decade with the falling cost of renewable energy. Council will look to take advantage of the benefits new technologies offer. Accordingly, while the emission reduction pathway set out in this policy and supporting Action Plan constitute Council’s primary policy to reduce emissions, Council will also look at emerging opportunities to reduce emissions, as low emissions technologies fall in cost or offer other benefits.

Emission Reduction and Renewable Energy Targets

On the basis of aligning Council's Climate Change Mitigation Program with the Paris Agreement, a set of internal Council targets for GHG emissions and renewable energy have been determined. A community-wide, GHG emissions goal has also been determined, which provides a means for Council to support community efforts to reduce local household and business emissions in line with the Paris Agreement.

The internal Council emissions targets and the community emissions goals form the primary objectives of this Policy and are set out in the table below.

Table 1 Emission Reduction and Renewable Energy Targets

Emission trajectories	Council targets (2000 baseline)
Council	
50% reduction	By 2030 or earlier
100% reduction (net zero emissions)	By 2040 or earlier
100% renewable energy	By 2030 whilst pursuing efforts to reach 100% renewable by 2025
100% reduction in fleet emissions	By 2040 or earlier
Community	
100% reduction (net zero emissions)	By 2040 or earlier

Purpose and objectives

Objectives:

- To reduce Council’s greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) (from fixed assets, street lighting and vehicles) to levels consistent with the international goal of limiting global heating to 1.5° C above pre-industrial levels, with no overshoot.
Equating to -
 - A reduction in total GHG emissions of 50% by 2030 (relative to 2000 levels), or earlier.
 - A reduction in total GHG emissions to net zero by 2040, or earlier.
- To reach 100% renewable energy for all grid-sourced electricity by 2030, whilst pursuing efforts to reach 100% renewable energy by 2025.
- To reduce fleet emissions to net zero by 2040, or earlier (based on 2000 levels).
- To support the community in the goal of reaching net zero GHG emissions by 2040. Through the delivery of programs and initiatives that further community GHG emission reductions efforts.
- To continue to review and make accessible Council’s total GHG emissions footprint and emission reduction trajectory
- To review and make accessible the Ku-ring-gai community’s total GHG emissions footprint and emission reduction trajectory.
- To reduce Council, the community and the natural and built environment’s vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.
- To increase Council, the community and the natural and built environment’s resilience to the impacts of climate change and associated extreme or intensified weather events.

Principles

The following principles provide a high level framework for Councils response to climate change:

- Council will adopt an evidence-based approach in responding to climate change, regularly reviewing plans, strategies, and benchmarks to ensure they remain consistent with the most recent knowledge and best available science.
- Council recognises effective mitigation of climate change requires action by all levels of government and by all sectors of the community.
- Council will work with all levels of government to seek local, state and national climate mitigation and climate adaptation solutions that are informed by the current knowledge and best available science.
- Council will work with and support the community in efforts to mitigate climate change, and adapt and build resilience to climate change impacts.
- Local Government has a key role to play in climate change mitigation and the management of climate change impacts, particularly through its statutory responsibilities and regulatory powers relating to land use planning, financial management, environmental planning, environmental protection and natural resource management
- Consideration of climate change and its potential impacts be incorporated into Council's operations, whilst appropriate mitigation and adaptation actions must be integrated into all strategic and operational management activities

Scope

Council's Climate Change Policy and the supporting Towards Net Zero Emissions - 2030 Action Plan provides a pathway for Council to take all reasonable and practical measures to increase climate change resilience and reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the organisation and within the community.

Responsibilities

This policy applies to all sections of Council.

Council's Manager Environment and Sustainability has overall responsibility for compliance with this Policy.

Implementation of this Policy is the responsibility of the General Manager, all Directors, Managers, Supervisors and Council Staff.

Implementation activities

To meet the objectives of this Policy, the following activities will be implemented across a number of sections of Council:

ACTIVITY AREA	RESPONSIBILITY AREA															
	Environment & Sustainability	Development & Assessment	Integrated Planning & Property	Projects Operations	Strategic Projects	Engineering Services	Information Technology	Community & Recreation Services	Library and Cultural Services	Procurement and contracts	Finance	Open Space Operations	Waste Operations	People & Culture	Urban Planning & Heritage	Corporate Communications
Staff behavioural change programs	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Energy efficiency and renewable energy works program for Council buildings and facilities	√					√										
Monitoring and maintenance of Council’s water reuse systems	√					√						√				
Community / business climate change mitigation / education programs	√															√
Community / business climate change adaptation / education programs	√											√				√
Sustainability data management and reporting system	√					√		√								
Sustainability and climate resilience provisions in planning controls	√	√													√	
Sustainability and climate resilience building performance standards for new and refurbished assets	√		√			√		√								

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Sustainable design and resource efficiency integrated into capital works program	√			√	√																√	
Sustainable design of parks, playgrounds and ovals	√			√	√								√									
Green infrastructure	√			√	√																	
Flood risk management	√						√							√								
Energy efficient street lighting upgrades	√						√															
Energy efficient equipment / appliances / devices							√	√														
Software to enhance resource efficiency								√														
Sustainable event management	√									√	√	√										√
Sustainable design of town and neighbourhood centres	√																					√
Sustainable transport	√						√															√
Sustainable procurement	√											√										
Financing for energy reduction / efficiency projects													√									
Emergency and disaster resilience management	√													√								
Biodiversity resilience programs	√													√								
Fleet management														√								
Minimum performance standards for new or replacement outdoor lighting installations	√			√	√									√								
Community waste reduction and efficiency programs	√																					√
Council waste management programs																						√
Proactive engagement with State and Federal Government and other relevant agencies to influence policies and reforms that affect Council's climate change mitigation and adaptation program	√							√							√							

Consideration of how financial management practices enable or impede climate change mitigation.	√										√					
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Monitoring and evaluation

Council will monitor and report against its Climate Change Policy as follows:

Item	Details	Timeframe
Council GHG emission reduction targets	Monitored through Council's sustainability data management and reporting (Envizi) system and reported against Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan / Council's Annual Report	Quarterly / Annually
Community GHG emissions	Monitored through use of GPC based community inventory of emissions	Every 4 Years
Mitigation and adaptation activities	Key activities reported against Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan / Council's Annual Report	Quarterly / Annually
Impact of mitigation and adaptation activities (Council)	Monitored through Council's sustainability data management and reporting (Envizi) system and reported against Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan / Council's Annual Report	Quarterly / Annually
Impact of mitigation and adaptation activities (community)	Measured through community surveys and project evaluation and reported against Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan / Council's Annual Report	Quarterly / Annually

Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition
Climate change	A long-term change in the earth's climate system, especially a change due to an increase in the average atmospheric temperature.
Climate change adaptation	Encompasses measures taken in response to the actual or expected changes in climate, to negate or reduce their impact. Adaptation measures aim to reduce vulnerability to climate change risks and impacts.
Climate change impact	An effect of climate change on a socio-bio-physical system.
Climate change risk	The risks associated with the socio-bio-physical impacts of climate change.
Climate change mitigation	Refers to efforts to reduce or prevent greenhouse gas emissions, aimed at reducing the potential extent of climate change or reducing the probability of reaching a certain level of climate change.
Climate resilience	The ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self-organising, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change.
Greenhouse gases (GHGs)	Any gaseous compound in the atmosphere (such as water vapour, carbon dioxide, tropospheric ozone, nitrous oxide, and methane) that is capable of absorbing infrared radiation, thereby trapping and holding heat in the atmosphere. By increasing the heat in the atmosphere, greenhouse gases are responsible for the greenhouse effect, which ultimately leads to global warming.

References

- Harris, R.M.B et al. (2018), *Biological responses to the press and pulse of climate trends and extreme events*. Nature Climate Change 8. Accessed at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mike_Letnic/publication/326067239_Biological_responses_to_the_press_and_pulse_of_climate_trends_and_extreme_events/links/5b4e9dd445851507a7a9a3c2/Biological-responses-to-the-press-and-pulse-of-climate-trends-and-extreme-events.pdf
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2018) *Special Report: Global Warming Of 1.5°C*. Accessed at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>