

Rockdale City Council Environment Policy

Purpose

This policy statement outlines Rockdale City Council's approach to environmental management. The policy establishes a platform for addressing environmental objectives and integrating environmental responsibility into all aspects of Council's work. This environment policy will enhance the quality of Council's activities and services, enabling Council to become a leader in environmental management.

Local Government has considerable responsibilities with respect to environmental management. Council embraces our responsibility to manage and reduce environmental impacts in accordance with our charter set out in the Local Government Act (NSW) 1993 (Section 8):

'To properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible, in a manner which is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development.'

A stated purpose of the Act (Section 7e) is *to require Councils, Councillors and Council employees to have regard to the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development in carrying out their responsibilities*. To this end, ecologically sustainable management of the Rockdale environment is the responsibility of each and every Council employee and Councillor.

Definitions

'Ecologically sustainable development' (ESD) - Local Government Act (NSW) 1993:

...Ecologically sustainability development requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. Ecologically Sustainable development can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

(a) *the precautionary principle - namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.*

(b) *intergenerational equity - namely, that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations,*

(c) *conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity - namely, that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration,*

(d) *improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms - namely, that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services...'*

'Environment' - adapted from the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (NSW) 1979:

...The natural and built aspects of the surroundings of people, whether affecting them as individuals or in social groupings.'

Environment Policy

Rockdale City Council is committed to achieving a world class standard of environmental management, through the integration of ecologically sustainable development principles into all Council activities. Rockdale City Council aims to ensure that the protection and improvement of environmental quality is a prime consideration in all Council business.

The importance Council places on environmental management is reflected in Council's City Plan (adopted June 2009) which sets out the long term strategic direction for the City of Rockdale. As part of this Plan Council has adopted the below mission:

"To provide quality local government services that protect our environment, are respectful to our community's needs and are delivered in a financially, socially and environmentally responsible way."

Through the development of the City Plan Council has identified a number of projects and programs to be implemented to ensure that environmental management remains a core business priority of Rockdale City Council.

Council's approach to environmental management seeks continuous improvement in performance by taking into account statutory requirements, evolving knowledge and our community's expectations. Our Environmental Management System for the Operational Service Units will assure the Rockdale community that we will continually monitor, review and improve Council operations to meet best practice environmental management.

Specifically, to protect the environment of Rockdale, Council will:

- Comply with all applicable laws, regulations and standards, and apply additional standards and targets to minimise environmental impacts resulting from operations or services
- Communicate openly with the community about environmental issues
- Promote community environmental awareness, behavioural change and provide opportunities for involvement in environmental programs
- Ensure that environmental and social costs are considered in addition to economic costs when evaluating services provided by and to Council
- Ensure that employees, the local community and suppliers of goods and services are informed about this policy and aware of their environmental responsibilities in relation to Council business
- Ensure that Council has management systems to identify, control and monitor environmental risks arising from our activities
- Establish programs to protect the environment; specifically to protect biodiversity, water quality, air quality, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage; prevent the potential for noise and other pollution; and to minimise use of resources through actions including conserving water and reducing energy consumption to minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

- Provide our employees and external parties with the necessary leadership, training and understanding in order to comply with the requirements of this policy.

Responsibility

This policy applies to all staff of Rockdale City Council.