
Policy:	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY	SP-POL-06
Division:	Planning	
Responsible Officer:	Strategic Planning Manager	

1. INTRODUCTION

Council, Councillors and Council employees are required under s7(e) *Local Government Act 1993* to have regard to the principles of **ecologically sustainable development** in carrying out their responsibilities. It is also part of the legislative charter of a Council (i.e. s8(1)) to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the Yass Valley Local Government Area, in a manner that is consistent with and promotes the principles of ecologically sustainable development.

Council must ensure that the Community Strategic Plan addresses civic leadership, social, environmental and economic issues in an integrated manner (s402(3)(e) *Local Government Act 1993*).

Local Government and public trading enterprises are strongly encouraged to adopt the principles from the *NSW Government Sustainability Policy (2008)* as an integral part of their business, thereby contributing to NSW's broad sustainability outcomes, while pursuing good business practice.

The *Tablelands Regional Community Strategic Plan 2016-2036* identifies seven key focus areas, which include strategies to achieve long term goals that address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

To:

- Formalise Council's environmental sustainability philosophy
- Demonstrate leadership to the Yass Valley community through the implementation of environmental sustainability initiatives

3. POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all Councillors and Staff and is intended to integrate environmental sustainability into Council's decision making to satisfy its statutory obligations under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

4. POLICY PROVISION

Council acknowledges that all its decisions and actions have an impact on the quality of life of present and future generations. The desired result is to provide positive influences toward community wellbeing while maintaining or enhancing those aspects the community most values.

Council recognises that in order to enhance the key environmental sustainability issues in Yass Valley (refer Attachment A), it has a role in protecting the environment, minimising adverse environmental impacts, remediating environmental problems, and reducing resource consumption.

Council is committed to:

- Protecting and conserving the environment, including natural resources, landscapes, ecological processes, biological diversity, Aboriginal and European items and cultural heritage
- Reducing the ecological footprint of Council and the Yass Valley community as a whole, through the encouragement of avoidance of waste, sustainable use of resources, and uptake of sustainable living
- Preventing and minimising human impacts on the environment by incorporating the principles of Ecological Sustainable Development into planning, policies and procedures

- Excellence in environmental management and corporate responsibility by utilising current best practices where possible and applying expertise within Council to contribute to managing environmental issues where applicable

5. REVIEW

The review of this policy will take account of relevant legislation and State Government policies, best practice guidelines and Council plans and priorities.

This policy will be reviewed following each general election of Council and the Director Planning is responsible for arranging the completion of the review.

6. LEGISLATION AND LEGAL FRAMEWROK

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following:

- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *NSW Government Sustainability Policy 2008*
- *Yass Valley 2030 Community Strategic Plan*

7. DEFINITIONS

The implementation of a sustainability philosophy requires recognition that all decisions and actions have an impact on present and future generations.

Sustainability broadly includes:

- Living within the limits of what the environment can provide
- Understanding the many interconnections between economy, society and the environment
- The equal distribution of resources and opportunities

Environmental Sustainability involves:

- Making decisions and taking action that are in the interests of protecting the natural world, with particular emphasis on preserving the capability of the environment to support human life

Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) means:

- Ecologically sustainable 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:

- The precautionary principle**—namely, that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. In the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:
 - Careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment
 - An assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options
- Inter-generational 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
- Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity**—namely, that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration

- d.
- e. **Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms**—namely, that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, such as:
- (i) Polluter pays—that is, those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance or abatement,
 - (ii) The users of goods and services should pay prices based on the full life cycle of costs of providing goods and services, including the use of natural resources and assets and the ultimate disposal of any waste,
 - (iii) Environmental goals, having been established, should be pursued in the most cost effective way, by establishing incentive structures, including market mechanisms, that enable those best placed to maximise benefits or minimise costs to develop their own solutions and responses to environmental problems

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

Council and all Staff undertaking decision making on behalf of Council are required to take into account the provisions of this policy in relation to any service or project being undertaken by Council.

9. HISTORY

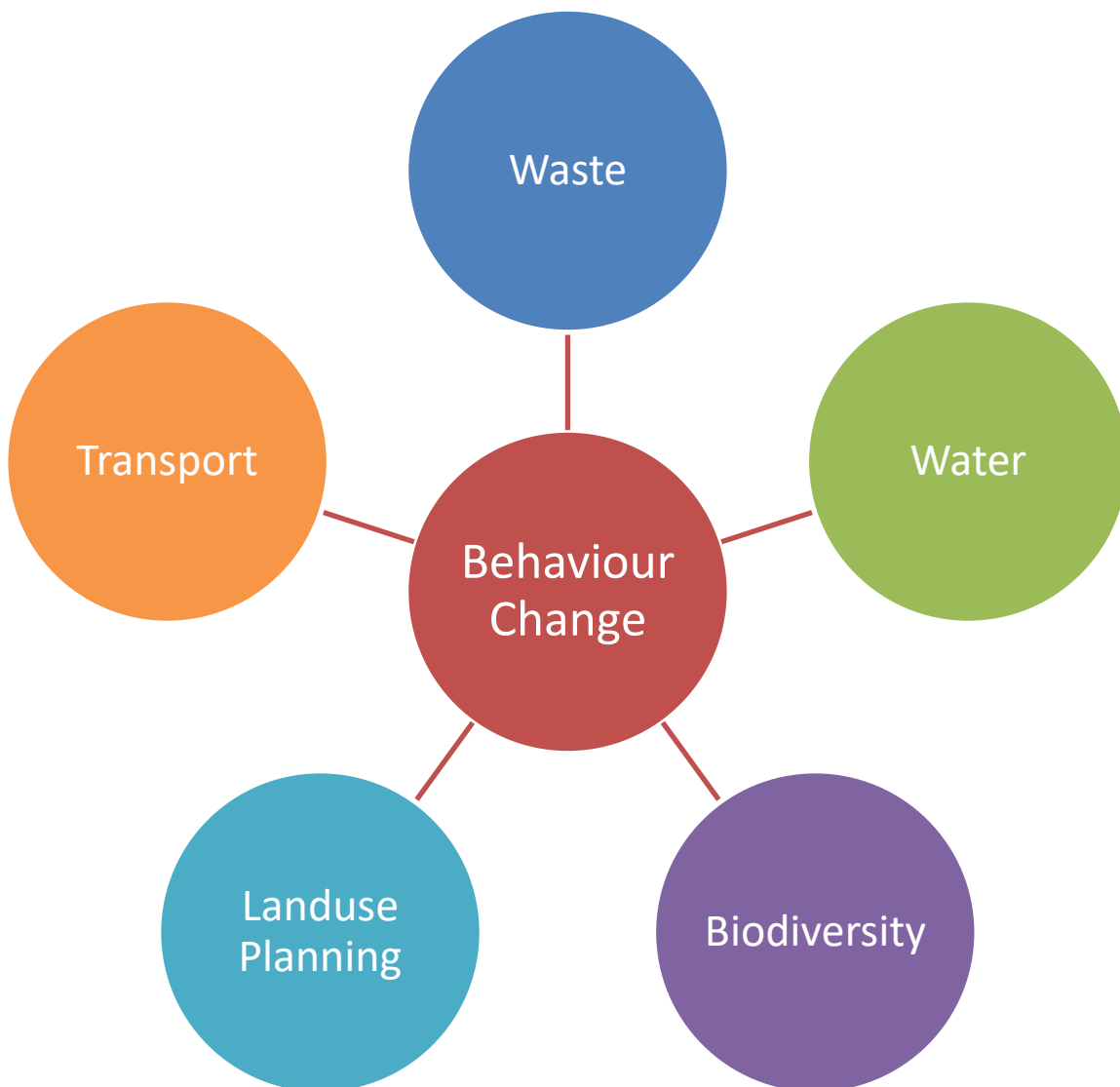
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12/06/2014	25/06/2014	122 131	26/6-31/7/2014	01/08/2014	
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Key Sustainability Themes for the Yass Valley

Yass Valley Sustainable Communities Advisory Committee, 12 May 2014

Adopted by Yass Valley Council, 28 May 2014



Key Sustainability Issues/Actions for the Yass Valley

Yass Valley Sustainable Communities Advisory Committee, 12 May 2014

Adopted by Yass Valley Council, 28 May 2014

Waste

Illegal Dumping

ACT/NSW
Cross-
Boarder
Illegal
Dumping
Action
Project

Clean Up
Australia Day

Recycling

Information
sheet of
what can and
can not be
recycled

Signage at
Transfer
Station -
educate staff
and users

Investigate
improving
Revolve

Input into
the YVC
Waste
Strategy

Green waste / compost

Provision of
green waste
bins with a
weekly or
fortnightly
collection

Improve
quality of the
compost

Input into
the YVC
Waste
Strategy

Water

Water quality (esp villages)

Water
quantity /
stream flow /
farm dams

Use &
Conservation

Waterway management

Monitoring,
establish
benchmark

Publish
waterwatch
results on the
YVC website
with interp
data

Determine
triggers for
environmental
releases

Fact sheet &
website

Weed (Willow)
control &
riparian
restoration

Pest (Carp)
control

Yass River
Management
Plan *

* Yass River Management Plan (Yass Dam to Railway Weir)

Review existing plans (eg Yass Dam REF/OEMP, Riverbank Park Master Plan, PAMP, draft Yass

Strategic
removal of
weeds, esp
willows &
blackberries

Pest animals,
esp carp

Recreational
infrastructure,
eg Yass River
Lookout (17
Irvine Drive),
Seating at Boat
ramps

Cooperative
projects with
local schools
and landcare
groups

Extension of
bike and/or
walking path to
include Yass
Dam wall,
historic railway
bridge, Joe
O'Connor,
Kirby Jones

Kirby Jones
opportunities
(WSUD,
riparian
restoration,
RE1)

Business
opportunities,
eg kiosk,
abseiling,
canoe and bike
hire

Biodiversity

Awareness of Nature Reserves

Roadside Vegetation

Map and promote, esp walking trails (incl Hume & Hovell Track, Mundoonen)

Promote existing NPWS PoMs

Input into the review of YVC Plans of Management

Possible new Parks, eg Hattons Corner

Mapping and management

Transport

Road Quality

Renewable and Alternative Fuels

Alternatives to Private Car use

Community education of road maintenance program, incl costs

driving tips to minimise road damage

Electric Vehicle charge points

Commuter Carpooling

Promoting Commuter Bus

Bicycles

Facebook page or app

address concerns (safety, flexibility)

Free breakfast event for bus commuters

investigate timetable

Infrastructure - Bike racks and paths (PAMP input)

Education, sharing pathways

Bike Week (Sept 2014)

Landuse Planning

Sustainable Building / Development

Land Capacity

Competing landuses (rural res &
commercial agriculture)
Urban development along northern
border of the ACT

Lifestyle Farming

Sustainable
House Day,
Gundaroo bus
trip with lunch

Earth Hour

Showcase best-
practise
development
(eg West
Belconnen)

Links to existing
information
online

Promote YVC
land capability
map

Participate in
cross-boarder
planning
matters and
provision of
information to
the community

Be consulted
during the
development of
the Peri-urban
Study

Provision of
information, in
conjunction
with LLS &
Landcare

Biosecurity:
weeds & pests

NRM: water &
soils

Shared
infrastructure
(encourage the
establishment
of a small-farm
cooperative)

