



Policy Owner: Director City Strategy

Direction: 5. Our Civic Leadership

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 North Sydney Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing our quality of life, while ensuring the viability of Council, now and in the future, through an integrated consideration of social, environmental, economic and governance factors. The adoption of this Policy provides Council with a holistic approach to progressing the philosophy of sustainability.

1.2 Council is required under the *Local Government Act 1993* to take into account the principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) in all its activities. Decision making under ESD involves the integration of environmental, social, economic and governance considerations - known as Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL).

For Council to embrace the principles of sustainability (social equity, environmental quality, economic prosperity and good governance) it requires recognition that all its decisions and actions have an impact on the quality of life of present and future generations. The desired result is to balance sustainability considerations to provide positive influences toward community well being while maintaining or enhancing those aspects the community most values in the ecological, social, cultural and economic environments.

1.3 The objectives of the policy are to:

- a) Provide understanding and communication of the principles of sustainability throughout Council;
- b) Embed sustainability in Council's planning, operational, decision making and reporting processes; and
- c) Promote sustainability to the wider community

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 This Policy applies to all permanent, temporary and casual employees, volunteers, work experience persons and Councillors of Council.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) - is a reporting device and an approach to decision making (eg the use of reporting and decision making tools) to understand the social, environmental, economic and governance implications of decisions across council activities.¹

3.2 Council defines the principles of sustainability as follows:

Social equity	Council will ensure access to services, facilities and amenities, and encourage community participation while considering the environmental economic and governance ramifications of decisions.
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Environmental quality	Council will deliver services and activities improving overall physical amenity, while protecting and enhancing natural assets and considering the social, economic and governance implications of decisions.
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Economic prosperity	Council will promote a strong local economy, while considering the social, economic and governance implications of decisions.
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Good governance	Council will govern in order to achieve its objectives within an acceptable degree of risk while not compromising its social, environmental and economic well being.
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4. PROVISIONS

4.1 Linkage to Community Strategic Plan

In order to provide consistency across Council's corporate documents and to continue Council's efforts in moving towards sustainability these guiding principles should be considered in context with the following Directions within the *Community Strategic Plan*:

- Our Living Environment - a greener, cleaner, and environmentally responsible North Sydney; and expanding local open space and recreational facilities

¹ Adapted from ICLEI and City of Melbourne *Triple Bottom Line Toolkit* 2002

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- Our Built Environment - a well designed, welcoming, safe and beautiful urban environment; a reliable, accessible and sustainable transport system; well maintained local infrastructure
 - Our Economic Vitality - commercial centres with thriving businesses and a life that caters to a variety of social and cultural needs
 - Our Social Vitality - a healthy, safe, connected and vibrant community
 - Our Civic Leadership - good governance through openness, transparency, accountability and participatory decision making; and a healthy financial position

Council will take a lead role in moving towards a sustainable North Sydney through the following commitments:

4.2 Guiding Principles

Principles provide understanding and clarification of the concepts of sustainability, which assists with implementation. Some are established legal principles and are part of Council's Core Values relating to sustainability, while others might be better described as 'approaches' to decision making. These guiding principles need to be considered as a package, with no principle predominating.

The following principles will be taken into account as part of Council's decisions:

- 4.2.1 The Precautionary Principle - act cautiously when there is a risk of serious or irreversible impacts on the environment or the community. Do not use uncertainty as a reason to not protect the environment or the community.
- 4.2.2 Ensuring Equity within and between Generations - provide for equity within and between generations. Ensure that all community members have equitable access to resources and justice now, and into the future.
- 4.2.3 Preservation - conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration.
- 4.2.4 Community Participation - provide for broad community involvement on issues that affect the community. Engage and encourage collaboration and partnerships with individuals, communities, stakeholders and businesses to build an understanding of sustainability and promote collective responsibility.

4.3 Decision Making

The most efficient way to continue progress towards sustainability is to target key areas of decision making. Those making decisions about the development of new policies, planning, procurement and allocation of resources are in the best

position to influence progress towards sustainability. However as with work health and safety for example, sustainability must become the responsibility of everyone.

Using the guiding principles Council has guidelines and a toolkit to assist sustainable decision making by council departments. Council will also provide training to staff in the application of these tools.

4.4 Communication and Community Engagement

Council will communicate and promote awareness and understanding of the principles, benefits, practices and applications of sustainability to councillors, staff and the community to inspire them to embrace and work towards sustainability.

Council will engage in and promote partnerships to advance sustainability in North Sydney. These partnerships may be with other councils, state and federal governments, research and academic institutions, industries, businesses, non-government organisations and communities.

4.5 Monitoring and Reporting Progress

Council will monitor and report regularly on progress towards sustainability. A set of sustainability indicators have been developed (and included within the *Community Strategic Plan*) to support long term monitoring and reporting, this will allow Council to consolidate an information base, to predict and respond to changing circumstances and to use and allocate resources fairly.

5. RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1 Council's (Internal) Sustainability Working Group made up of representatives from across all of Council's Divisions leads and facilitates the implementation of QBL. This Group is also responsible for the ongoing management, evaluation and reporting to ensure that QBL principles are met and maintained across Council

5.2 Council's Integrated Planning and Special Projects Department is responsible for supporting the Sustainability Working Group; and for coordinating the development and implementation of the organisational sustainability program and suite of corporate planning documents.

5.3 Council's (internal) Organisational Sustainability 'Champions' are responsible for raising the profile of organisational sustainability and supporting staff in using the sustainability guidelines and toolkit.

- 5.4 Senior Management (MANEX) is responsible for supporting the implementation of the organisational sustainability program and the organisational change required to drive it. Support of senior management is critical for making QBL a success and embedding it within Council.
- 5.5 The Elected Council is responsible for understanding and taking into account the actual and potential implications for sustainability of a proposed policy or initiative when making decisions on behalf of, and in the best interests of, present and future generations.
- 5.6 All staff have a responsibility in applying sustainability concepts to their work to make a contribution to the achievement of Council's strategic direction and improve sustainability outcomes.
- 5.7 The community individually and collectively, have an impact on the environment and are encouraged to take responsibility and actively participate in developing solutions for actions that harm the environment.

6. RELATED POLICIES/LEGISLATION/DOCUMENTS

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council policies and documents:

- Asset Management Strategy
- Community Engagement Policy
- Community Strategic Plan
- Delivery Program
- Long Term Financial Plan
- Operational Plan
- Workforce Strategy

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents/legislation:

- Local Government Act 1993

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
1	16 February 2009	Council	61	2012/13
2	2 August 2010	Council	473	2012/13
3	18 February 2013	Council	61	2016/17
4	25 June 2018	Council	214	2020/21