

Title:	Environment Policy
Type:	Organisational
Adopted:	12 December 2019
File No:	19/51846

1. Purpose

The purpose of the Environment Policy (Policy) is to demonstrate Council's commitment to a sustainable future.

2. Rationale

Murrindindi Shire is a place of unique natural beauty and rural character, where the natural environment is valued, respected and should be responsibly managed for public benefit and future generations. A healthy natural environment provides functions that are essential for life, clean water, fresh air, healthy soil and habitat. Beyond the biological benefits, the natural environment also provides economic, social and cultural benefits to the community of Murrindindi shire and a range of positive influences on mental and physical health, through promoting physical activity and social interaction for community and tourists.

Council's role in environmental management as a land manager, regulator, strategic planner, advocate, facilitator and service provider, involves a range of services that impact in different ways on the environment. This Policy outlines the commitment of the organisation to protect, minimise impact to and where appropriate, enhance the natural environment in delivering these services.

3. Scope

This Policy covers all staff undertaking work related duties that impact directly or in-directly on the environment.

4. Definitions

Reference Term	Definition
Environment	The air, water and land in or on which people, animals and plants live including any value with natural attributes. This definition extends to areas of aboriginal cultural heritage value.
Sustainable	The quality of not being harmful to the environment or depleting natural resources, and thereby supporting long-term ecological balance
Habitat	The natural home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism.
The Organisation	Murrindindi Shire Council
Best Practice	Procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or the most effective.

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5. Policy

All staff will:

- conduct activities in a way that protects the natural environment
- commit to continued improvement in environmental best practice
- conserve and reduce consumption of natural resources in Council operations.

Managers will:

- take reasonable steps to familiarise themselves with environmental legislation and standards that pertain to their role
- ensure the environment is considered in the delivery of services
- minimise resource use in delivery of works, such as utilising products made from recovered resources.
- ensure their staff comply with environmental legislation and relevant standards when undertaking their duties
- display leadership that creates a culture of environmental best practice.

The Organisation will endeavour to:

- where possible remediate adverse environmental impacts associated with past operations in a cost effective manner
- respond to the challenges presented to our community by climate change within council's resources and capacity.
- engage with our community and understand what they value about the environment and act accordingly
- advocate to State and Federal Government and industry on environmental issues of concern to our community
- display strong leadership to the community.

6. Related Policies, Strategies and Legislation*

- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cwth)*
- *The Environmental Protection Act 1970*
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- *The Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1897*
- Murrindindi Planning Scheme
- Guidelines for the Removal, Destruction or Lopping of Native Vegetation
- Road Safety Exemption Procedure for the Removal of Native Vegetation
- Murrindindi Shire Council Plan 2017-2021
- Murrindindi Shire Council Environmental Standards in Infrastructure works Policy
- Murrindindi Shire Council Rural Roadside Management Code of Practice
- Murrindindi Shire Council Procurement Policy

* this is not a comprehensive list of legislation, but provides guidance to the most common environmental legislation pertaining to Council activities.

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7. Council Plan

This Policy is consistent with the Council Plan 2017-2021 Our Place strategy to 'strengthen the environmental sustainability of our communities, protect our natural environment and reduce resource consumption.'

8. Management and Review

This Policy will be implemented by the CEO through the Director, Assets and Development, Director Corporate and Shared Services, Director Community Engagement, with the support of the Coordinator, Environmental Sustainability.

With support from the Coordinator Environmental Sustainability, the Director Assets and Development, will review the Policy at least every three years on:

- changes to relevant legislation
- review of the effectiveness of this Policy in achieving its purpose.

9. Consultation

Consultation was undertaken by way of the Murrindindi Shire Council Leadership Team.

10. Human Rights Charter

This Policy has been developed with consideration of the requirements under the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.