



Mitchell Shire Council Environment Policy

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MITCHELL SHIRE COUNCIL



Vision

Mitchell Shire Council is a leader in sustainable environmental management in all our business operations and in support of the wider community.

Purpose

To guide Council's decision making processes and embed environmental considerations across the organisation.

Scope

This Policy covers all Mitchell Shire Council employees, Councillors, contractors and volunteers, undertaking Council work related duties that impact directly or in-directly on the environment. The policy sets environmental goals for the delivery of Council's services.

It is acknowledged that there are areas of environmental management, where Council does not have direct control. In these situations, Council will collaborate with our government agency partners such as DELWP, Water Authorities and the CFA and take an advocacy role to achieve the goals of this Policy.

Policy

The Policy vision is underpinned by six (6) strategic aims to assist in guiding Council's activities planning and business decisions which support best practice environmental management now diverse and rapidly growing community, these are;

- Energy;
- Climate Change;
- Land and Biodiversity;
- Water;
- Urban Ecology; and
- Resource Use and Waste Management.

Council is committed to taking clear and logical steps to achieve the 2050 goals within this policy, including immediate – 2 year actions and achieving interim (2035) goals.

Energy

Greenhouse emissions, adaptation, energy efficiency, renewable resources.

We will have zero net emissions by 2050.

2050 Goals

- Mitchell Shire Council to have Zero Net Emissions.¹
- 100% of Council's electricity needs are sourced from renewable resources.
- All Council owned buildings and facilities are planned, designed, built or retrofitted to achieve the highest level of environmentally sustainable design.

¹ Victorian Climate Change Act 2017

Climate Change

Climate change mitigation and adaptation, responding to and creating resilience to a changing climate, drought, emergency management.

We will continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to minimise the impact of climate change.

We will continue to respond to climatic changes and emergencies.

2050 Goals

- Council's assets are planned and built to respond to the effects of a changing climate.
- All Council policies and plans take account of climate change and its implications for Council operations.
- Climate Change risk mitigation is part of business as usual at Mitchell Shire Council.

Land and Biodiversity

Native Flora and fauna, biolinks, nature, ecosystem services, rare and threatened species, sustainable land management sustainable agriculture, pest plant and animal control, climate change adaptation, Biomass.

We will practice, promote and encourage sustainable, innovative and adaptive land management that responds to climate change.

We will protect, restore and connect landscapes by increasing the extent and quality of native habitat.

2050 Goals

- Mitchell Shire is known for supporting innovative, sustainable and adaptable land management and agricultural business.
- Mitchell Shire's biodiversity values and natural environment are embedded within and protected by the planning scheme and local policy.
- The majority of our population is connected to nature.
- Prevent new high-risk invasive plants and animals from establishing in the Shire ²
- Indigenous land management practices are recognised and respected
- No vulnerable or near threatened species will have become endangered.³
- Net gain of the overall extent and condition of habitats across Council managed land.⁴

Water

Water conservation, water quality, waterways and wetlands, integrated water management, water security, water reuse.

We will reduce water use and increase water quality.

2050 Goals

- Reduce Council's reliance on potable water sources through more effective usage of non-potable and reclaimed water sources.

² Goulburn Broken Biosecurity, Invasive Plants and Animals Strategy 2019 - 2025

³ Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037

⁴ Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037

- Mitchell Shire communities are;
 - provided with water,
 - protected from floods,
 - interact with healthy waterways; and
 - benefit from cooler, greener urban spaces and healthier environments. ⁵

Urban Ecology

Environmentally Sustainable Development, Integrated Water Management, Green Buildings, light pollution, air quality and noise pollution.

We will build and retrofit infrastructure and development that embraces Environmentally Sustainable Design principles that adapt to climate change.

2050 Goals

- Environmentally Sustainable Design is a core principle for all new developments.
- Our urban areas have at least 27% tree canopy cover and 39% tree canopy and shrub cover.⁶
- Environmentally Sustainable Design principles are incorporated into existing developed areas.
- Advocate to the State Governments Planning Authority for meaningful environmentally sustainable design principles to be incorporated in the development of Precinct Structure Plans for all new development.

Resource Use and Waste Management

Circular Economies, Avoid, Reuse, Reduce, Recycle, Sustainable Procurement, Responsible Resource Use.

We will practice sustainable procurement throughout the supply chain and delivery of our services, including consideration of environment/climate change criteria in procurement.

We will actively promote and participate in the circular economy and will seek to avoid and reduce waste in Mitchell Shire's operations.

2050 Goals

- The procurement of all goods and services meet adopted organisational sustainability targets.
- Waste generated from Council operations and services is reduced by 50%.
- 70% of waste generated by Council's operations and services is diverted from landfill.

⁵ Integrated Water Management Framework for Victoria 2017 (DELWP)

⁶ Resilient Melbourne – Urban Forest Strategy 2019

Implementation

Council will implement this policy by:

- Applying the policy commitments and outlined to our decision-making frameworks and operational activities.
- Ensuring all staff understand their role in applying sustainability to their daily work.
- Leading by example by continually improving its sustainability performance.
- Setting sustainability targets and regularly monitoring and reporting on sustainability performance.
- Recognising that investing in sustainability initiatives provides long-term social, economic and environmental outcomes and benefits.

Definitions

Environmentally Sustainable Development - *using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased*⁷.

Circular Economy - an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources.

Connection to Nature - *Connecting with nature refers to time spent in nature where the person has some awareness of their surroundings*⁸.

Council operations and services –for the purpose of this policy is defined as the delivery or coordination of a service or project by a Council staff member. Examples include Kindergarten, capital works projects, Council offices etc.

Habitat - The natural home or environment of an animal, plant or other organism.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring that Council complies with legislative requirements of the relevant provisions of federal and state environmental legislation.

All directors, managers and coordinators are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the Mitchell Shire Environment Policy and its sub-strategies and plans are understood and applied.

Related Documents⁹

Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- *Climate Change Act 2017*
- *Environment Protection Act 1970*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Recycling Victoria – A New Economy 2020*

⁷ National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (1992)

⁸ Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2037

⁹ This is not a comprehensive list of legislation but provides guidance to the most common environmental legislation pertaining to Council activities.

Council documents

- Mitchell Shire Council Plan 2017-2021
- Mitchell Shire Health and Wellbeing Policy 2017-2021
- Mitchell Shire Environment Strategy 2014-2024
- Mitchell Shire Waste Management Strategy 2016-2021
- Mitchell Shire Rural Roadside Environmental Management Plan
- Mitchell Shire Sustainable Resource Management Strategy 2011
- Mitchell Shire Open Space Strategy 2013-2023
- Mitchell Shire Procurement Policy
- Mitchell Shire Volunteer Policy
- Mitchell Shire Project Management Framework
- Mitchell Shire Council Advocacy Plan
- Mitchell Shire Council Risk Management Policy
- Mitchell Shire Council Planning Scheme

Monitoring and Evaluation

Key Evaluation Questions

To be part of the evaluation of the policy reported to Council.

Impact

- What is the evidence of progress toward the desired outcomes of the Environment Policy?
- To what extent have the desired outcomes been achieved?
- What contribution has the Environment Policy made towards the stated purpose?
- What were the anticipated and unintended consequences of the Environment Policy?
 - Why did they arise?
 - How were/will they be addressed?

Effectiveness

- Were the planned actions delivered, and to the standard required?
- To what extent have the planned actions and targets been achieved?
- How effective was the delivery model at achieving the desired outcomes?
- What hindered effective delivery of the Policy?

Appropriateness

- Have the actions been delivered within scope, budget and expected timeframes, and in line with appropriate governance and risk management practices?
- Were the actions consistent with relevant legislative responsibilities, policies and priorities?
- Did the actions and the way they were undertaken align with stakeholder needs and expectations?
- What have been the advantages and disadvantages of the delivery model?

Efficiency

- Has the Mitchell Shire Council demonstrated efficiency and economy in relation to the delivery of the desired outcomes?
- To what extent did the program attain the highest value from the available resources?
- Could the same outcomes be achieved more simply and for less cost next time?

Legacy

- What will be the lasting impact of the Environment Policy?
- What evidence is there that the actions will continue?
- Are there any examples where actions have resulted in additional work?
- Will the program continue to have an impact after its completion?