

# Environmental Policy

## Purpose

To effectively integrate the principles of ecological sustainability into all council and community functions to achieve a clean, healthy, and ecologically sustainable environment.

## Policy Statement

Riverina Water's service area should be a place where the natural environment is valued, respected, and carefully managed for public benefit and future generations and where sound urban planning ensures outstanding local amenity and ecological and economic sustainability.

## Definitions

'Ecological sustainability' means the following statements of principle (as per the definition of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) in the Local Government Act 1993):

Ecological sustainability requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. Ecological sustainability 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 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:
  - (i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious, or irreversible damage to the environment, and
  - (ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options,
- (b) 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,
- (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, such as:

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- (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.

## **Policy Implementation**

Through the Riverina Water Management Plan we will set objectives, targets, and measures that will reflect the Council's commitment to:

1. Complying with all the relevant Commonwealth and State environment legislation, regulations, standards, policies, and initiatives.
2. Minimising the adverse environmental impacts of development through the integration of the principles of ESD.
3. Develop an Operational Environmental Management Plan for the Wagga Treatment Plant, to identify, minimise and monitor environmental impacts of Council operations and provision of services.
4. Preventing and minimising adverse environmental impacts from incidents or accidents that release pollution into the environment.
5. Remediating adverse environmental impacts associated with past and future pollution incidents.
6. Protecting and conserving natural resources, biodiversity, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage.
7. Reducing waste and increasing resource recovery in accordance with the Resource NSW Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery hierarchy.
8. Reducing adverse environmental impacts of the RWCC's fleet and exploring cleaner, greener technologies.

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9. Reducing consumption of natural resources in Council operations and services and facilitate the purchase of environmentally friendly products.
10. Requiring suppliers and independent contractors to demonstrate commitment to best practice environmental management performance consistent with the principles of ESD.
11. Communicating the Environment Policy to Council staff, contractors and Councillors and providing training to ensure they are fully informed of their obligations and empowered in their decision making and actions.
12. Implementing a process of review and improvement of operational performance

### **Non Compliance**

Non-compliance with adopted policy may be considered a breach under the Code of Conduct. As such, any suspected or known non-compliance will be reported to the Chief Executive Officer

### **References**

<b>Policy number</b>	<b>POL 1.19</b>
Responsible area	Chief Executive Officer
Approved by	Riverina Water Board – Res 22/049
Approval date	27 April 2022
Legislation or related strategy	Local Government Act 1993 and subsequent Regulations under the Act. NSW Water Management Act 2000 Water Act 1912 Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
Documents associated with this policy	RWCC Management Plan

#### **Data and document control**

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**EDRMS #121805**

**Version 3**

**Last revised date 27 April 2022**

**Next scheduled review April 2024**

RWCC Strategic Business Plan & Resource Strategy  
Rev 3

RWCC Asset Management Plan

Four (4) Year Capital Works Program

Assets Register

Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM)  
2021

Net Zero Emissions Policy 1.30

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Policy history

Vers 2.0 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 – Res 19/14

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Review schedule

Every 2 years

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Policy details may change prior to review date due to legislative or other changes, therefore this document is uncontrolled when printed.

## END OF POLICY STATEMENT

### Data and document control

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