



POLICY

Environment

Date adopted by Council	28 October 2024
Minute & Item number	24/112 H.10.1.1.c
Endorsed by	Senior Management Group on 22 August 2024
CM Ref	CD-60/24
Due for review	4 years from adoption date
Related documents	UHSC – Risk Management Framework UHSC – Work Health and Safety Policy UHSC – Sustainability Policy
Responsible officer	Manager Waste & Sustainability
Department/Section	Environmental and Community Services
Category	Environmental Management
Community Strategic Plan goal	Goal 2 Protected Environment 2.1 Advocate for, facilitate and support programs that protect and sustain our diverse environment for future generations. 2.2 Encourage and support community participation to care for our environment. 2.3 Ensure all actions, decisions and policy response to natural hazards and climate change remain current. 2.6 Plan, facilitate and provide for a changing population for current and future generations. 2.7 Provide efficient and effective waste and recycling services and support improved waste minimisation and recycling practices. 2.8 Implement policies to ensure the protection of strategic agricultural lands, equine critical industry clusters, natural resources and heritage.



Policy Statement

Upper Hunter Shire Council (UHSC) Officers are committed to ensuring that our business operations and activities have minimal impact on the environment that we work within.

Environmental Sustainability is both a strategic priority and a strategic focus throughout UHSC Business Operations.

Objective

This policy provides a framework to outline our commitment to reducing negative impacts on the environment and the community, with the aim to minimise the risk of damage to the environment in the local government area that we work within.

Scope

The Environment Policy is applied to all operational activities, and is the responsibility of all Council Management teams, Officers, Employees, Contractors and Visitors to our Business Operations.

Definitions

All terms used in this policy have the standard dictionary definition.

Policy Details

UHSC has adopted a risk based management approach that aims to comply with the regulatory and community expectations to ensure that we protect, and enhance the natural environment while reducing negative impacts on the environment from our business operations.

How do we achieve this?

- Risk Assessments conducted throughout our business operations with consideration for the environmental impacts from our business operations.
- Development and implementation of management tools to record, report, monitor and review our environmental impact.
- Review and monitor compliance with UHSC risk management policies, procedures and management systems.
- Review, monitor and ensure compliance to environmental legislation and regulatory bodies.
- Contributing to and influencing the strategic environment and sustainability of Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- Being accountable for addressing and minimising the environmental impacts of our activities to satisfy the expectations and legislative requirements of Federal and NSW Governments and the community.
- Raising the awareness and capacity of our workforce to be accountable for their activities to achieve advances in environmental outcomes and a culture of environmental responsibility.
- Communicating openly, responsively and empathetically with our community, industry and regulators on environmental matters and reporting on our performance.
- Having regard for the protection of natural habitats and local wildlife.
- Minimising carbon emissions and conserving natural resources for future generations through improvements in energy efficiency.
- Striving to continually improve UHSC's environmental performance.
- Waste management and recycling procedures identified to minimise waste production.
- Considering whole of life benefits and impacts from our activities across all life cycle stages, demand/need, plan, acquire, operate/maintain and disposal.



Environmental Management

This Environment Policy is supported by various risk management documentation, policies, procedures, forms and templates. Outlined minimum standards are adhered to in business operations and subsequent management of the risk of negative impacts to the environment is recorded.

Reporting

UHSC will report on its environmental performance in accordance with recognised standards and targets.

Review

This Policy will be reviewed every four (4) years in consultation with management, staff and a review of legislative requirements to ensure compliance and that we are continuing to minimise the impacts on the environments within our communities.

Responsibilities

Councillors

Councillors will ensure that the General Manager and Officers of the council have identified and implemented the appropriate policies, procedures and strategies for the organisation to meet its environmental obligations.

Senior Management Group and Directors

The Senior Management Group will exercise due diligence to ensure that Council is compliant with Environmental Legislation and Regulatory requirements, this will be achieved by:

- Having a sound understanding of the sensitivities in the environments we operate within.
- Systems developed, identified and accessed to monitor compliance requirements.
- Allocation of budgets to include environmental management strategies and planning.
- Business Operational Planning to include strategies for environmental management.
- Allocation of finance and resources to effectively manage environmental risks.
- Foster policies and procedures to imbed environmental management processes into all business operations.
- Identify and implement project management strategies to manage environmental impacts throughout the life of the projects.
- Raise awareness of management and organisational commitment to environmental management strategies.
- Consult and communicate opportunities with management teams on environmental strategies throughout the organisation.
- Assign roles and responsibilities to personnel for the consultation and communication of environmental strategies.
- Contractor engagement is risk assessed, with the potential for negative environmental impacts considered and addressed before engagement.
- Inform the relevant authority and landowners when environmental harm has occurred, or might occur.



All Managers

All Managers will exercise due diligence to ensure that Council is compliant with Environmental Legislation and Regulatory requirements (as far as reasonably practical), this will be achieved by:

- Risk and potential impacts to the environment are assessed and managed throughout all of the business activities.
- Ensuring that environmental conditions and restrictions are considered when planning works.
- Identify, document and implement best practices for environmental management.
- Ensuring that the Environmental Management Systems policies and procedures are implemented into the field operations.
- Environmental emergency management procedures and resources have been identified and implemented into all of the business operations.
- Training opportunities relevant to environmental management procedures, skills and knowledge required for field based operations are identified and provided.
- Consultation and communication regarding environmental management is conducted with all relevant parties to identify effective systems of operations as scheduled and when identified necessary.
- Conducting risk assessments to identify controls to minimise impacts on the environment.
- Scheduling inspections, monitoring and review of business field operations to identify and manage environmental concerns.
- All environmental management processes are managed and documented in a timely fashion, and are reported to the relevant departments and Director.
- That any damage to the environment is reported and rectified as soon as reasonably practicable.

All Coordinators and Supervisors

All Coordinators and Supervisors will exercise due diligence to ensure that Council is compliant with Environmental Legislation and Regulatory requirements. This will be achieved by:

- Risk, and potential impacts to the environment are assessed and managed throughout all of the business activities.
- Ensuring that environmental conditions and restrictions are considered when planning works.
- Planning daily field operations with environmental management procedures considered.
- Ensuring that the Environmental Management Systems policies and procedures are implemented into the field operations.
- Consultation and communication regarding environmental management is conducted with all relevant parties to identify effective systems of operations as scheduled and when identified necessary.
- Conducting risk assessments to identify controls to minimise impacts on the environment.
- Scheduling inspections, monitoring and review of business field operations to identify and manage environmental concerns.
- All environmental management processes are managed and documented in a timely fashion, and are reported to the relevant departments and Manager.
- That any damage to the environment is reported and rectified as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that all staff, contractors or visitors to site are aware of their environmental responsibility, and they comply with the environmental management plan and risk management procedures.
- Ensuring that all field staff and contractors are aware of the resources and procedures to follow in the event of an environmental incident.



All Staff

All staff will exercise due diligence to ensure that they comply with the environmental management policies and procedures in all of their business activities. This will be achieved by:

- Staff and contractors have completed the Council, and relevant site, inductions prior to commencing employment and business operational activities.
- Raising awareness of the environmental considerations and sensitivities associated with Council operations.
- Staff complete training, with awareness of the legal requirements and environmental management systems that Council operates within.
- Prior to commencing any activities that may impact on the environment, staff and contractors will review all relevant SWMS, procedures and conduct inspections to identify any potential environmental concerns and risk management procedures to be implemented.
- Staff and contractors agree to follow all reasonable requests made by the management teams to manage environmental risks.
- Staff and contractors actively engage in the consultation / communication processes to manage environmental risks.
- Staff and contractors have a duty of care to not carry out an activity that may cause harm without taking measures to prevent or minimise the harm to the environment.

References and Related Legislation

- [International standard ISO 14001:2015](#)
- [Contaminated Land Management Act 1997](#)
- [Dangerous Goods \(Road and Rail Transport\) Act 2008](#)
- [Environmentally Hazardous Chemicals Act 1985](#)
- [Forestry Act 2012](#)
- [Pesticides Act 1999](#)
- [Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997](#)
- [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2001](#)
- [Contaminated Land Management Regulation 2013](#)
- [Dangerous Goods \(Road and Rail Transport\) Regulation 2014](#)
- [Environmentally Hazardous Chemicals Regulation 2017](#)
- [Pesticides Regulation 2017](#)
- [Protection of the Environment Operations \(Clean Air\) Regulation 2010](#)
- [Protection of the Environment Operations \(General\) Regulation 2009](#)
- [Protection of the Environment Operations \(Noise Control\) Regulation 2017](#)
- [Protection of the Environment Operations \(Waste\) Regulation 2014](#)
- [Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery \(Container Deposit Scheme\) Regulation 2](#)
- [Transport Environment and Sustainability Policy \(NSW Government 2020\)](#)

Version History

Version No.	Date	CM Ref	Reason for Review
1	29/03/2021	CD-140/21	New policy requested
2	28/10/2024	CD-60/24	Timed review