

Ecologically Sustainable Development Self-Assessment Package for Local Government



**Developed as part of the Commonwealth
Local Government Capacity Building Program**

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Overview

Summary

The Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney (UTS), has developed an ESD Self Assessment Package in conjunction with Local Councils in the Australian Capital Region. The Package provides a practical self-assessment process for Councils to evaluate their current activities in the context of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD). Undertaking this self-assessment will enable Councils to meet their legislative requirements under the *Local Government (Ecologically Sustainable Development) Amendment Act 1997*, which requires Councils to integrate ESD into all activities and decision making processes.

The ESD Self-Assessment Package encourages local Councils to document all relevant work proposed or currently being undertaken. This documentation provides a vital baseline for organisations in identifying and recognising their current contributions to ESD and in monitoring their progress towards ESD. The Package also assists Councils to plan future actions as part of their progress towards ESD, with progress towards ESD also able to be tracked for Local Government regions from year to year.

The Self-Assessment Package uses ten general areas of sustainability as a basis for the assessment. Use of these 'general areas of sustainability' is designed to act as an awareness raising exercise on ESD and to expand discussion and implementation of ESD beyond existing organisational boundaries of councils. These 'areas' have been deliberately chosen so as *not* to reflect function or service areas within councils and to operate at organisation-wide, function and service levels. This approach also recognises the variety of different actions and approaches being used by Councils to address the many Local Government challenges and issues.

The Self-Assessment Package is designed to operate at different levels (organisation-wide, function/service areas) within Council. This ensures the Package will be practical and relevant for all Councils, regardless of their size, structure, available resources or current capacity. At one end of the spectrum, Councils could choose to address one 'area of sustainability' for one service area, in the coming year. At the other end, Councils could address all ten 'areas of sustainability' across all their function and service areas in the coming year.

The Package is designed to help Councils establish where they are up to *now* in terms of ESD and establish the direction they wish to take to achieve greater sustainability. It is important to emphasise that ESD is not a goal or endpoint but rather Councils are encouraged to progress along a pathway towards sustainability. It is also important to recognise that progress towards sustainability is often more successful as a series of small steps.

To encourage individual Council progress towards ESD, Councils are encouraged to select at least one 'area of sustainability' to be addressed in

one function or service area in the coming year. The results from the self-assessment will provide your organisation with a basis for action on ESD, with the results forming a separate 'ESD Action Plan' which is able to be incorporated into existing management and planning documents.

Introduction

The Federal Government, with State Governments also endorsing the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development, has adopted ESD as a goal. There are many definitions for Ecologically Sustainable Development, with the term often defined by statements of 'principles' such as biological diversity, the precautionary principle and intergenerational equity (see *Appendix 1*).

For the Self Assessment Package it is suffice to say that ESD is about incorporating social, environmental, economic and perhaps even spiritual issues into decision making. ESD is also about using resources, with the aim of achieving economic and social development, which protects and conserves the natural environment and promotes social equity and human well being. It should also be noted that although ESD has been given more precise definitions in policy and legislation, the term 'sustainability' is used interchangeably with the term ESD in this document.

The Self Assessment Package provides a practical self-assessment process for Councils to evaluate their current activities in the context of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD). Undertaking this self-assessment will enable Councils to meet their legislative requirements under the *Local Government (Ecologically Sustainable Development) Amendment Act 1997*, and to contribute to achievement of Australia's national goals for ESD.

The Self Assessment is divided into two Stages, an assessment of the whole of Council and an assessment of Council services, on a service by service basis. Background information and procedures are provided to guide you through assessment sheets for both stages. Results of Stage One can be used to provide an overall picture of Council's current level of sustainability, can be used as a baseline against other Councils or to build up a regional picture of Local Government's progress towards ESD. Results of Stage Two can be used to inform and focus Council's decision making on future sustainability actions and priorities.

Following the self-assessment there is a section on Future Action. Completion of this section provides your Council with a basis for future action on ESD. The results from the self-assessment and future action sections should be included as part of Council's Management Planning and State of Environment reporting documents. If undertaken annually, the ESD Self Assessment could be timed to fit in with normal planning, budgetary and reporting cycles of Councils.

It is recommended that the ESD Self Assessment Package be undertaken by a group of Council officers from a variety of service areas and levels across Council. In selecting officers to participate in the process, it is important for Councils to recognise and value the organisational and individual learning opportunities provided through this assessment process. In some cases the discussion and ideas generated through the assessment process may be more valuable than the outcome itself.

The documentation and recording of information throughout the Self Assessment process is a critical part of the Package. Recording all relevant ESD work being undertaken by Councils provides a vital baseline for organisations. It is also important for Councils in actually identifying and valuing their current contributions to ESD. If undertaken annually, information collected through the process also enables Council and its community to monitor progress towards sustainability.

Similarities can be drawn between the ESD Self Assessment Package and continuous improvement programs in Councils, in that the Self Assessment Package moves through levels of sustainability. From less sustainable at Step 1 to more sustainable at Step 2 and so on to Step 5. It is also important to note that the Package is designed to provide a cumulative and progressive path towards ESD, with Councils ideally having addressed and/or implemented Step 1 before Step 2 and so on. The self-assessment process also encourages Councils to expand the focus of sustainability in their organisation to eventually cover all service and function areas.

Background

Through the Federal Department of Transport and Regional Services' Local Government Capacity Building Program, a joint project was funded to establish a model system for State of Environment Reporting and assessment of Ecologically Sustainable Development at a local and regional level. The project has the combined aim of capacity building in Local Government through assisting government bodies to improve their reporting, planning and management capabilities.

The Institute for Sustainable Futures, UTS has developed the ESD Assessment component together with the seventeen Councils of the Australian Capital Region and the ACT Government. The Office of the Commissioner for the Environment (ACT) has developed a State of Environment Reporting template for producing State of Environment Reports (SoERs) and has improved the functionality of the existing regional SoER.

The overall project enables Councils to provide improved information to their communities through:

- Developing the ESD Self Assessment Package for assessing how individual Councils and the region as a whole are progressing towards sustainability;
- Enhancing the existing State of Environment Report; and
- Developing and standardising the collection and recording of relevant local data for SoE reporting.

The ESD Self Assessment Package was developed together with the seventeen Councils of the Australian Capital Region through a series of workshops, regional tours and working with two pilot Councils, namely Snowy River Shire and Eurobodalla Shire. Other Councils include Bega Valley Shire, Bombala Shire, Boorowa Shire, Cooma-Monaro Shire, Crookwell, Goulbourn City, Gunning Shire, Harden, Mulwaree, Queanbeyan City, Tallaganda Shire, Tumut, Yarrowlunla Shire, Yass Shire and Young Council. A profile of these Councils is provided in *Appendix 2*.

The first regional workshop was held in July 1999 and was important in establishing the framework for the project and in identifying the areas to be addressed by the assessment package. Initial regional visits during August and September 1999 successfully established the issues, priorities and direction in regard to sustainability for local Councils and the region generally.

A second regional tour and workshop were undertaken in October 1999, with the information obtained assisting further in the development and refinement of the Self Assessment Package and in obtaining feedback on the practical aspects of Councils undertaking a self-assessment process. Further regional visits were undertaken in January, with a final regional workshop held in March 2000. These provided additional valuable information on Council priorities, projects, local issues, organisational structures and key

documents. Together with information from previous workshops and tours, this information was used to finalise the ESD Self Assessment Package.

Ten Areas of Sustainability

The Self-Assessment Package uses ten general areas of sustainability as a basis for the assessment. Use of these 'areas of sustainability' is quite deliberate and designed not only to act as an awareness raising exercise on ESD but also to expand discussion and implementation of ESD beyond existing organisational and functional boundaries of councils. Traditional corporate structures with 'compartments of expertise' can act as barriers to successfully implementing ESD. The 'areas of sustainability' have been intentionally chosen so as *not* to reflect function or service areas within councils but to operate both within and across these structural boundaries.

The ten areas of sustainability are focus, policies, organisational management, ESD performance, training, innovation, management of opportunities, management of risks, information and communication, and community. These are described in detail below.

Focus describes the focal point of the organisation in regard to ESD and the leadership role of Council. It captures an internal, external, community wide, LGA or regional focus. Also Council's leadership role as an employer, regulator and service provider in the local community.

Policies captures the interaction and relationship of key Council documents. It is an important part of sustainability as it relates to areas of Council's operations such as links between strategic planning, service delivery and management. It is important in documenting the steps taken towards sustainability for the organisation, its staff and the community.

Organisational Management is an integral part of sustainability in providing the systems, structures and procedures to support the development and implementation of sustainable actions. Organisational management includes: the capabilities and capacity of the organisation; management responsibilities; corporate structure, hierarchy and culture; and reporting and communication lines.

ESD Performance is about how strategic an organisation is in tackling ESD. The performance of each Council is important in areas such as responses to the ESD legislation, commitment to ESD, setting of ESD objectives and targets and monitoring and evaluation of ESD activities. In addition, information on Council's ESD performance should be available to staff and the community, with specific references to ESD in Council's documentation adding to the awareness raising of staff, Councillors and the community.

Innovation is an important part of sustainability recognising the social aspect of individual and group contributions to innovative and creative solutions and actions. This is particularly true for actions involving use of environmental, social and economic resources. Innovation also captures parts of organisational management; encouraging innovative approaches to long term economic, social and environmental planning.

Management of Opportunities could be considered a new area of sustainability describing a pro-active approach to doing business. It captures a range of issues such as local networks, current trends and influences, employee network schemes and building the organisation's capacity. Also the responsiveness of the organisation to change and opportunities and recognising that issues such as the flow of information are an important contributor to an organisation being able to capitalise on opportunities.

Management of Risks is an essential part of sustainability, primarily to ensure environmental and economic sustainability. It includes management of liabilities, due diligence and meeting legislative requirements, audits (health & safety, social and environmental) and financial management. Risk management is broader than compliance, capturing longterm strategic decisions and looking at the impacts of particular decisions and the social, economic and environmental risks of taking and not taking certain actions and decisions.

Training is an important component of sustainability covering a range of actions and issues from awareness raising among staff and Councillors, to staff capacity building through regular training and staff induction programs. Also extending training programs to include the community and business partners on a range of issues from water use, to biodiversity and Council services.

Information and Communication is the management of all information sources in Councils. For example, record keeping, document management, access to computers and their capabilities (internet/email) and management of customer/Councillor requests. It also captures the knowledge of and availability of information (policies, Council goals, legislation, and position descriptions) for staff, Councillors and the community, the format of this information and documentation of changes to this information.

Community – is an essential part of sustainability for Councils. Once Councils have looked at “getting their own house in order” it is important to take the sustainability message out to the broader community. In addition, Councils play an important role in the social side of sustainability, from promoting and planning for social well-being and providing spaces and places for social interaction, to being able to supply timely responses to social changes, evolving demographics and shifting cultural patterns.

NOTE: Under the section on *Assessment of Sustainability* (page 13), each area of sustainability is listed with a series of statements progressing from less sustainable at Step 1 to more sustainable at Step 5. These statements should be used in undertaking the assessment of Council for both Stages One and Two.

Self Assessment Procedures

Stage One – Whole of Council Assessment

Stage One provides an assessment of the whole of Council. Results of Stage One can be used to provide an overall picture of Council's current level of sustainability and can also be used as a baseline against other Councils or to build up a regional picture of Local Government's progress towards ESD.

The following procedure is designed to guide you through Stage One of the Assessment.

1. To complete this Stage you will need the record sheets (example next page, copy provided as a separate attachment) and the *Assessment of Sustainability* section (page 13), listing statements for each of the ten areas of sustainability.
2. A Council officer or officers with a good general knowledge of the whole organisation should undertake this Stage of the assessment. Fill in the details at the top of the record sheet and attach a copy of your Corporate Structure.
3. From the *Assessment of Sustainability* section considers the first area of sustainability and determine which step most closely reflects your current organisation as a whole. Record this on the sheet.
4. The five steps (1 though 5) represent a cumulative and progressive path towards ESD. Councils ideally should have addressed and/or implemented Step 1 before Step 2 and so on.
5. Repeat this process for the remaining nine areas of sustainability, always considering the current position of your whole organisation.
6. As you consider each of the statements you are encouraged to make comments about recent initiatives or sustainability actions being undertaken by your Council in this area. These comments should be recorded on the assessment sheets.

NOTE:

As the structures of organisations are expected to change over time, you are encouraged to attach a copy of your current corporate structure to this part of the assessment.

Name of Council _____ Date of Assessment _____

ESD Assessment of the Whole of Council		
Areas of Sustainability	Current Assessment	Comments/Current Sustainability Actions of Council
Focus	<i>Example:</i> Step 2	Council is currently at Step 2, however preparation and implementation of the ESD Action Plan will focus Council on 'getting its own house in order'.
Policies		
Organisational Management	<i>Example:</i> Step 2	Council has documented its vision and operating principles. Parts of Steps 1 and 2 still need to be addressed before progressing to Step 3, eg. identifying reporting and communication lines
Performance		
Innovation		
Opportunities		
Risks		
Training	<i>Example:</i> Step 1	Council has recently undertaken training programs for outdoor staff on management of soil erosion and weed identification.
Information		
Community	<i>Example:</i> Step 4	Council is currently undertaking a review of all policies. This review will now incorporate the social component of Council's activities. Council-community partnerships are not yet fully developed.

Stage Two – Assessment of Council Services

Stage Two provides an assessment of Council services on a service by service basis. The results of Stage Two can be used to inform Council's decision making and planning for future sustainability actions and priorities for each of the service areas assessed.

The following procedure is designed to guide you through Stage Two of the Assessment.

1. To complete this Stage you will need the record sheet (example next page, copies provided as a separate attachment) and the *Assessment of Sustainability* section (page 13), listing statements for each of the ten areas of sustainability.
2. Select one or more service areas of Council for the assessment (record sheets which can be used for each service area are attached separately). A range of Council officers from different areas and levels should undertake this Stage.
3. From the *Assessment of Sustainability* section consider the first area of sustainability and determine which step most closely reflects the current position of the service area of Council. Record this on the sheet.
4. The five steps (1 through 5) represent a cumulative and progressive path towards ESD. Councils ideally should have addressed and/or implemented Step 1 before Step 2 and so on.
5. Repeat this process for the remaining nine areas of sustainability, always considering the current position for this service area.
6. As you consider each of the statements you are encouraged to make comments about sustainability activities or recent initiatives being undertaken by your Council in this area. These comments should be recorded on the sheet.

NOTE:

Each Council is not expected to have all service areas represented in their structure. *Appendix 3* provides a sample of service and function areas of Councils.

Name of Council _____ Date of Assessment _____

ESD Assessment of Council Services			
Areas of Sustainability	Service Area	Assessment	Comments/Current Sustainability Actions of Council
	Community Services		
Focus	<i>Example:</i>	Step 4	Following completion of Social Plan, Community Services is taking a leadership role
Policies	<i>Example:</i>	Step 2	A review of other relevant Council policies was undertaken as part of the Social Plan
Organisational Management			
Performance	<i>Example:</i>	Step 1	Community Services will be developing specific sustainability goals and objectives next year
Innovation	<i>Example:</i>	Step 1	All work undertaken complies with relevant legislation. Internal practices require updating
Opportunities			
Risks			
Training	<i>Example:</i>	Step 1	Informal training was undertaken to familiarise Community Services staff with the Social Plan
Information	<i>Example:</i>	Step 2	Community Services has developed a new record keeping system for staff
Community			

Assessment of Sustainability

The following section details each of the ten Area of Sustainability with a corresponding series of statements progressing from less sustainable at Step 1 to more sustainable at Step.5. These statements should be used in undertaking the assessment of Council for both Stages One and Two.

Focus

Focus – describes the **focal point of the organisation** in regard to ESD and the **leadership role of Council**. It captures an internal, external, community wide, LGA or regional focus. Also Council's leadership role as an employer, regulator and service provider in the local community.

Step	Statement
1	Focus of the organisation is on responding to day to day community and Councillor requests.
2	Focus of the organisation is shared between achieving planned work and addressing day to day requests.
3	Focus of the organisation is on " getting its own house in order " in terms of sustainability measures.
4	Focus of the organisation is on taking a leadership role for the local area and the community in terms of sustainability.
5	Focus of the organisation is on taking a key leadership role with neighbouring councils or within the region to plan and implement sustainability measures.

Notes/Comments

Policies

Policies – captures the interaction and relationship of key Council documents . It is an important part of sustainability as it relates to areas of Council's operations such as links between strategic planning, service delivery and management . It is important in documenting the steps taken towards sustainability, for the organisation, its staff and the community.	
Step	Statement
1	A Council ' vision ' is developed to provide a goal for the future of the area and/or the existing vision is re-visited to include a definition of ESD (which is relevant to Council and the community) and an ESD goal. Staff and the community could be involved in developing this vision.
2	After addressing Step 1, Existing policies are reviewed to include references to Ecologically Sustainable Development. A brief review is undertaken to determine the interrelationships and hierarchy of Council's key documents. This information should be made available to all staff. Interdisciplinary staff teams are formed to develop ESD goals and objectives for key documents such as the LEP, SoER, Corporate Plan and Social Plan. There should be common core ESD goals in these documents where possible.
3	Following steps 1 and 2, all job specifications to contain clauses with knowledge of ESD being a desirable skill. Employment contracts of Senior Staff to contain clauses to achieve set ESD goals and objectives. Key documents of Council should be cross referenced to one another to illustrate common goals and linkages.
4	If all areas in Steps 1 to 3 are addressed, then job descriptions for all staff are to provide information to the job holder on how they contribute to the achievement of Council's sustainability objectives . Key documents of Council should be linked electronically where possible, with achievement of specific ESD goals able to be tracked through each document.
5	As a higher level step, linking of Council's key documents should also include integration of job specifications and performance reviews . Performance reviews should include documentation on each staff member's contribution to Council's sustainability objectives.

Notes/Comments

Organisational Management

Organisational Management – is an integral part of sustainability in providing the systems, structure and procedures to support the development and implementation of sustainable actions. Organisational management includes: the capabilities and capacity of the organisation; management responsibilities; corporate structure, hierarchy and culture; and reporting and communication lines.	
Step	Statement
1	Roles and responsibilities of key staff are listed in individual position descriptions. Reporting and communication lines within Council are clearly identified and documented.
2	Following completion of Step 1, the organisation has documented and publicised its vision and operating principles and includes principles such as equity for staff, access to information, integrity and transparency of decision making. Human Resource policies are introduced to build and maintain the social structure of the organisation , for example flexible working arrangements, support for study and childcare.
3	At the completion of Steps 1 and 2, roles and responsibilities of key staff are documented in the corporate plan and/or other public documents. Performance measures and reviews of Senior Staff include sustainability measures.
4	After addressing all aspects of Steps 1 to 3, a review is undertaken to determine organisational capabilities and identify gaps in the capacity and capabilities of the organisation. Position descriptions/statements are regularly reviewed against core competencies and current roles and responsibilities of each position , with gaps identified and to make position descriptions consistent with Council's ESD vision.
5	As a higher level step, a range of measures are introduced (eg. training, support for external study, secondments) to address the gaps identified in Step 4. A 360 degree feedback program is introduced for all staff (ie. to obtain feedback from peers, supervisors, subordinates, and stakeholders).

Notes/Comments

ESD Performance

ESD Performance – is about **how strategic an organisation is** in addressing Ecologically Sustainable Development. The performance of Council is important in areas such as responses to the ESD legislation, commitment to ESD, setting of **ESD objectives and targets and monitoring and evaluation of ESD activities**. In addition, information on Council's ESD performance should be available to staff and the community, with specific references to ESD in **Council's documentation** adding to the awareness raising of staff, Councillor and the community.

Step	Statement
1	Council's current ESD activities and actions are identified . Council's current ESD activities and actions are documented. This information is made available to staff and the community.
2	General sustainability goals and objectives are developed and documented for each service/function area of Council following completion of Step 1. These goals and objectives should aim to address social, environmental and economic issues and risks in each service and functional area. This information is made available to staff and the community.
3	After addressing Steps 1 and 2, one or more programs are undertaken with staff, Councillors and the community to develop sustainability indicators for Council and for the community. The final set of indicators should include specific targets for sustainability measures and activities.
4	Following implementation of Steps 1 to 3, specific sustainability goals and objectives are developed and documented for each service/function area of Council. These aim to progress Council towards greater sustainability. Progress towards sustainability as measured through the sustainability indicators is reported annually to Council and the community in the SoER, Management Plan or other public document.
5	As a higher level step, the specific sustainability goals, objectives and indicators of Council are reviewed with progress towards greater sustainability broadened to include Council's business partners, State agencies, community groups and neighbouring Councils.

Notes/Comments

Innovation

<p>Innovation – is an important part of sustainability recognising the social aspect of individual and group contributions to innovative and creative solutions and actions. This is particularly true for actions involving the use of environmental, social and economic resources. Innovation also captures parts of organisational management; encouraging innovative approaches to long term social, economic and environmental planning.</p>	
Step	Statement
1	Strategic and financial planning is undertaken to comply with legislative requirements , for example the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> . Current internal practices and policies in social, environmental and economic areas are clearly documented.
2	Following implementation of Step 1, staff are encouraged to be innovative in their work, both in terms of how they make decisions about the future and in terms of resource use (environmental, social and economic resources). Continuous improvement is encouraged in all work areas through annual performance reviews.
3	After completing Steps 1 and 2, a formal continuous improvement program is introduced which recognises sustainability as well as economic and efficiency ‘improvements’. Sustainability improvements are encouraged in social, economic and environmental areas.
4	Following implementation of Steps 1 through 3, staff are rewarded for initiatives, ideas and innovations that lead to measurable gains for Council and/or the community in the management and use of social, economic and environmental resources.
5	As a higher level step, staff and Councillor decision making is undertaken on an ESD basis , with consideration given to the social, economic and environmental issues and risks of undertaking or not undertaking particular decisions.

Notes/Comments

Management of Opportunities

Management of Opportunities – could be considered a new area of sustainability, describing a **pro-active approach to doing business**. It captures a range of issues such as local networks, current trends and influences, employee network schemes and building the organisation’s capacity. Also **the responsiveness of the organisation to change and opportunities**, and recognising that issues such as the flow of information are an important contributor to an organisation being able to capitalise on opportunities.

Step	Statement
1	A range of staff friendly policies are introduced (eg. encouraging a balance of work/family life, Council supported out-of-work activities such as sporting groups and having an active staff social club).
2	In addition to Step 1, Council staff participation in community groups and volunteer organisations such as the SES is encouraged and supported by Council.
3	Following implementation of Steps 1 and 2, the organisation’s internal response to at least one new issue or plan is documented each year. New issues could be proactive, such as Council pursuing particular grant funds or promoting local events, or could be reactive to issues such as legislative amendments, new State policies, or Local/State elections. Gaps are identified. These could be technological barriers, structural or information barriers.
4	Following Step 3, a range of measures is introduced to address those gaps to enable the organisation to be more responsive to change. For example, work practices could include recognition and allowances for the large ‘unplanned’ component of Council’s work each year.
5	As a higher level step, Council undertakes a review of the collective response to new issues , including external influences on Council such as community groups, service partners or State agencies. Partnership arrangements should be encouraged and pursued with all these groups.

Notes/Comments

Management of Risks

Management of Risks – is an essential part of sustainability, primarily to ensure environmental and economic sustainability. It includes **management of liabilities, due diligence and meeting legislative requirements**, audits (health & safety, social, environmental) and financial management. Risk management is broader than compliance, it is capturing long term strategic decisions and **looking at the impacts of particular decisions** and the social, economic and environmental risks of taking and not taking certain actions and decisions.

Step	Statement
1	Council undertakes a self-audit of its own work practices in terms of compliance with existing legislation, for example environmental legislation or undertaking regular workplace safety and OH&S audits. Council documents its legislative requirements for all service and function areas and reports annually on its compliance with this legislation.
2	Council documents its risk management requirements for all service and function areas. Council documents its areas of operational risk management and actions undertaken to address these. Areas of operational risk management include appropriate signage, insurance, work cover requirements, fire safety, Reviews of Environmental Factors, OH&S.
3	Following implementation of Step 2, Council introduces actions, develops policies or reviews existing policies to address gaps identified in areas of operational risk management, for example introducing a program of life-cycle management for all of Council's infrastructure. Council reports regularly on compliance with its own policies in terms of risk management.
4	Council implements the actions or policies identified and developed in step 3 . Council documents its areas of external risk management and actions taken to address these. Areas of external risk include the Disability Discrimination Act, Emergency Management Act, Union action and the potential to pollute from Council's own activities.
5	As a higher level step, Council introduces actions and policies to address gaps identified in areas of external risk management . Council implements the actions and policies identified and developed in step 4. Council undertakes an evaluation of its risk management actions.

Notes/Comments

Training

<p>Training – is an important component of sustainability for your organisation. The term covers a range of actions and issues from awareness raising among staff and Councillors, to staff capacity building through regular training and staff induction programs. Also extending training programs to include the community and business partners, on a range of issues from water use, to biodiversity and Council services.</p>	
Step	Statement
1	Staff training and awareness raising is undertaken irregularly on key Council documents such as the Social Plan, Local Environment Plan, State of Environment Report and the Management Plan and budget. Staff training is undertaken irregularly on aspects of environmental management such as soil erosion, waste generation, water pollution and the potential environmental impacts of Council's own work practices (indoor and outdoor).
2	Staff training referred to in Step 1 is undertaken as part of a regular/annual staff training program . These training modules are also undertaken as part of Council's induction program for new or re-trained officers. General information or open days are provided for the community to obtain information, knowledge and awareness of Council activities and services.
3	Following implementation of Steps 1 and 2, community, industrial and agricultural groups are targeted for training/awareness raising programs provided by Council. Skills/performance based staff training programs are undertaken for staff on a range of environmental and social issues.
4	After completion of Steps 1 to 3, staff and Councillor training is undertaken regularly on higher level specific issues such as relevant legislation, on ESD and on the social, environmental and economic impacts of Council's own decisions, activities and work practices.
5	As a higher level step, ESD training programs are valued by the organisation , being given a high priority and annual funding. These training programs are expanded to include a diverse range of participants (different Council teams, Councillors, State agencies, community groups, neighbouring Councils).

Notes/Comments

Information and Communication

Information and Communication – is the **management of all information sources** in Councils. For example, record keeping, document management, access to computers and their capabilities (internet/email) and management of customer/Councillor requests. It also captures the **knowledge of and availability of information** (policies, Council goals, legislation, and position descriptions) for staff, Councillors and the community, the format of this information and documentation of changes to this information.

Step	Statement
1	A contact list of all relevant State Government agency regional offices is prepared and distributed to all appropriate staff. The contact list includes a statement on the roles and responsibilities of these organisations.
2	Council includes procedures for management of records and council information as part of its staff induction program. Council reviews its hard copy record keeping systems for duplication and areas of overlap. Staff are encouraged to document all relevant areas of their work in a hard copy format in a central record location.
3	Building on Step 2, Council develops an electronic record keeping system . A central 'corporate library' is developed with resources available for staff to use. The internet and personal email is made available to all staff. Council's web page is regularly updated as a source of staff and community information.
4	Following implementation of Steps 1 to 3, electronic information and communication systems are developed for Council. For example, a Council intra-net to circulate internal information, or an electronic customer/Councillor request system to track requests and responses to requests.
5	As a higher level step, information on Council's specific ESD goals and policies and Council's ESD performance is made publicly available through a variety of sources, eg. Intra-net, internet, different languages, video. Key documents are linked electronically and included on Council's web page to show areas of similarity, common goals, areas of overlap and responsibilities.

Notes/Comments

Community

Community – is an essential part of sustainability for Councils. Once Councils have looked at “getting their own house in order” it is important to **take the sustainability message out to the broader community**. In addition, Councils play an **important role in the social side of sustainability**, from promoting and planning for social well-being and providing places and spaces for social interaction, to being able to supply timely responses to social change, evolving demographics and shifting cultural patterns.

Step	Statement
1	Councils to prepare Social Plans in accordance with the legislation. Community consultation is undertaken on an irregular basis , it is issue based consultation. The consultation is also general in nature, with issues being advertised in local papers or on community notice boards. The demographic profile of the Council area is documented, with summaries distributed to all appropriate staff. Summaries should highlight particular cultural, age or community traits as well as specific demographic trends and changes. Staff should be encouraged to consider this information in making decisions or undertaking their work. Some training may be required.
2	Following completion of Step 1, community consultation undertaken by Councils is more focused , with community leaders and community groups being targeted in addition to the general consultation. Contact information on these individuals and groups is identified and documented regularly, say in a ‘community directory’ and distributed to all staff.
3	After addressing Steps 1 and 2, contributions from all service areas towards achieving implementation of the social plan is identified for each service area. Council’s ‘Social Plan’ is implemented.
4	Following completion of Steps 1 to 3, a review is undertaken of Council’s key documents , eg. Local Environment Plan, State of Environment Report, to identify and highlight the social component of Council activities and services. This information should be made available to all staff. Council considers potential community-Council partnerships in planning and implementing projects.
5	As a higher level step, development of Council policies and undertaking Council services considers the social issues, impacts and risks of undertaking or not undertaking particular decisions and activities . The social impact and any mitigating measures are documented. Decisions are evaluated in terms of how community input was considered in reaching the decision. The social impact may include effects on the health, amenity and well being, the access of people to places and services, provision of public areas for meeting and gathering and any changes to people’s current lifestyles

Future Action

The results from the ESD Self Assessment Package are designed to provide your organisation with a basis for action on Ecologically Sustainable Development. To initiate and encourage Council progress towards sustainability, Councils are encouraged to select at least one of the ten 'areas of sustainability' to be addressed by Council in the coming year and to select one or more function or service areas in which to target these actions.

For example, Councils could select one Service Area, say 'Community Services' and resolve to target all ten areas of sustainability in this service area. Alternatively, Councils could select 'Training' as an area of sustainability to be addressed and resolve to implement more sustainable 'training' actions across all service areas of council.

Within each target area chosen Councils should record one or more 'ESD Actions' that you wish to address in the coming year. These should be recorded on the ESD Action Plan record sheet (example next page, copies are provided in a separate attachment). These actions may come from your own ideas, from discussion generated through the assessment process, from statements in the Areas of Sustainability section or from the list of Sustainability Initiatives provided in *Appendix 4* page 30.

All actions recorded on the sheet would form the basis of an 'ESD Action Plan' for the following year. Councils are also encouraged to nominate a corresponding SoER theme on the record sheet, in addition to allocating a priority and dollars for each proposed action.

If the ESD Self Assessment is undertaken annually and timed to fit in with planning, budgetary and reporting cycles, this information should be incorporated into existing documents such as Council's Management Plan and State of Environment report.

NOTES:

Actions should only be selected and recorded which have a realistic chance of being addressed in the following year or during the next four year planning cycle. Progress towards sustainability is often more successful as a series of small steps.

It is also acknowledged that it requires a certain amount of resources to simply maintain Council at a certain step. It is a valid decision therefore for Councils to choose to consolidate their position at a certain step for a particular area, rather than choosing to progress to the next step for that area.

Name of Council _____ Financial Year _____

ESD Action Plan						
Selected Area(s) of Sustainability	Selected Service Area	Current ESD Assessment	SoER Theme(s)	Proposed Sustainability Actions for Council	Priority	\$s Allocated
<i>Example: Training</i>	Community Services	Step 1	Human Settlement/ Social	Incorporate 'awareness raising on sustainability' into Council's annual training program; encourage all staff to attend.	High	\$5,000
<i>Example: Risks</i>	Parks & Recreation	Step1/2	Water	Undertake a self-audit of parks maintenance in terms of water and chemical use and compliance with safety regulations. Undertake OH&S audit of work practices	Med	\$2,500
<i>Example: Opportunities</i>	Technical Services	Step 3	Water/ Waste/ Biodiversity	Following the preparation of Stormwater Management Plans, opportunities for attracting implementation funding will be investigated and documented	High	Normal staff costs

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Legislative Requirements and Definition of ESD

Following the 1997 amendments to the Local Government Act, there is now requirement on NSW Councils to integrate ESD in their activities and decision making processes.

The Local Government (Ecologically Sustainable Development) Amendment Act 1997 amends the Local Government Act 1993 to require councils to take into consideration the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development and to enhance reporting requirements for Annual and State of the Environment Reporting by councils.

Under the new legislation:

- ❖ Section 7 – Purpose of the Act is amended to require Councils to have regard to the principles of ESD in carrying out their responsibilities;
- ❖ The Charter of Act – Section 8 is amended to include: “to properly manage, develop, protect, restore, enhance and conserve the environment of the area for which it is responsible in a manner that is consistent with the principles of ESD”;
- ❖ Section 89 of the Act is amended to require councils to take into consideration the principles of ESD when determining applications for approval under the Local Government Act 1993; and
- ❖ In regard to the preparation of council Management Plans (under s403) and Annual Report (under s428) Councils are required to have regard to the principles of ESD.

In addition, a **definition of “principles of ecologically sustainable development”** is inserted in the Dictionary to the Act, as:

Ecologically sustainable development requires the effective integration of economic and environmental considerations in decision-making processes. Ecologically sustainable development can be achieved through the implementation of the following principles and programs:

1. the precautionary principle, namely that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environment damage, lack of full scientific certainty should be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environment 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,

2. 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,
3. conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity, namely that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration,
4. improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms, namely that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, such as:
 - i) polluter pays, that is those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance and 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.

Appendix 2 - Profile of Councils in the Australian Capital Region

The Australian Capital Region area comprises seventeen NSW Councils plus the ACT Government, and has been described as follows:

An area of significant ecological diversity, extending from the South-East Coast of New South Wales, across the Great Dividing Range, to the highest mountains of Australia, and to portions of the Murray-Darling Basin. The Region has relatively low population density and does not have high concentration of industries which are heavy users of energy or which generate damaging gaseous emissions.

Council	Estimated Residential Population (at 30/6/97)	Area (square kms)	Population Growth % (5 yr av)	Total No. of Staff - full time equivalent	Operating Expenses (97/98) \$M
Bega Valley	28,523	6,049	1.15	232	28.8
Bombala	2,991	3,994	-1.01	54	8.0
Boorowa	2,522	2,599	-0.75	53	6.5
Cooma-Monaro	9,641	4,881	-0.08	102	11.7
Crookwell	4,436	3,439	-0.67	57	8.1
Eurobodalla	30,755	3,404	9.03	314	37.6
Goulburn	21,310	53	-0.69	180	18.8
Gunning	2,312	2,199	0.74	36	4.0
Harden	3,891	1,862	-1.29	52	9.2
Mulwaree	5,863	5,207	1.32	67	7.7
Queanbeyan	28,584	52	1.95	284	25.0
Snowy River	6,282	6,034	2.28	80	13.0
Tallaganda	2,593	3,351	0.02	54	5.4
Tumut	11,318	3,752	-0.37	110	13.9
Yarrowlumla	9,360	2,969	2.39	63	9.6
Yass	9,400	3,416	0.77	99	11.9
Young	11,385	2,699	0.31	103	14.8

Summary Table

	Mean	High	Low	Median
Population	11,245	30,755	2,522	9,360
Area	3,133	6,049	52	3,404
Growth	0.88	9.03	-1.29	0.31
Staff	114	314	36	80
Expenses	13.7	37.6	4.0	9.6

Appendix 3 – Sample of Council Services

Community Services

Community development
Community health
Housing
Library services
Cultural services
Children's services
Youth services
Aged support
Disability services
Social and community planning

Planning

Strategic planning
Regional planning
Development control planning
Land use planning
Urban services
Heritage
Zoning
Subdivisions

Public safety

Fire protection
Animal control
Beach control
Bushfire administration
Emergency services

Corporate Services/Administration

Corporate management
Corporate support
Economic development
Human Resources
Occupational health and safety
Finance/Accounting
Legal services
Information technology
Records
Purchasing
Stores
Customer service
Revenue collection

Recreation

Parks, gardens and reserves
Sporting grounds
Swimming pools
Wharves, jetties and boat ramps

Waste

Domestic waste collection
Waste depot management

Business and trade waste
Street cleaning

Environmental services

Environmental management
Environmental regulation
Environmental health
Land use regulation
Catchment management
Pollution
Noxious weeds
Pest control
Cemeteries
Rangers

Engineering/Technical Services

Design
Utilities management
Road construction and maintenance
Bridge construction and maintenance
Traffic management
Water supply
Drainage
Sewerage services
Stormwater management
Fleet management
Asset management
Plant and depot management
Quarry and gravel pits
Saleyards
Airports

Property

Property management
Property services
Commercial properties
Caravan parks

General Manager

Organisational development
Public relations
Tourism

Appendix 4 - Sustainability Initiatives

Focus
Ceramic mugs are provided in all Council meeting rooms and kitchens.
Council kitchens only have microwave or gas ovens.
Fridges and freezers in Council kitchens are placed away from direct sunlight and Council kitchen appliances should have a high energy or water efficiency rating.
All unnecessary lights are switched off, with all computers, monitors, photocopiers and printers switched off at night.
Regular environmental audits are carried out on Council's operations.
Council employs best practice sustainability measures when renovating or developing property to provide an example for private industry.
Insert clauses into tender contracts requiring that the contractor observe environmental due diligence.
Prepare voluntary Code of Conduct to achieve ESD for Council, local industry and the community.
Adopt the role of catalyst in implementing sustainable practices in council service areas.
Assess and conserve regional biodiversity in cooperation with NPWS and DLWC. Establish regional bio-indicators.
Lead by example and encourage the adoption of sustainability principles in the community.
Promote links with State Government Departments, neighbouring Councils and regional groupings to develop a consistent approach to sustainability.
Chair an Ecologically Sustainable Development Committee with representatives from management, Council and community.
Use Sister City Agreements as a vehicle for international exchange of ideas on ESD initiatives.
Nominate Council sustainability initiatives for industry awards.
Develop partnerships with Stage agencies and private enterprise to address community issues such as safer communities.
A community/industry awards scheme is introduced to recognise sustainability initiatives and practices.
Industry compliance audits and reviews are undertaken regularly.
Where possible plant vegetation communities rather than single trees on Council parks and reserves.
Litter and recycling facilities are placed in public areas and reserves where possible.

Policies
Form cross-divisional working groups to revise and develop Council policies.
Develop a green purchasing policy. Have particular regard to energy rating of Council appliances and equipment and features of office equipment, eg. power save buttons, double sided copying, recyclable components.
Ensure that all new and renovated Council buildings achieve a five star energy rating under SEDA Energy Smart Homes Policy.
Ensure landscaping, tree planting and public art components are integrated into capital works budget and design policies.
All new subdivisions and major developments are to address integrated transport planning.
Embed the recommendations of the State of the Environment Report into Council's Management Plan.
Embed a Sustainability Goal within the Council's Management Plan.
Promote mixed-use zonings and increase residential densities around transit nodes.
Design development to be compatible with existing neighbouring buildings and landscape.
Link Senior Staff contracts in terms of performance assessment, to Council's progress toward sustainability.
Prepare an Energy Smart /Water Wise Development Control Plan.
Prepare a tourism policy to address tourist infrastructure and to control tourism numbers and access.
Prepare an integrated transport plan.
Prepare a policy on contaminated land.
Council to purchase 'green power' for all Council buildings and facilities.
Council should strongly consider purchasing goods and services from local producers and service providers.
Stormwater management policies are integrated into all areas of Council, including maintenance, parks and reserves, environmental services, development and strategic planning.
Conservation zones are created for areas of environmentally sensitive land or areas with endangered species.

Organisational Management

Promote flexible working hours to improve employment equity

Keep up to date copies of the organisational structure on staff notice boards.

Regularly update internal phone directories listing names position description and areas of responsibility and distribute to all staff and Councillors.

Managers are made responsible for informing their staff about current reporting and communication lines within Council.

Insert clauses into relevant Position Descriptions (engineers, field staff) that require a 'demonstrated ability to operate in a sensitive environment.

Facilitate telecommuting or working from home for staff where appropriate.

Environmental managers are provided with training in budgeting and reporting procedures.

A system is developed for the involvement of environmental management staff in strategic planning decisions and reviews of the LEP and DCPs.

A system is developed to ensure referral of DAs to officers with appropriate expertise for comment.

Council support is provided for alternatives to individual car usage, eg. car pooling, subsidised bus passes, bike racks, showers and changing facilities.

Information on sustainable living is made easily accessible to staff and the community through Council's web page, community notice boards and libraries.

Discussion groups are encouraged in Council to exchange ideas and develop solutions for ESD issues.

Employee incentive schemes are developed to encourage development and implementation of sustainable work practices.

An employee award scheme is developed to encourage implementation of sustainable work and lifestyle practices.

Sustainability performance measures are introduced for senior staff. These could include:

- Annual staff turnover (%)
- Percentage of annual budget spent on training
- Mean number of sick days per year
- Number of days lost through workplace injury.
- Number of operational changes adopted by management at the suggestion of staff/per year.
- Gap between manager's salaries and staff.
- Mean number of hours of overtime worked.

ESD Performance
Support use of tertiary treated sewerage on broad acre irrigation (eg. golf courses).
Utilise alternative energy sources on Council buildings, pools and street lighting to supplement or replace grid supply (eg. sign up for 'Green Power, install solar streetlights, heat pumps etc).
Balance frequency of prescriptive burns for property protection with maintenance of biodiversity.
Protect environmentally sensitive areas and areas of high visual amenity such as ridgelines and wetlands.
Develop and implement 'Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans'.
Prepare an ESD development control checklist.
Develop performance indicators across all divisions to monitor Council's progress toward sustainability.
Establish monitoring programs for key natural environmental indicators (eg water quality, air quality and area of weed infestation).
Employ multi-use design in managing stormwater (eg. playing fields as detention basins) and regularly maintain sediment traps and detention basins.
Progressively replace fittings with water efficient options (taps and showerheads).
Progressively replace all conventional light bulbs and fluorescent lights with energy efficient alternatives.
Avoid use of ozone depleting substances.
Make ESD a core service area of Council.
Balance Council's performance on economic efficiency with its social performance on social equity, access, community health
Develop a 'new residents kit' including information on Council services and sustainability practices such as recycling.
Print all Council documents, newsletter, policies etc. on recycled paper (double sided).
Outline Council's sustainability actions and policies in staff induction manuals.

Innovation
Convert Council vehicle and truck fleet to use low emission fuel (eg LPG or 50ppm diesoline where available).
Provide incentives for residents to conserve bushland and wetland areas (eg. rate rebates, fencing assistance, professional advice, and native seedlings).
Minimise car parking as a condition of development approvals.
Maximise solar access and passive ventilation in building design.
Maximise on-site detention and infiltration of stormwater.
Create an employee incentive scheme to reduce staff turnover, training costs and loss of corporate knowledge.
Provide flexible salary packages (job sharing, cash in lieu of vehicle).
Maximise use of native plants in all Council landscaping to minimise water usage.
Minimise open grass areas and lawn areas to reduce mowing/watering costs or plant native grasses for lawn areas.
Install off peak, solar or instant gas water heaters or heat pumps in recreation and community centres
Install energy saving floodlight controls on Council buildings.
Regulate open space/sportsground watering systems to only water at dawn or dusk or not at all in summer.
Provide open space as an integrated component of the built/urban environment.
Buy products in bulk to avoid packaging.
Purchase recycled products to complete the re-use cycle.
Shred tree prunings and use for mulch on Council parks and gardens.
Encourage installation of grey water re-use systems in Council buildings.
Harvest methane from decommissioned landfill sites for power generation.

Management of Opportunities

Identify opportunities for eco-tourism in your local area.
Require construction sites to comply with waste minimisation targets.
Encourage formation or provide support for Council social and/or recreation clubs.
Encourage regular exercise for staff, particularly as part of a team environment.
Employ a 'least cost' approach to capital investment.
Buy locally where practicable for Council supplies and equipment.
Revise Council's rating system to encourage special rates for matters such as stormwater, acquisition of public open space or bush regeneration.
Record the cumulative environmental impact of decisions, for example number of trees removed, area of land cleared and/or developed, and area of new impervious surfaces approved.
Acquire environmentally sensitive land such as wetlands and foreshore reserves.
Ensure that tourism income and opportunities are retained locally.
Consolidate links between Chambers of Commerce and Council.
Ensure new Council buildings are well insulated, use natural passive ventilation and include passive energy options such as window tinting and verandahs.
Consider opportunities for reuse of old Council buildings as an alternative to demolition.
Partnerships are developed with industrial and agricultural groups and state agencies to address sustainability issues.
Council contractors are required to demonstrate their ESD awareness.
Participate in community and promotional events, providing information about Council services and sustainability practices.
Require at least some living areas of new dwellings to maximise solar access.
Require all applications for new dwellings to incorporate water efficiency measures, eg. dual flush toilets, rainwater tanks

Management of Risks
Install cameras at common illegal dumping areas and prosecute illegal dumpers.
Initiate a biannual hazardous waste collection.
Undertake regular waste audits to measure progress towards waste minimisation targets.
Provide interpretive signage to inform visitors of the environmental and cultural importance of the area.
Formalise popular walking/mountain bike tracks to reduce erosion and improve safety.
Select ethical investment portfolios for Council.
Use 'life cycle' costing when purchasing major assets.
Avoid residential land releases in extreme and high fire risk zones.
Prohibit development on primary coastal dunes and floodplains.
Manage access to remote or potentially dangerous locations (eg coastal rocks, cliffs).
Undertake soil testing of potentially contaminated sites and prepare a risk assessment.
Prepare 'Emergency Response Plan' for pollution spills, fire etc.
Seal roads on significant grades to minimise erosion and sediment export.
Require selection of construction materials be subject to life cycle assessment, (ie. considering environmental implications during manufacture, use and disposal).
Regularly maintain all equipment and large and small plant.
Minimise indoor levels of carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, lead, ozone, sulphur dioxide, TOC and total VOC to comply with NHMRC interim international air quality goals.
Regularly monitor thermostats on all air conditioning units.
Purchase only ergonomic furniture.
Insulate buildings with cellulose fibre.
Minimise dust generation and sediment export during construction through techniques to minimise soil erosion and sedimentation.
Issue protective clothing/equipment for field staff (eg. hats, sunscreen etc.).
Regularly maintain sediment traps and detention basins.

Training
Distribute information and educational material on Ecologically Sustainable Development to staff and the community.
Develop an ESD awareness and training program for all Council staff.
Develop a regular ESD awareness and training program for Councillors and Senior staff.
Develop a training program on sustainable work practices for Council field staff.
Train Council staff in emergency response procedures.
Develop specific education programs for staff on energy and water conservation in the home.
Prepare a Community Services and Information Directory for staff and the community.
Prepare a training manual for Council's contractors on ESD principles and practices.
Develop an internal 'sustainability newsletter' for staff with tips on lifestyle changes which can contribute to sustainability.
Develop specific environmental education program for staff and the community on areas such as soil erosion management, green purchasing, energy efficiency, and conservation of biodiversity.
Develop a training program for Parks and Reserves staff and the community on the sustainability benefits of planting native gardens.
Provide training for Council's depot and workshop staff on appropriate disposal of waste.
Incorporate driver education programs such as Fleetsafe, promoting vehicle care and safe and efficient driving practices.
Hold promotional events for Water Week, Earth Week, World Environment Day etc.
Provide training/educational signs throughout Council on recycling facilities, reduction of paper usage and energy saving techniques for office equipment.

Information and Communication
Identify invasive plant/weed species and prepare a brochure advising residents of their impact and of alternative garden species.
Ensure easy access to Council information for all members of the community.
Provide public safety information in various ethnic languages.
Provide educational material about Council's programs in various ethnic languages.
Install a hearing loop in Council Chambers and install TYY phone in reception for hearing impaired.
Develop an information package on the local area to encourage local businesses and encourage local employment.
Pursue a policy of Open Government.
Map local resources and issues such as area containing threatened species or contaminated lands. Where possible this information should be incorporated into a GIS.
Provide information on Council services and sustainability practices at all Council buildings and facilities.
Aim to provide all Council business papers, key documents and policies in electronic format.
Distribute information to staff electronically where possible. Discourage printing of emails.
Provide an ongoing public awareness campaign for the community on Council's ESD initiatives and practices.
Information is provided to staff and the community on energy and water efficient appliances and equipment.
Information is provided on Council's web page on sustainable living.
There is a mobile library service for the Council area.
Unwanted Council library books are given to charity.

Community
Propagate native seedlings for distribution to volunteer organisations and schools.
Promote and assist volunteer groups such as Streamwatch, Landcare, and Bushcare.
Convert decommissioned sanitary landfill site into playing fields.
Provide coloured recycling bins in public places.
Sell (at cost) composting bins and worm farms to local residents.
Establish and maintain equity of access to public open space (where access is considered appropriate).
Engage local honorary rangers to assist Council.
Advertise vacant staff positions locally as well as in metropolitan papers.
Design local roads with traffic calming devices in residential and high pedestrian usage areas.
Facilitate the provision of basic services within every residential neighbourhood (eg. corner shop, neighbourhood centre etc.).
Promote redevelopment, intensification or infilling of existing areas to prevent urban sprawl.
Facilitate language translation services for Council activities and provide community information in community languages.
Promote events such as Seniors' Week and Youth Week.
Support Neighbourhood Watch programs.
Provide and support youth recreation activities.
Recognise voluntary work through awards and in kind assistance.
Encourage housing types that meets demographic needs of your Council.
Install ramps and lifts where necessary facilitate wheel chair access to existing Council and public buildings.
Provide community meeting places for social interaction in local centres.
Provide support for a community bus for use by community organisations.
Provide training for community groups on computer and internet use.