

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY 2021-2022:

Trend and condition summary

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY 2021-2022

TREND AND CONDITION SUMMARY

This summary outlines Council's results for 2021-2022 in implementing the Lake Macquarie City Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2027 (ESSAP 2020-2027).

It provides a trend and condition report on the priority environmental sustainability themes:

- protecting and enhancing our natural landscapes
- supporting resilient communities
- creating a sustainable city and communities
- responsible consumption and production.

In June 2020, Council adopted ESSAP 2020-2027 to maximise the wellbeing of the city's residents, while reducing our environmental footprint. The targets developed and implemented under ESSAP 2020-2027 are for the 19-year period, starting from 2008 (baseline year where applicable) and concluding in 2027.

COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

For each of the priority environmental issues, we provide a high-level rating on the effectiveness of Council's response:



GOOD – shows an effective response consistent with best practice.



MODERATE – shows that the management response is moderate.



POOR – shows that the response could be improved.

Cover image shows the Ken and Audrey Owens Walkway, which opened in early 2022 and winds through an important coastal ecosystem

STRATEGIC THEME 1

Protecting and enhancing our natural landscapes

The targets presented focus on factors that have been shown to be key for maintaining ecosystem function, such as connectivity, protection of habitat of high conservation value and ecosystem health and land use practices that support high water quality in the aquatic environment.

Targets

- 1.1 Maintain at least 57.5 per cent native vegetation cover in the city
 - 1.2 Improve the condition of 30 per cent of public land with high conservation value compared to 2007 baseline.
 - 1.3 No net loss in connectivity of ecological communities from 2007 baseline.
 - 1.4 Five per cent increase in area of the City (land and water) with conservation status compared to 2007 baseline.
 - 1.5 20 per cent increase in lake and waterway health compared to 2007 baseline.
 - 1.6 Achieve a '100 Per Cent Water Cycle City' state (using the Water Sensitive Cities Benchmarking Assessment).
 - 1.7 90 per cent of residents place a high value on the health of the natural environment (beaches, lake and bushland) of Lake Macquarie.
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Response	2021-2022 summary outcomes
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Natural environment	
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10,136ha reserved for conservation
37 natural area works projects (improving water quality and biodiversity and preventing erosion)
Six registered biobank and biodiversity stewardship sites (236.48ha)
97 per cent of respondents agree our natural landscape is an important part of our city's identity (Lake Macquarie City Council Community Research, November 2021)
Native vegetation cover has reduced to 58.1 per cent - the average annual rate of vegetation clearing (between 2018 and 2022) is 47.1 hectares a year, which is a reduction in rate from previous (69.5ha/year between 2014 and 2018)

STRATEGIC THEME 2

Supporting resilient communities

The targets presented focus on factors that help the community and Council, in relation to its own assets, understand the risks from natural hazards and the influence climate change is expected to have on the frequency and severity of these events and its specific contribution to sea level rise and how we prepare for these risks so adverse outcomes can be minimised.

Targets

- 2.1 Natural disaster risk reduction strategies in place for 100 per cent of the city's extreme and high risks
- 2.2 Climate change risk reduction strategies in place for 100 per cent of the city's extreme and high risks
- 2.3 100 per cent of known contaminated public land assessed for risk to human health and prioritised for risk mitigation measures
- 2.4 Air quality emissions in the city meet the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure
- 2.5 70 per cent of residents believe they have the information and resources needed to prepare, respond and recover from adverse events

Response 2021-2022 summary outcomes

Climate change adaptation



Two local area adaptation plans.
(In action: Belmont South and Marks Point, and Pelican and Blacksmiths combined with Swansea and surrounds).
547 dwelling approvals compliant to sea level rise and flood planning floor levels (total since 2009).
2.55mm-3.5mm a year average change in relative lake level (2011 baseline reported 2.6mm a year)

Natural hazards



\$993,804 bush fire hazard reduction funding (from NSW Rural Fire Service Rural Fire Fighting Fund (\$561,575) and Bush Fire Risk Mitigation and Resilience Program (\$432,229)
\$1.3 million bush fire mitigation costs to Council (within community land)
14.9ha managed through four hazard reduction burns (Bolton Point (two sites), Blacksmiths and Jewells)

Environmental health



82 illegal dump sites cleaned up by offender (saving Council \$35,959)
31 asbestos-related issues investigated
3.7 per cent decrease in smoke, dust and fugitive emission complaints (78 complaints received)
Implementing Council's contaminated land database

STRATEGIC THEME 3

Creating a sustainable city and communities

The targets presented focus on factors: that maximise the efficient use of energy and reduce reliance on non-renewable energy sources (with reducing greenhouse gas emission as a well-recognised indicator), drive efficient use of water and encourage diversification of suitable supply options and guide land use and transport planning to support development of a high-quality built environment.

Targets

- 3.1 57 per cent reduction in city-wide per capita and total Council greenhouse gas emissions from 2007 baseline
- 3.2 12 per cent reduction in city-wide per capita and total Council drinking water consumption from 2007 baseline
- 3.3 Increase active transport (walking and other) to 15 per cent of total trips (Transport for NSW Household Travel Survey - Data by LGA)
- 3.4 80 per cent of residents report taking positive actions to source renewable energy and/or conserve water and/or undertake active transport trips

Response 2021-2022 summary outcomes

Energy



- 45.79 per cent increase in solar generation exported to grid within the city (20,354 Ausgrid customers now exporting solar to grid – resulting in a 22,428MWh increase on 2020-2021 reporting)
- 1749kW solar generation capacity on Council infrastructure (an additional 160 solar panels)
- 9.5 per cent reduction in Council greenhouse gas emissions (1186t CO₂-e less than 2020-2021)
- 11 active Sustainable Neighbourhood groups

Water and land



- 3.18 per cent reduction in residential water use (421,181kL decrease on 2019-2020)
- 14.38 per cent reduction in Council water consumption (45,323kL decrease on 2020-2021 climate corrected 315,246kL)
- 2.8ha rezoned for infill development (including 1.2ha zoned for public recreation use and 0.2ha rezoned for conservation)
- 1046 registered Aboriginal sites in the city

Transport



- 8.42km shared pathway constructed (4617m by Council and 3800m by developers)
- 13.38km of footpath constructed (3648m by Council and 9727m by developers)
- 46 per cent of Council's passenger fleet is electric or hybrid (nine electric and 76 hybrid passenger vehicles)
- 11.48 per cent reduction in Council fleet fuel burn emissions (down 577t CO₂-e on 2020-2021)



STRATEGIC THEME 4

Responsible consumption and production

The targets presented focus on factors: that maximise the value placed on finite resources by encouraging separation of once unrecovered resources, into useful components, and development of markets for their beneficial reuse, and recognise that resources include the land, water and energy needed to create our goods and services, as captured in the concept of the ecological footprint.

Targets

- 4.1 30 per cent reduction in the per capita ecological footprint of the city from 2007 baseline
- 4.2 To divert 75 per cent of waste from properties serviced by Council (residential and commercial) away from landfill
- 4.3 To divert 90 per cent of construction and demolition waste generated and managed by Council operations away from landfill
- 4.4 100 per cent of Council tender specifications include recycled, reused and sustainably-sourced products, where a functionally and economically viable alternative to new materials is available
- 4.5 Increase the number of businesses in the region involved in circular economy manufacturing, design, reuse, repair and recycling of materials by 20 per cent from 2019 baseline
- 4.6 90 per cent of residents believe it is important for Lake Macquarie residents to reduce their resource consumption

Response	2021-2022 summary outcomes
Waste and recycling	
	102,503 tonnes total waste diverted from landfill 47,338 tonnes food and garden green waste diverted from landfill 0.96 per cent more waste to landfill (623 tonnes increase on 2020-2021) 241 tonnes hazardous and problem waste collected through Community Recycle Centre program and Chemical CleanOut 93.6 per cent of construction and demolition waste, generated by Council operations, diverted from landfill
Circular economy	
	71 businesses in the region involved in circular economy activity



CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in September 2015 by 193 United Nation member states and ratified by the Australian Government, comprise 17 goals and 169 targets aimed at addressing the world's most significant development challenges.

Council's ESSAP 2020-2027 establishes Council's vital role to create a city committed to the localisation of the global United Nations SDGs. The strategy's focus includes initiatives and targets to address our influence, impacts and opportunities in relation to 13 goals consistent with the city's vision and community values. There are five priority SDGs reflecting the areas we believe Lake Macquarie City Council is currently best placed to contribute:



CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PRIORITY 11

Sustainable cities and communities



Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
Guide land use planning to support development of a high-quality built environment.	<p>Council is working to protect and enhance the city's natural heritage.</p> <p>Urban Greening and Urban Heat Strategies developed and adopted.</p>	<p>Implement the Urban Greening Strategy including the development of: an urban greening and tree planting prioritisation tool; and a tool to inform tree species selection, considering future climate change scenarios.</p> <p>Implement the Urban Heat Strategy and develop a cooler materials specification document to enable improved built outcomes for Council facilities regarding urban heat.</p>
Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world cultural and natural heritage.	<p>Engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) groups (Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Traditional Owner groups) occurring as part of the Coastal Management program.</p> <p>Council engages with ATSI groups including applications of traditional 'fire stick' approach to manage bushland areas and bush fire hazard reduction.</p> <p>Council support of grant applications by Local Aboriginal Land Council for traditional burn activity.</p>	<p>Ensure terrestrial landscape health projects incorporate involvement of indigenous groups and communities.</p> <p>Develop and implement programs to enhance indigenous involvement in lake health initiatives.</p> <p>Continue to use traditional Aboriginal fire management.</p> <p>Continue to engage ATSI perspectives in new strategy development (for example, Coastal Management Program).</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
Reduce the adverse environmental impact of cities - air quality, municipal and other waste management.	<p>Council is addressing air quality issues through a range of initiatives including updating air pollutant dispersion modelling, registering and investigating air pollution incidents and reviewing Air Quality Assessment reports as part of pollution-intensive development applications, and making recommendations to approval authorities to mitigate air quality impacts.</p> <p>Council focuses on opportunities for the maximum recycling and re-use of bulk construction materials and is undertaking an audit program of all licensed on-site sewage management systems within the local government area (risk category applied).</p>	<p>Continue to work collaboratively with the community and internal/external stakeholders to ensure air quality emissions in the city meet the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure.</p> <p>Continued participation in regional, and state-funded illegal dumping programs.</p> <p>Reuse or recycle more than 90 per cent of Council-generated construction and demolition waste each year (2027 target).</p> <p>Draft and implement priority recommendations from the on-site sewage strategy.</p>
Provision of access to safe public spaces.	<p>Council's objective is for our open and shared spaces to be inclusive, enabling us to live a healthy and safer social lifestyle.</p> <p>To protect the community, assets and the environment, Council continues to implement actions from the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan.</p> <p>Council's Lake Activation Strategy (adopted October 2021) includes actions to improve access to foreshore areas.</p>	<p>Implement the Lake Activation Strategy.</p> <p>Implement the Urban Greening and Urban Heat strategies.</p> <p>Review fertiliser, herbicide and pesticide use on public land by Council and community groups, and make recommendations aimed at reducing the potential for public and ecosystem health impacts.</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PRIORITY 12



Responsible consumption and production

Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
Ensure the community has the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.	<p>Council aims to connect people to nature through programs and activities designed to foster enhanced social resilience, health and wellbeing and environmental stewardship.</p> <p>Education and engagement programs are delivered to business and community, on accessible ways to live a low impact lifestyle.</p> <p>Council provides ongoing support for Landcare and Sustainable Neighbourhood programs and aims to increase community engagement and participation in these programs and within other volunteer and community groups.</p>	<p>Explore the ways in which cultural and practical 'Caring for Country' principles can assist in integrating people with nature.</p> <p>Continue to protect and conserve natural heritage places that define our city's distinctive identity, now and into the future, through protection of biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystem processes.</p> <p>Continue to strengthen existing citizen science programs and explore collaborative citizen science partnerships.</p>
Achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimise adverse impacts on human health and the environment.	<p>Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> continues to implement recommendations from the Lead Expert Working Group Report on managing residual lead contamination in North Lake Macquarie is investigating the feasibility of the establishment of an Environment Audit Program for the identification of high-risk industry and activity applies regulatory controls where contamination of land is considered to be of harm to public health and environment is developing and implementing effluent management strategies and policies to reduce environmental health impacts is developing and implementing strategies to manage contaminated land and implements works to address contamination at priority sites. 	<p>Establish objectives for an Environment Audit Program and implement inspection program.</p> <p>Strategically plan for and undertake remediation of Council managed contaminated land at priority sites.</p> <p>Continue to plan and implement engagement campaigns related to priority environmental health issues (including air pollution, heat stress and contaminated land).</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
Achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, promote sustainable public procurement practices and encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices.	<p>The Hunter, Central Coast and Lake Macquarie area is on a mission to become Australia's leading circular economy region and Lake Macquarie City Council is collaborating with the Hunter Joint Organisation (HJO), NSW Government Sustainability Advantage and other key stakeholders to make this a reality.</p> <p>A partnership between the University of Newcastle, Council and Dantia has established Australia's first Circular Economy Living Lab (CELL). The living lab approach is designed to set up the circular economy through a user-centred open innovation ecosystem co-designed and operating in real life settings.</p> <p>Working together, in the past year, the region has already completed a number of impressive circular economy projects including participating in the first CELL pilot project with Origin Energy, which will introduce an innovative re-use of fly ash.</p> <p>Council also continues to use recycled plastics and recycled glass sand in pavement, road construction and kerb and guttering projects across the city.</p>	<p>Council will continue its representation within the HJO, NSW Government Sustainability Advantage and the Hunter Central Coast Circular Economy Facilitators group to develop regional projects and realise circular economy projects.</p> <p>Council will continue implementing its internal Circular Economy Action Plans and looking for opportunities to improve its procurement practices to adopt more circular and sustainable practices.</p> <p>Working as a founding partner of Australia's first Circular Economy Living Lab (CELL), Council will continue to identify circular opportunities within the area and seek innovative pilot projects and initiatives to trial in practical real-world settings.</p> <p>Council will work with other local councils and the business community on circular economy initiatives to galvanise change in the region.</p>
Substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.	<p>Council will lead by example in waste avoidance, repair, reuse and recycling, in purchasing and disposal of assets, resources and wastes.</p> <p>The amount of waste landfilled has stabilised at a lower rate for the fourth year following the 2018 transition to weekly kerbside food and garden organics and fortnightly garbage collections with 22,000 tonnes (26 per cent) less material being landfilled each year than before the service change.</p>	<p>Continue to work closely with the Hunter and Central Coast Waste Region, the NSW Government's Sustainability Advantage program, and local industry leaders to advance circular economy in the region.</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PRIORITY 13

Climate action



Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters.	<p>Council continues to work with government/emergency service agencies and non-governmental organisations to address natural hazard awareness and preparedness issues, prioritising vulnerable communities, businesses and individuals.</p> <p>Sea level rise policy and guidelines and new flood levels are incorporated in planning for, and designing, all new Council infrastructure, with all infrastructure design adjusted to meet new standards that include consideration of climate change.</p> <p>Council is working collaboratively with the community and internal and external stakeholders to achieve natural hazard/disaster risk reduction - to prepare, respond and recover from adverse events. These events may be natural disasters, economic shocks or social disconnection. Working to achieve our environmental sustainability targets will help us support resilient communities by: addressing the risks to health, safety and infrastructure from natural hazards and pollution events, and developing strong local networks, and addressing the influence climate change is expected to have on the frequency and severity of natural hazards.</p>	<p>Continue to implement programs and activities designed to increase householder preparedness for natural disasters and climate change.</p> <p>Continue to investigate and develop new building and landscape design guidelines, and encourage innovative building, infrastructure and landscape designs that are able to adapt more easily to climate change and sea level rise (urban design to mitigate the combined effects of climate change and urban heat islands).</p> <p>Review and undertake flood studies and floodplain risk management studies/plans, that include climate change predictions, for prioritised catchments and tributary catchments in the local government area. Flood studies currently cover 56.44 per cent of the city's population who reside within an identified flood prone catchment. Council endeavours to implement recommended management actions emanating from these completed reports.</p> <p>Finalise and be ready to implement a Lake Macquarie Emergency Waste Management Sub-plan - identifying disaster waste prevention and management measures.</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
Integrate climate change measures into policies, strategies and planning.	<p>Recommendations from the Coastal Ecosystem Resilience in Lake Macquarie Report incorporated in the Coastal Management Program.</p> <p>Lake Macquarie Local Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) - endorsed December 2021.</p> <p>Development conditions for floor heights, setbacks and subdivision have been incorporated in the Lake Macquarie Development Control Plan 2014 and are being applied to new development. Strategic planning for the long-term management of risks to existing settlements and infrastructure commenced with the adoption of a local area adaptation plan for Marks Point and Belmont South. Council, in collaboration with the community, also completed the Local Adaptation Plan for Pelican, Blacksmiths, Swansea and surrounds (adopted by Council in October 2021).</p> <p>Council continues to develop and implement local adaptation plans to address current and emerging climate change risks.</p>	<p>Integrate climate change adaptation strategies into asset management plans and programs for built and natural assets.</p> <p>Risk reduction strategies in place for the city's extreme and high natural hazard risks.</p> <p>Implement Urban Heat Strategy (adopted June 2022).</p> <p>Implement Urban Greening Strategy (adopted June 2022).</p> <p>Continue to identify and assess emerging climate change risks and review and update policies, strategies and guidelines to mitigate impacts.</p>
Raise capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management.	<p>Council and the community are becoming better informed about climate change and its effects, and incorporating this information into planning and operational decisions.</p> <p>Lake Macquarie City Coastal Management Program is being finalised prior certification by the NSW Government. This program, together with the Floodplain Risk Management Plans and Local Adaptation Plans, will provide a framework to support Council and the community manage the impacts of climate change including sea level rise.</p>	<p>Implement Coastal Management Program for Lake Macquarie City's coastal zone.</p> <p>Continue to implement priority recommendations from approved floodplain risk management studies and plans for all major/prioritised catchments in the city.</p> <p>Continue to identify, research and assess environmental risks and develop and implement strategies to reduce Council's and the community's exposure to identified risks.</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

PRIORITY 14

Life below water



Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
Monitor key aquatic health indicators and maintain up-to-date water cycle models.	<p>Council works in partnership with other agencies such as the NSW Department of Planning and Environment to undertake aquatic ecosystem modelling, water quality analysis and assessment of sea grass coverage. The 2021-2022 outcomes indicated the improved aquatic ecosystem health, achieved over the previous 15 years, has been maintained.</p> <p>Research into aquatic biodiversity is ongoing through the Lake Macquarie Research Grants program with specific research including the completion of Stage One of a foreshore ecological assessment project (with Macquarie University, University of New South Wales and NSW Department of Planning and Environment).</p>	<p>Continue to support research into aquatic ecosystem health topics (including the use of remote sensing and innovation in monitoring).</p> <p>Undertake partnerships with industry and the community to reduce impacts on water quality and aquatic ecosystem health.</p>
Implement on-ground natural area rehabilitation works across the local government area.	<p>In 2021-2022, Council implemented on-ground natural area rehabilitation works at 37 sites across the city. Focus areas of the works included post-fire regeneration, terrestrial biodiversity restoration and management, coastal and littoral rehabilitation, foreshore stabilisation and rehabilitation, streambank and riparian rehabilitations and wetland rehabilitation, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3.79ha of post-fire regeneration works on areas following hazard reduction burns - 7.73ha of terrestrial restoration works in areas of high biodiversity value - 3.5ha of coastal and littoral rehabilitation works - 6.9ha and 470m of foreshore stabilisation and rehabilitation works - 9.2ha of streambank and riparian rehabilitation works - 16.02ha of coastal wetland and saltmarsh restoration works - 2.98ha revegetation works in natural areas, planting 19,445 native plants. - 250m of dune stabilisation works to limit significant erosion impacts on coastal dunes. <p>Council is undertaking works to protect and enhance the health of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems including the development of a local biodiversity framework to guide acquisition of strategically important conservation lands and encourage biodiversity offsets locally and within the city.</p>	<p>Continue to review and implement strategic works program for the enhancement of natural areas in the city, including dune, riparian and wetland ecosystem enhancement, and continue to assess, understand and mitigate the impacts of climate change.</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
Sustainably manage, protect and conserve marine and coastal ecosystems.	<p>There has been an emphasis on updating the strategic documents that relate to coastal and estuary ecosystems. A more balanced focus on both lake and coastline is emerging, with Council: undertaking works to protect and enhance the health of aquatic and terrestrial environments; and preparing the Coastal Management Program for Lake Macquarie City's coastal zone (being finalised prior to certification by the NSW Government).</p> <p>There are no marine reserves in the city and the health of Lake Macquarie remains a matter of high community concern.</p>	<p>Continue to advocate for establishment of Intertidal Protected Area, and/or Marine Reserve status in high priority locations (potential sites include Swansea Heads and Fennell Bay).</p> <p>Finalise and implement the Lake Macquarie Coastal Management Program.</p> <p>Finalise and exhibit waterway development guidelines and associated planning controls.</p> <p>Review and implement the Lake Macquarie Water Cycle Management Guidelines and associated planning controls to provide best practice water cycle management for new developments.</p>
Prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities.	<p>Pressures of urbanisation, industry and recreational use of the marine/estuarine ecosystems continue to increase and the on-going effects of climate change will have an impact on the stability and functioning of coasts, estuaries and foreshores.</p> <p>Council provides appropriate training and information to Council staff to facilitate the assessment and compliance of new development with conditions of approval relating to stormwater management and treatment. Water sensitive urban design (WSUD) applied to all new developments (ensuring treatment of 50-80 per cent of stormwater from each sub-catchment in new subdivisions) and Water Cycle Management Guidelines updated to incorporate WSUD objective.</p> <p>Council partners with industry (e.g. power stations, Hunter Water Corporation) and the community to reduce impacts on water quality and aquatic ecosystem health.</p>	<p>Continue to design and construct water quality and flow control devices (such as constructed wetlands) at priority locations identified within existing stormwater and catchment management plans and at newly identified priority sites.</p> <p>Develop and deliver a city-wide campaign to reduce the impacts from stormwater on water quality and aquatic ecosystem health.</p> <p>Investigate and support measures to minimise adverse impacts from all forms of mining (including coal seam gas exploration on surface and groundwater and on ecosystem health), and minimise environmental impacts and negative effects from offshore oil and gas exploration (including the impacts on marine and other wildlife, the sea floor and the devastating cumulative effects of pollution), as required.</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



PRIORITY 15

Life on land

Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
<p>Prevent habitat loss due to land clearing for urban infrastructure and other development.</p>	<p>Land clearing places a fundamental pressure on the environment, causing habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, species death and exacerbates other environmental threatening processes.</p> <p>Conservation planning framework includes a draft local biodiversity offset framework to encourage biodiversity offsets locally and within the city.</p> <p>Indicators suggest that biodiversity and native habitats are still in a state of decline. Recent assessment reports the area of the city covered by native vegetation (bushland) is now 37,361 hectares. This covers 58.1 percent of the total land area in the city. The average annual rate of vegetation clearing (bushland to cleared, between 2018 and 2022) is assessed at 47.1 hectares a year, which is a reduction in rate from the previous mapping period (69.5ha/year between 2014 and 2018).</p>	<p>Continue conservation planning for the city to protect important biodiversity values and build ecological resilience.</p> <p>Implement guidelines (and associated planning controls) to ensure that biodiversity, and ecological connectivity is adequately assessed and impacts avoided and/or mitigated, and further develop the Awaba Conservation Area proposal.</p> <p>Complete conservation planning framework including guidance on the acquisition of strategically important conservation land in the city.</p> <p>Maximise rezoning for urban land uses on land not identified as high conservation.</p> <p>Retain existing conservation zones and apply such zones to land identified as high conservation.</p> <p>Council to encourage, support and partner with industry and private organisations to reduce the intensity of threats facing biodiversity (including the destruction, degradation and fragmentation of habitats) and the impacts on terrestrial ecosystem health through developing terrestrial ecosystem partnership projects and effectively administering vegetation management plans.</p>

CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Potential influence	Our status	Future plans
<p>Introduce measures to further prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive pest species on land and water ecosystems.</p>	<p>Council contributes to regional feral animal control programs and implements programs for the control and eradication of noxious and invasive plants.</p> <p>Biosecurity inspections within Council's strategic works program have been included for the enhancement of natural areas in the city, including high priority bushland, foreshore and wetland sites.</p>	<p>Active participation in HJO's five yearly review of the Regional Weed Strategy and the continued identification, management and monitoring of weed species in accordance with the regional Weed Action Program.</p> <p>Council will to continue to use <i>NSW Biosecurity Act 2015</i>, to provide the framework to managing vertebrate pests.</p>

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