

City of Albany  
**Policy**

# Environmental



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## Objective

To ensure that the City of Albany commits to taking action on climate change, recognising that while uncertainty is present in existing climate science, this does not present a reason for inaction or delay of action, and that the “precautionary principle” should be applied.

The key principles behind this objective include:

- Ensuring that an understanding is reached on the potential impacts of climate change in a local, regional and international context;
- The recognition of the City’s existing greenhouse gas footprint through its operational activities;
- A commitment to evaluating and reducing the City’s footprint and the provision of practical strategies for reduction, offsetting and / or sequestration; and
- A commitment to reducing the vulnerability of the City to climate change impacts through risk management and adaptation strategies.

## Policy Statement

The City of Albany is committed to ensuring that appropriate responses are undertaken to mitigate the potential climate change impacts. To achieve this, the City will:

- Acknowledge and recognise climate change as a factor in all City operations
- Be prepared and adaptable to future events, by applying the “precautionary principle” and conducting risk analysis. The resulting risk analysis will be used for informed decision-making;
- Develop and implement a measured greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation strategy throughout Council to meet determined greenhouse gas reductions;
- Establish sufficient budget allocation to deliver mitigation and adaptation initiatives, as outlined in the strategy; and
- Build community understanding and awareness by promoting City actions and providing education programmes to address priority areas.

## Scope

Refer to “[Responsibility and Reporting](#)” section of the policy position.

## Legislative and Strategic Context

### Local Government Act 1995

Section 1.3 (3) of the Local Government Act 1995 states... “In carrying out its functions, a local government is to use its best endeavours to meet the needs of current and future generations through integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity”.

In order to ‘meet the needs of current and future generations’, Local Government must address climate change impacts on its community. A range of mitigation and adaptation strategies must be applied to ensure that economic, social, environmental and legal obligations are met.

### Community Strategic Plan

In terms of the City’s strategic plan, this policy compliments and recognizes the Community Strategic Plan at the time of adoption:, being: *The City of Albany will be a City where...*

- **Lifestyle and Environment:** *“The long term problems of climate change and peak oil have been recognised and responded to.”*
- **Economic Development:** *“renewable energy completely powers the region.”*
- **City Centre:**
  - *“Be family and pedestrian friendly;*
  - *“Serviced by regular and affordable public transport system.”*
- **Governance:** *“Manage our municipal assets to ensure they are capable of supporting our growing community.”*

### National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (NGER Act)

The National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (NGER Act) introduced a national framework for the reporting and dissemination of information about the greenhouse gas emissions, greenhouse gas projects, energy use and production of corporations.

The objectives of the NGER Act are:

- to underpin the introduction of an emissions trading scheme;
- to inform government policy formulation and the Australian public;
- to help meet Australia’s international reporting obligations;
- to assist commonwealth, state and territory government programmes and activities; and
- avoid the duplication of similar reporting requirements in the states and territories.

It is anticipated that the City may be required to provide the following information under the act in the near future, including:

- greenhouse gas emissions;
- energy production;
- energy consumption, and
- other information specified under NGER legislation.

### **Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS)**

*At the time of authoring this policy position, the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) was part of the Australian Government's strategy to reduce Australia's carbon pollution by 60 percent of 2000 levels by 2050. After a change of government this scheme was repealed.*

*However, the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (NGER Act) introduced a single national framework for reporting and disseminating company information about greenhouse gas emissions, energy production and energy consumption.*

### **Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999**

The objectives of the Act are to:

- provide for the protection of the environment, especially matters of national environmental significance;
- conserve Australian biodiversity;
- provide a streamlined national environmental assessment and approvals process;
- enhance the protection and management of important natural and cultural places;
- control the international movement of plants and animals (wildlife), wildlife specimens and products made or derived from wildlife; and
- promote ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources.

### **State Coastal Planning Policy, 2003 (amended 2006)**

The policy addresses land use planning and development issues specifically as they relate to the protection and management of the coast.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- protect, conserve and enhance coastal values, particularly in areas of landscape, nature conservation, indigenous and cultural significance;
- provide for public foreshore areas and access to these on the coast;
- ensure the identification of appropriate areas for the sustainable use of the coast for housing, tourism, recreation, ocean access, maritime industry, commercial and other activities; and
- ensure that the location of coastal facilities and development takes into account coastal processes including erosion, accretion, storm surge, tides, wave conditions, sea level change and biophysical criteria.

### **Planning and Development Act, 2005**

This act brings together what were three separate planning Acts - the Western Australian *Planning Commission Act 1985*, the *Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act 1959* and the *Town Planning and Development Act 1928* into one consolidated Act, in a rewritten form.

It is promoted as more streamlined than previous planning procedures, has an emphasis on sustainable land use and provides greater opportunities for public consultation.

## **Western Australian Carbon Rights Act 2003**

The Western Australian *Carbon Rights Act 2003* provides the framework for the legal recognition of a “carbon right”, which is created upon registration and may be transferred separately from the land in respect of which it is registered. The proprietor of a carbon right has the legal and commercial benefits and risks arising from changes to atmosphere that are caused by carbon sequestration and carbon release occurring in or on land in respect of which carbon is registered. Carbon rights may be protected by “carbon covenants”. A carbon covenant is an agreement between the landholder, the owner of the carbon right and anyone else whose cooperation is required to give effect to the agreement. These may be registered against the land.

*(from Carbon Rights in WA – a new interest in Land, Dept of Agriculture, 2005)*

## **Review Position and Date**

This policy has an expected life of two (2) years from date of adoption.

Executive Director Works & Services to review every two years.

## **Responsibility and Reporting**

Council is responsible for approving (including amendments to) the following documents:

- Environmental Policy;
- Environmental Strategy, and
- Climate Change Plans.

Council is also responsible for ensuring (upon recommendation of the CEO) that resources are allocated to achieve the objectives of the above documents.

### **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):**

is responsible for ensuring that systems are in place to ensure that Council’s Environmental (CC) Policy, CC Environmental, CC Plans are prepared and kept up to date, reviewed at least annually and that recommendations are put to Council (at least annually) in relation to appropriate resource allocation to fulfil the objectives of the above documents. The CEO reports to Council on all matters relating to Climate Change.

### **Executive Management Team (EMT):**

is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Environmental Strategy across the organisation. The EMT will ensure that strategies are put in place to remove barriers to the successful implementation of Climate Change mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

### **Executive Director Works and Services:**

is responsible for providing the administration and technical support for implement policy and strategy.

## Associated Documents

- The Community Strategic Plan
- The City of Albany Environmental Strategy
- City of Albany Town Planning Scheme
- [National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007](#)
- [Proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme \(2009\) \(Repealed\)](#).
- [Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999](#)
- [Local Government Act 1995](#)
- [Planning and Development Act 2005](#)
- [Carbon Rights Act 2003](#)
- [WALGA Climate Change Policy Background Paper/ April 2009 & Policy Statement](#)
- Main Roads (WA):
  - <https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/BuildingRoads/StandardsTechnical/Pages/home.aspx>
  - <https://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au/OurRoads/Environment/Pages/Environment.aspx>

## Definitions

- **“Precautionary Principle”** - “That lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing a measure to prevent degradation of the environment where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage” (Source: Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth), section 391(2)).
- **“Greenhouse Gas Emissions “** -The release of greenhouse gases (as determined under the Kyoto Protocol as being carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride, hydro fluorocarbons and per fluorocarbons) into the atmosphere which are widely recognised to cause global warming and climate disruptions.
- **“Mitigation”** – Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through reducing the amount of greenhouse gases that are released, or by enhancing the sinks that sequester (absorb or contain) emissions. (Source: IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)
- **“Adaptation”**- The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or anticipated changes that reduces the harm, or takes advantage of the opportunities presented by climate change. (Source: IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change)