

## Sustainable Energy Policy

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### 1. PURPOSE

Shoalhaven City Council ('Council') aims to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy (consistent with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals), for both its operations and that of the wider Shoalhaven community. The increased use of renewable energy and improved energy efficiency is crucial to creating more sustainable communities, employment opportunities and resilience to climate change.

### 2. STATEMENT

Shoalhaven City Council is committed to operating sustainable assets, facilities and fleet vehicles across the Shoalhaven Local Government Area. The operation of these facilities and fleet transport can consume large amounts of energy at a high cost and generate harmful greenhouse gas emissions. Council will actively work towards reducing fossil-fuelled energy consumption for assets and transport under its control to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts. At all times, Council will seek the most effective and economic means to achieve its emission reduction targets from all sources, including investing in renewable energy generation projects to ensure clean energy for the future. This extends to Council encouraging the Shoalhaven community's transition away from fossil fuels to more renewable energy generation and battery storage for households, businesses and industry.

It was resolved at Council's Ordinary meeting on 24 November 2020, that Council acknowledge the efforts of the international Community in coming together to attempt to mitigate the rate of global warming and its impact on world climate; and continues to actively support its proactive policy of exploring all practical means of reducing its carbon footprint as a local endeavour to help mitigate the impacts on climate of global warming.

### 3. PROVISIONS

#### 3.1. Vision

Shoalhaven City Council's vision is to operate its energy consuming assets and fleet transport in a sustainable manner with minimal effect on the natural environment. This will then serve as a model of best practice for the wider Shoalhaven community to reduce energy bills, minimise greenhouse gas emissions and increase uptake of renewable energy.

### **3.2. Objectives and Targets**

**To achieve this Vision, and in partnership with stakeholders and the community, Shoalhaven City Council will:**

- Aim to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 (consistent with the United Nations Paris Agreement ratified by the Commonwealth Government and the NSW Government's agreed targets). Interim targets to reduce emissions are 25% by 2025 and 50% by 2030, compared to 2015 levels.
- Continually improve management practices to strive towards improved energy efficiency across the organisation.
- Seek opportunities to source or generate electricity supply for Council's operations from renewable energy sources, with an interim target of 25% renewables by 2023 and eventually 50% from renewable sources by 2030.
- Promote relevant initiatives to the community and businesses to increase the uptake of installed rooftop solar panels across the Shoalhaven LGA towards a target of 33% of dwellings by 2025.
- Upgrade all street lighting to energy saving LEDs by 2025.

## **4. IMPLEMENTATION**

Shoalhaven City Council will support this Policy by:

- Preparing and implementing a Sustainable Energy Strategy by January 2020 to identify priority actions for improved energy efficiency (including electricity and gas), sustainable fleet transport (including transitioning towards electric vehicles), corporate and community greenhouse gas emissions reduction, renewable energy generation and battery storage.
- Resourcing its implementation by means of sufficient annual budget allocations for the procurement of sustainable energy, energy efficiency and fleet transport initiatives.
- Establishing an internal Revolving Energy Fund (REFund) as a mechanism to generate funds from energy efficiency project savings to support future energy and renewable energy initiatives.
- Measuring, monitoring, benchmarking and reporting on energy consumption to identify issues, tracking towards agreed targets and informing this Policy and the Sustainable Energy Strategy.
- Preserving solar access rights across the Shoalhaven LGA on both public and private land to protect solar systems from adverse overshadowing.

## **5. REVIEW**

The Sustainable Energy Policy and associated Sustainable Energy Strategy will be reviewed every 4 years and particularly where new legislation, guidelines and/or management information dictates.

## **6. APPLICATION OF ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES**

This Policy will play a key role in the application of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles as it aims to reduce reliance on fossil-fuelled grid power, increase renewable energy generation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Specifically, this Policy supports the following ESD principles:

- The precautionary principle – where there is the threat of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- Intergenerational equity – the current generation should make sure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment continues for the benefit of future generations.
- Conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity – conserving the diversity of flora and fauna and the health and sustainability of ecosystems.