

City of Ipswich

Sustainable Ipswich engagement

Discussion paper



Shapeyouripswich.com.au

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Acknowledgement of Country

Ipswich City Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners, the Jagera, Yuggera and Ugarapul People of the Yugara/Yagara Language Group, as custodians of the land and waters we share. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, as the keepers of the traditions, customs, cultures and stories of proud peoples.



1: INTRODUCTION

Over the past five years there have been big leaps taken in making Ipswich a more sustainable place to live as the city continues to grow.

Since council's most recent Sustainability Strategy set the direction in 2021, there have been a range of actions delivered that have made a significant difference to council's operations and the City of Ipswich. This includes:

- LED retrofit program, including streetlights and council facilities
- Solar installation program on council buildings
- Power Purchase Agreement with CleanCo Queensland for renewable energy
- Establishment of the Southeast Queensland Climate Resilient Alliance (SEQCRA)
- New programs for diverting waste from landfill including citywide GO bin rollout
- Increased community resilience to disaster including development of local flood guides
- Urban heat map of Ipswich and strategic delivery of urban greening plantings.

2: EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS

At Ipswich Art Gallery replacing 600+ lights with LEDs saved more than 10,000kWh per month and ensured best practice care and display of works.

Ipswich City Council has been a leader in regional climate action by hosting the SEQ Climate Resilient Alliance formed by nine councils.

Installing a 200kWh solar PV system on Ipswich Central Library has halved electricity costs and reduced electricity usage by over 80%.

In the six months following the citywide rollout of GO (Garden Organics) bins almost 10,000 tonnes of green waste was diverted from landfill.

Through the Power Purchase Agreement with CleanCo for renewable energy, council cut its annual CO² emissions by 13,000 tonnes.

Changes to council operations have supported reducing emissions such as increasing the number of electric and hybrid vehicles in council's fleet.

The annual Sustainable Ipswich program of workshops and events celebrated local initiatives, increased education and encouraged action.

Improved measurement and reporting of council's emissions profile, which allows for evidence-based decision making.

3: WHERE TO FROM HERE?

In 2026 council is renewing its Sustainability Strategy to build on successes to date and address challenges and opportunities for the next five years.

It is proposed to align the Sustainability Strategy five-year vision to four pillars.

More information about each of these pillars is on the following pages.

**Sustainable
Assets &
Infrastructure**

**Sustainability
Governance**

**Resilient
Community**

**Sustainable
Environment &
Natural Systems**

At the same time, council is reviewing the community education and events delivered through the Sustainable Ipswich programming.

It is important to make sure the events and workshops align to community needs and expectations and support positive behaviour change.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Community input is needed for the Sustainability Strategy to guide actions for a cleaner greener future.

Share what sustainability means to you, and what is important to you – both at home and for our whole community.

Engagement is open Friday 18 September to Sunday 1 November at Shapeyouripswich.com.au

4: SUSTAINABLE ASSETS & INFRASTRUCTURE

The Sustainability Strategy sets the direction and targets for council to reduce emissions generated through its operations and build climate resilience as an organisation. This is the strongest area of influence for the strategy, and where council can demonstrate tangible outcomes in both the short and long term.

Climate change is a modern-day challenge that can impact our infrastructure, the way we live and our susceptibility to extreme weather events. This can include physical climate risk such as higher temperatures, more frequent hot days and variable rainfall.

Through the Sustainability Strategy, council can 'lead by example' in committing to reducing its emissions, both those that it generates directly (such as from its buildings and vehicles) and indirectly (such as supply chains) and ensure council assets and infrastructure are prepared for a changing climate. This also meets community expectation for accountability and action.

Since 2021 when the previous Strategy was adopted, council has significantly reduced its electricity emissions through renewable energy and efficiency. However, an increasing proportion of emissions now come from indirect sources, which are more difficult to reduce. Council's 2025 emissions profile had more than 80 per cent of emissions classed as 'Scope 3', indirect emissions from purchased goods and services, capital delivery and supply chains.

2026 community research (commissioned by council) of Ipswich residents found that 86 per cent were either feeling the effect of climate change now or expecting to in their lifetime. The respondents ranked the top three climate-related events as extreme heat (85%), flooding (70%) and storms (67%).

Our ability as a city to plan, adapt and respond to a changing climate will ensure that we are prepared to meet this challenge. The Sustainability Strategy seeks to build capacity within the organisation through targeted actions to better adapt council operations to a changing climate.

Council is also addressing actions for a resilient Ipswich through strategies that complement the Sustainability Strategy. For example, the Local Disaster Management Plan sets out how the City of Ipswich approaches prevention, preparedness, response and recovery regarding disaster events, and the Urban Greening Plan provides a roadmap for strategic tree planting to combat urban heat island impacts.



What do we want to achieve?

- Sustainability Strategy to commit to further reducing council's Scope 1 (direct), Scope 2 (indirect – energy) and Scope 3 (indirect – other) emissions
- Sustainability Strategy to prioritise actions for the next five years (2027 – 2031) that will have a direct impact on reducing the emissions generated through council operations
- Sustainability Strategy to prioritise actions for climate resilience in existing and future assets.

What might it look like?

- Renewable energy such as installing solar panels on council buildings
- Increasing the number of electric vehicles in council's fleet
- Embedding sustainability principles and targets in council processes such as procurement and capital delivery
- Increasing energy and water efficiency of council's operations
- Reducing operational waste
- Improving emissions data management and emissions reporting
- Sustainability Strategy prioritise actions for the next five years (2027 – 2031) that will increase the resilience of council assets and service delivery to climate change
- Planning for service continuity
- Climate-informed planning
- Building climate resilient infrastructure
- Climate risk analysis and integration to council operations.

7: SUSTAINABILITY GOVERNANCE

Effective sustainability governance provides the foundation for delivering a resilient, low-carbon and sustainable future for council and the community. It ensures that sustainability and climate change considerations are integrated into council's leadership, decision-making, financial planning, risk management and service delivery. Strong governance creates accountability, builds organisational capability and provides the structures needed to respond to increasingly complex environmental, social and economic challenges.

As climate risks intensify and community expectations evolve, sustainability governance is critical to ensuring that council can effectively manage both current and emerging challenges. It enables informed decision-making that balances environmental stewardship, economic prosperity and community wellbeing, while ensuring the organisation remains adaptable and resilient in the face of change.

What do we want to achieve?

- Sustainability Strategy embeds leadership on climate and decarbonisation
- Sustainability Strategy commits council to reporting on annual emissions across Scope 1 and 2 emissions and improving monitoring and reporting on Scope 3 emissions.

What can it look like?

- Reporting annually on council's emissions profile
- Advocating to all levels of government for sustainability and climate change outcomes
- Building internal council capacity through knowledge and education
- Providing leadership on climate change and decarbonisation of council's operations
- Regional collaboration with South-East Queensland Climate Resilient Alliance (SEQCRA)
- Strengthen organisational climate risk knowledge and embed climate resilience into governance
- Educational programs and partnerships.

.5: RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

A sustainable future will take a whole-of-community approach. Government, business and industry, organisations and individuals all have a role to play. Through the Sustainability Strategy council can seek to influence our communities to be more prepared for climate impacts across the broader City of Ipswich.

The Australian Government has implemented a range of policies and initiatives with a target of achieving net zero emissions by 2050. This includes transitioning to renewable energy and modernising the grid, reducing emissions from industrial and resource productions, the transport sector, and agricultural and land sectors.

Australia's 2025 National Adaptation Plan provides a central strategy for preparing the country for increased climate risks. Under the Plan, local governments are responsible for managing risks and impacts to their public assets and service delivery and helping build the capacity of their local communities and businesses to adapt.

2026 community research (commissioned by council) of Ipswich residents found 89 per cent believe climate change is happening. Personal impacts included increased household running costs, increased difficulty and expense of food items, and challenges in getting around.

The top five actions identified to address the effects of climate change were:

- protect and enhance local biodiversity
- reduce pollution of the environment
- conserve natural resources
- educate residents on how to live more sustainably
- adopt renewable energy sources.

Council is also addressing actions for Resilient Communities through strategies that complement the Sustainability Strategy. For example, the Resource Recovery Strategy details actions for diverting organic and recyclable material from landfill, and the iGO Ipswich Transport Strategy sets the direction for a more sustainable transport network to support a future population of 533,800 by 2046.

What do we want to achieve?

- Sustainability Strategy to identify opportunities for council to influence, advocate and support climate resilience and emissions reduction locally and regionally
- Sustainable Ipswich programming to prioritise workshops and education that support residents with meaningful and achievable actions for a more sustainable lifestyle.

What can it look like?

- Council programming that educates residents on ways to increase climate resilience
- Council encouraging circular economy initiatives
- Engagement between council and industry
- Council advocacy on local and regional projects
- Community partnerships that support climate resilience outcomes
- Supporting uptake of solar technology and climate resilient technology.

6: SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL SYSTEMS

Healthy natural systems are fundamental to the liveability, resilience and prosperity of council and our community. They provide essential ecosystem services including clean air and water, biodiversity, climate regulation, flood mitigation, urban cooling, recreation opportunities and cultural values. Protecting and enhancing these natural assets is critical to ensuring a sustainable future and strengthening the community's resilience to a changing climate.

As the city continues to grow, balancing development with environmental protection becomes increasingly important. Conserving and restoring natural areas, waterways, wetlands and biodiversity corridors supports healthier ecosystems while delivering social, economic and environmental benefits for current and future generations.

This principle recognises that council has an important role as a steward of the natural environment through the protection, management and enhancement of natural assets, while also supporting innovative approaches that promote environmental restoration and long-term ecological resilience.

Council is also addressing actions for sustainable environment and natural systems through strategies that complement the Sustainability Strategy. For example, the Waterway Health Strategy guides long-term recovery programs across Ipswich's 11,000 km of waterways, and the Natural Environment Strategy addresses actions needed for a connected and protected natural environment.

What do we want to achieve?

- Sustainability Strategy identifies opportunities for protecting and restoring vegetation and opportunities for carbon sequestration outcomes.

What can it look like?

- Identifying opportunities for carbon offsets and other markets
- Council projects that protect ecological values, improve habitat connectivity and long-term survival of native flora and fauna
- Identifying opportunities to build conservation connectivity.



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