





SUSTAINING OUR REGION.

Rockhampton Regional Council is committed to putting sustainability into action, ensuring our Region remains a premier destination to live, visit and invest. Back in 2018, we took our first big leap with a Sustainability Strategy, and in late 2022, we doubled down on our commitment with the revamped Sustainability Strategy Towards 2030.

I am incredibly proud of the way Council is teaming up with locals, communities, businesses, industries, and other levels of government to align with the ever-changing policy landscape and boost our resilience. It's a journey filled with many steps, but one that's absolutely vital for keeping our communities vibrant and prosperous.

This Year in Review report checks in on our progress against the Strategy and highlights some of the key actions Council is taking as we transition towards a more sustainable future. Some of the highlights from FY2023-24 include:

- Working together with the Australian and Queensland Governments, to boost long-term water security and climate resilience by commencing construction of a 28km potable water pipeline for the Mount Morgan community.
- Finalising a major solar installation at the Glenmore Water Treatment Plant that will reduce grid electricity usage and emissions.
- Cooling and shading our residential streets by implementing a new Street Tree Pilot Program that increases tree canopy cover across our Region.
- Making it easier for residents to access information on how to recycle right and reduce waste to landfill by launching an online Recycle Mate tool.
- Continuing momentum towards zero waste through the Community Recycling Centre, Reviva Ibis Reuse Shop, Upcycle Village, Containers for Change, specialist recycling programs, and an active local second hand retail market.
- Supporting our community to engage in a range of local sustainability and resilience initiatives from National Tree Day and Clean Up Australia Day, through to the Recycling Hero Schools program, Sustainability in Action competition and the Get Ready disaster preparedness activities.
- Making Water Work for the Rockhampton Region through a range of collaborative partnerships that support agricultural developments, protect local waterways and explore opportunities to make fertiliser from aquatic weeds.
- Securing Australian Government support, through continuing participation in the Reef Guardian Council program, for new local initiatives that protect the Great Barrier Reef and our very own Fitzroy River catchment.
- Progressing new development solutions that deliver improved erosion and sediment control and reduce land-based runoff.
- Establishing a new Environmentally Sustainable Development procedure and technical specifications for Council buildings.
- Achieving certification of a new Integrated Management System for safety, quality and environment within Council's Civil Operations.

Creating a stronger and more resilient region has never been more important. It is vital that we continue to advocate for our region and work in partnership with our community, local businesses, industry and other levels of government to position our region to capitalise on emerging opportunities.

I look forward to leading this work in the year ahead.

PROGRESSING OUR STRATEGIC **SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES**.

Council's Sustainability Strategy recognises the need to address four strategic priorities:

- Prioritise a healthy natural environment by protecting, maintaining and enhancing our natural assets;
- Transition towards net zero emissions by accelerating local climate action;
- Create a climate resilient region by preparing our Council, Region and community to adapt and prosper in a changing climate; and
- Build a low-carbon circular economy by working with business, industry and government to ensure our Region thrives.

Together, these priorities help to focus attention on the actions necessary to align with national and state policies and targets; strengthen our community, environmental and economic resilience, and position us to make the most of emerging opportunities for our Region.

Since adopting its first Sustainability Strategy in 2018, Council has continued to build and strengthen the foundational policies, partnerships and programs required to deliver on these priorities. By maintaining a clear sustainability governance framework and annual action plan, Council's coordinated approach is integrating sustainability considerations across Council's many and diverse functions, ensuring progress against targeted improvement initiatives.

Whilst there is still much work to be done, together we have already achieved some significant outcomes through the Sustainability Strategy. The Sustainability Snapshot shows just some of the key highlights to date.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SNAPSHOT

AS AT JUNE 2024

PRIORITISE A HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT



provided to local residents as part of the Native Plant Program since it was established in 2018.



shared in \$84,730 funding since Council's Environment and Sustainability Grants were established in 2019.



invested to support local skilling, maintenance and enhancement works at 9 project sites since the Natural Resource Management program was established in 2018.



shows the Fitzroy River Estuary (downstream of Rockhampton) holding steady with a B rating.



working together to reduce impacts to the Reef and our local communities.

TRANSITION TOWARDS NET ZERO EMISSIONS



for the Rockhampton Local Government Area holding steady at around 1,527,000 tCO2e compared with the FY2018-19 baseline.



SMALL SOLAR SYSTEMS installed in Rockhampton LGA

installed in Rockhampton LGA (postcodes 4700 and 4701).



achieved through organisational improvements, compared to the FY2021-22 Corporate Emissions Inventory.



generated per annum via solar installations at 10 Council facilities, saving 1,846 tCO₂e.



within Council's Fleet including 7 fully electric vehicles and 10 hybrids.

CREATE A CLIMATE RESILIENT REGION

54
CLIMATE
RESILIENT
COUNCILS

working together since 2018 to address climate related risks as part of the Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program.





planning underway as part of local implementation of the Climate Risk Management Framework for Queensland Local Government.



BUILDING RESILIENCE

by continuing to work with our local community and other government agencies to prevent, prepare, respond and recover from disasters.



through constuction of the Mount Morgan water pipeline and participation in Regional Water Security Assessments.

SECURITY



planted across the Rockhampton Region to shade and cool key streets, parks, playgrounds and footpaths since 2018.

BUILD A LOW-CARBON CIRCULAR ECONOMY



progressed through supply chain and precinct visioning, Reef water quality improvements and Water Hyacinth Recovery and Reuse Pilot.



CIRCULA ECONOM PATHWA

proposed three draft circular economy feasibility studies, focussed on Water Hyacinth, Biogas and Biofuels.



government funding and investment secured to support local industry development opportunities presented by global decarbonisation.

ECONOMIC FUTURES FUND



spent locally through the Local Preference Policy as part of Council's commitment to support our Region's economy, local businesses and community.



momentum boosted through new and continuing efforts to divert waste from landfill.



OUR **PATHWAYS** TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

As the level of government closest to the community, Council plays an important role in protecting our local communities and positioning our Region to thrive.

Council is committed to putting sustainability into action through its corporate commitments and governance arrangements; its strategies, services and operations; and its community programs and partnerships.

As we move towards 2030, Council's Sustainability Strategy delivers on our vision for a sustainable future through four interconnected pathways. Council is working together with our local residents, communities, businesses, industries and other levels of government to lead sustainability action and help the Rockhampton Region to prioritise a healthy natural environment, transition towards net zero emissions, create a climate resilient region and build a low carbon circular economy.

As part of Council's Sustainability Governance Framework, the Sustainability Strategy Executive Group meets regularly to guide implementation of Council's Sustainability Strategy. They also monitor and review progress against the supporting annual action plan, work together to identify further opportunities for improvement and collaboration across Council and report this progress back to Council and the community.

"Progressing our local Sustainability Strategy is about harnessing the power of collective action. When we work together, we can achieve great things for our community, our environment and our economy."

- Mayor Tony Williams





INDIVIDUALS & HOUSEHOLDS.

OBJECTIVE

Let's work together to strengthen our capacity to live sustainably.

- **1.1** Support local residents to adopt sustainable behaviours that help them to save money and reduce household emissions.
- **1.2** Accelerate the transition towards zero waste by driving waste avoidance and waste diversion at the individual and household level.
- **1.3** Help residents build their household resilience to climate-related risks by connecting them with practical tools, workshops and resources.
- **1.4** Link individuals with sustainable transport and active recreation opportunities that connect with key local destinations and open spaces.
- **1.5** Provide residents with the opportunity to participate in a range of local sustainability programs, initiatives, activities and events.

YEAR IN **REVIEW**



planted in collaboration with local residents as part of Council's new Street Tree Planting Pilot.



provided free to local residents to help cool and green the Rockhampton Region as part of Council's Native Plant Program.



launched to help local residents to recycle right and divert waste from landfill.

4,239 LOCAL HOUSEHOLDS



explored opportunities to adopt sustainable behaviours via Council's Living Sustainably program e-newsletter.



STREET TREE PILOT PROGRAM

Residents showed their support for urban greening initiatives, submitting over 200 street tree nominations as part of Council's new street tree planting program. Launched in April 2024, the pilot program was designed to help increase urban greening across the Region and to shade, cool and green local streets. Council carefully reviewed each request to confirm site suitability and select the most appropriate street tree species for each location. As part of the pilot program, Council is now working together with residents to establish 165 new street trees across the Region. Residents will be responsible for the ongoing watering and general care of new street trees, while Council will handle the long-term street tree health checks and any required pruning to ensure our streets stay green and vibrant for generations to come.

The street tree planting pilot complements a range of other urban greening works including a further 346 trees planted as part of improvements along Campbell Street, Quay Street, Glenmore Road, Riverside Drive park and roundabout, Queen's Park, Johnson Road and several other locations across Gracemere.

GETTING RECYCLING SORTED

Local households are now finding it easier than ever to access information on how to recycle and reduce waste to landfill. In November 2023, Council announced its collaboration with Recycle Mate – an online tool that makes it easier for residents to recycle right and find available disposal options across the Rockhampton Region. By helping local residents to recycle right, Council hopes to increase resource recovery, build a local circular economy and continue moving towards a zero waste community.

LIVING SUSTAINABLY

From recycling right, to being water wise, caring for our catchment and finding energy efficiencies, local residents continued to strengthen their capacity to live sustainably. Key local sustainability activities included the following:

- Residents got involved with a variety of local community events including Clean up Australia Day, Birdlife Australia's
 Aussie Bird Count, the Electric Vehicle Display Day, River Festival, National Water Week, National Recycling Week
 celebrations and the Upcycle Fair.
- Council's Native Plant Program supported hundreds of local residents to celebrate National Tree Day in their own backyards, 32 local schools and childcare centres to celebrate Schools National Tree Day with a planting on their grounds, whilst around 200 community members turned out to celebrate National Tree Day with a tree planting day at Yeppen Lagoon.
- Local schools and residents submitted more than 100 entries to Council's Sustainability in Action photo competition, showcasing everyday actions our community are taking to live more sustainably.
- Local households subscribed to Council's Living Sustainably e-newsletter to access practical information and handy tips to help them save money and make more sustainable choices at home, at work and when out and about.

COMMUNITY & LOCAL GROUPS.

OBJECTIVE

Let's work together to create a vibrant, liveable and resilient community.

- **2.1** Grow the community's capacity and capability to understand, adapt and build resilience to climate-related risks.
- **2.2** Explore opportunities to work with, learn from and strengthen outcomes through partnerships with First Nations Peoples.
- **2.3** Enhance the liveability of our Region by supporting initiatives that protect local biodiversity, restore landscapes and increase urban canopy cover.
- **2.4** Foster community collaboration on key local environment and sustainability initiatives.
- 2.5 Encourage initiatives that help the community to adopt sustainable behaviours, avoid waste and reduce emissions.

YEAR IN **REVIEW**



installed to strengthen local resilience by providing improved access to firefighting water for rural fire brigades.



invested in on-ground restoration works as part of Council's Natural Resource Management program.



working with Council to educate students on waste management and improve local waste diversion rates.



delivered by local organisations sharing in \$10,590 funding from Council's Community Assistance Program - Environment and Sustainability Grants.



COMMUNITY WASTE DIVERSION

Local waste diversion facilities proved popular again with the community:

- Resource Recovery Australia continues to manage the Community Recycling Centre and Reviva Ibis Reuse Shop at the Lakes Creek Road Waste Management Facility.
- Megz Reuse Shop opened at the Gracemere Waste Facility.
- Council added new B-Cycle battery recycling options.
- Residents helped to reduce waste to landfill by continuing to support local op shops and Marketplace, second hand book sales and other local initiatives.
- Event participants supported local charities by putting their used drink containers in recycling bins at local Council events.
- A range of local schools participated in Council's Recycling Hero Schools program and accessed new bin infrastructure through the Containers for Change 'Wave of Change' program.



Council has been working to improve the flood resilience of our community by building our understanding of flood behaviour, associated risks, and creek flood mitigation options. The community has provided feedback on Flood Risk Management Studies for the local creek and catchment areas of Frenchmans and Thozets Creeks, Moores Creek and South Rockhampton, providing their first-hand experience from past flood events and helping to corroborate technical investigations. The studies provide an important response for addressing current and future flooding concerns for these catchment areas. In October 2023, Council commenced the statutory process to amend the Rockhampton Region Planning Scheme to update the flood related development codes, Fitzroy River Flood Overlay map and the Local Catchment Flood Overlay Map.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Council continues to partner with a range of community groups to deliver on-ground ecological restoration works, to enhance the liveability of our Region and protect local biodiversity. Now in the sixth year of the program, Capricornia Catchments and Multicultural Australia delivered works along the walking trail at Yeppen Lagoon and a number of parks along Moores and Thozets Creeks. Capricornia Catchments continued to deliver bush regeneration works in and around Nurim Circuit at Mount Archer, with local students from the Yadaba Nunthi program also getting hands on experience whilst connecting with country. CQUniversity continued to train students in ecological restoration at their work site along Frenchmans Creek.

GROWING RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE-RELATED RISK

Council has been working with the community to adapt and build resilience to climate-related risks:

- Thanks to funding from the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Scheme, Council installed five new non-potable water tanks to improve access to firefighting water for rural fire brigades in Stanwell/Dalma, Gogango and Struck Oil.
- Council installed new bushfire safety awareness signage in recreational areas within high-risk bushfire areas including sites at First Turkey (Mount Archer), the Mount Morgan Number 7 Dam and Bouldercombe Gorge.
- Digital noticeboard messaging was developed to address specific risks and seasons, with displays to occur throughout the year in the rural communities of Pink Lily, Stanwell and Bouldercombe.
- The community also learned about the importance of disaster preparedness, response and recovery from dozens of sessions delivered by Council's Disaster Management Unit at local schools and community events across the Region.





BUSINESS, INDUSTRY & GOVERNMENT

OBJECTIVE

Let's work together to position the Rockhampton Region to thrive and grow sustainably.

- 3.1 Advocate and partner to progress local sustainability priorities at the regional, state and national level.
- **3.2** Actively pursue opportunities associated with sustainable industries and infrastructure that deliver local social, environmental and economic benefits for the Region.
- Progress workforce and economic planning that will ensure we prosper as the demand for low-carbon products and services grows.
- **3.4** Grow local visitation and tourism opportunities that celebrate our natural assets and contribute to the liveability of the Region.
- Work with business, industry and government to drive low-carbon circular economy initiatives, alongside other innovative and sustainable practices.

YEAR IN **REVIEW**



\$920,000 FUNDING

grant secured towards the Rockhampton Airport Solar installation as part of the Reef Guardian Council program.





harvested to be composted and locally trialled as part of the collaborative Hyacinth Recovery and Reuse Pilot.





project under construction to deliver long-term water security for the Mount Morgan community.



QLD GOVERNMENT CQ RENEWABLE ENERGY 70NE

readiness assessments underway to support regional industries like agriculture and minerals processing to grow and decarbonise.



COLLABORATIVE REEF STEWARDSHIP

Council renewed its commitment to the Reef Guardian Council program for another four years. The voluntary partnership with the Australian Government's Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority recognises that managing the Reef is a collaborative effort and that actions taken in local Reef catchments (like ours) are central to the protection of this world-heritage listed asset and the communities its supports.

Council has secured \$920,000 from the Australian Government as part of the 'Activating Local Councils Reef Action Plans' grant program. The investment will help Council to deliver a 976kW solar system at the Rockhampton Airport Terminal. The Rockhampton Airport is critical regional infrastructure that is owned and operated by Rockhampton Regional Council, supporting around 600,000 passenger movements through the Rockhampton Region each year. As Council's second highest electricity consuming facility, installation of a behind-the-meter rooftop solar system at the Rockhampton Airport Terminal will reduce grid energy usage by around 1,750,000kWh per annum and save up to 1,600 tCO2e per year. The project supports the Reef 2050 Plan objective of 'limiting the impacts of climate change' by cost-effectively accelerating our local transition towards net zero emissions.



MAKING WATER WORK

An innovative new pilot project is exploring ways to turn an invasive aquatic weed into new products. The Hyacinth Recovery and Reuse Pilot is part of Council's Making Water Work program. With collaborative partnerships at its core, the pilot has been managed by the Fitzroy Basin Association, with funding and support from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Cooperative Research Centre for Developing Northern Australia, and Council. The pilot delivers significant resource recovery and circular economy benefits, removing 500 tonnes of water hyacinth to be composted and locally trialled as potential fertiliser, soil conditioner or a protein substitute for livestock feed. Cost effective controls for water hyacinth infestations can help to reduce impacts on waterways, improve water quality and create beneficial products for local agriculture.

As part of the Making Water Work program, through Advance Rockhampton, Council is also assisting local irrigators in the Fitzroy Food Bowl to meet their Reef water quality requirements. Under the Queensland Government's Reef Regulations and the Rookwood Weir Land Management Code of Practice, new and expanding agricultural irrigation developments require individual farm plans. As part of the Reef Water Quality Project, Advance Rockhampton is also coordinating a new precinct modelling approach (based at South Yaamba) which aims to identify ways to manage sediment, nutrient and pesticide use at a district scale with a focus on having a neutral impact on water quality whilst expanding agriculture.

EXPLORING INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS

Land-based runoff can pose a significant risk to our local waterways and the Reef. Council has been working with local industry, government and specialist advisors to explore innovative development solutions that meet State Planning Policy criteria and protect our local catchments. To support long-term practice improvement, together they have:

- undertaken targeted erosion and sediment control training;
- audited a variety of local projects to determine current standards, gaps and opportunities;
- explored new water quality treatment approaches;
- begun identifying best practice demonstration sites at the local level; and
- progressed key updates to the Capricorn Municipal Development Guidelines, which set the expectations for local projects by providing standard engineering drawing and approved specifications.

COUNCIL OPERATIONS & SERVICES

OBJECTIVE

Let's work together to continually improve our environment and sustainability performance.

- **4.1** Accelerate Council's transition towards net zero emissions by actively monitoring and reducing emissions within Council's operational control.
- **4.2** Embed climate-related risk considerations into Council's decision-making, planning scheme, local developments and operations.
- **4.3** Apply sustainable procurement, circular economy and lifecycle principles to the delivery of products, services, assets and projects.
- **4.4** Implement management policies, planning and practices that protect our natural environment and support the resilience of our biodiversity and natural assets.
- **4.5** Foster sustainable behaviour, and encourage the wise use of resources, by making sustainability second nature within Council's operations and services.

YEAR IN **REVIEW**

375KW



SOLAR SYSTEM INSTALLED

at the Glenmore Water Treatment Plant to help reduce grid electricity usage by 2,500,000 kWh per annum and save up to 2,200 tCO2e per year.



at the Lakes Creek Waste Management Facility to reduce methane emissions.

ISO14001 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



System certification attained for Council's Civil Operations and Design Services sections.



6,000 TONNES BIOSOLIDS

removed from wastewater treatment plants for beneficial reuse in local agriculture.



POWERING THE GLENMORE WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Council has taken another step on its transition towards net zero emissions, with a major renewables project at its' largest energy consuming site. The 1375 kW solar system at the Glenmore Water Treatment Plant is expected to reduce grid electricity usage by around 2,500,000 kWh per annum and save up to 2,200 tCO2e per year. This initiative is a key action outlined in Council's Corporate Emissions Reduction Plan and emissions reduction roadmap, that is supporting Council in its efforts to reduce net emissions by around 43% by the end of the decade, in line with both the Queensland and Australian Government targets.

The Glenmore Water Treatment Plant, operated by Council business unit Fitzroy River Water (FRW) and located adjacent to the Fitzroy River, is a crucial piece of infrastructure that provides clean and safe drinking water to every person across the Rockhampton Region connected to Council's water supply network. In addition to the solar installation, FRW is taking actions to optimise operation of equipment such as pumps, aerators and blowers to reduce energy use, including digitising asset performance and trends on its centralised control systems.

INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

To support ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure resilience and sustainability,
Council is committed to embedding Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD)
practices within the scope of new projects. Officers developed a new procedure,
standards and technical specifications which are to be considered in project scoping,
design and construction. The new ESD procedure has been incorporated in projects such
as the Mount Morgan Pool redevelopment, ensuring that resource efficiencies such as water
saving devices, solar hot water and rainwater harvesting for irrigation were incorporated in the
project's design and delivery. Officers also considered ESD in significant roof works at the Walter Reid
Cultural Centre and Athelstane Range Reservoir, incorporating heavier guage roofing to extend longevity
of the materials and light colours and R1 insulation to reduce energy consumption. All old metal roofing material
was recycled.

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR CIVIL OPERATIONS

Council's Civil Operations and Design Services teams established an Integrated Management System and attained ISO14001 Environmental Management System certification in November 2023. The teams are embedding a broad range of environmental considerations in their operations and continuously improving their plans, policies and procedures. To date, key focus areas have included staff training, implementation of environmental management plans, erosion and sediment control, the management of chemicals and hazardous materials, and works in and around watercourses.

LOOKING FORWARD.

Council's vision is One Great Region to live, visit and invest in.

Achieving this vision requires Council to work together with our communities, businesses, industries and other levels of government as we continue to create a sustainable future for the Rockhampton Region.

As we move towards 2030, we recognise the need to deliver local initiatives that help us to prioritise a healthy natural environment, transition towards net zero emissions, create a climate resilient region and build a low-carbon circular economy.

Looking forward to FY2024-25, Council will continue to:

- Strengthen the capacity of individuals and households to live more sustainably;
- Work together with community and local groups to create a vibrant, liveable and resilient community;
- Position the Rockhampton Region to thrive and grow sustainably by working with business, industry and government; and
- Continually improve the environment and sustainability performance of Council's operations and services.

Council understands the need to increase our community, environmental and economic resilience and positively influence the continuing liveability and prosperity of our Region.

Let's continue to work together to create One Great Region to live, visit and invest in.





BE PART OF THE SOLUTION!



rock hampton region. qld. gov. au/Environmental Sustainability



sustainability@rrc.qld.gov.au



07 4936 9200 or 1300 22 55 77



PO Box 1860 Rockhampton Qld 4700



