

# Environmental Sustainability

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### 1.0 Purpose

This policy expresses Griffith University's commitment to mitigating the impact of our operations on the climate and the natural environment by:

- adopting economic, social, and environmentally responsible practices that align with the principles of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#),
- complying with all relevant legislation informed by contemporary best practice, First Peoples knowledges and practices, and latest scientific knowledge to prevent and minimise harm to the natural environment, and
- developing action plans to:
  - achieve net zero by 2029 within the defined emissions boundary,
  - avoid and reduce waste on campus,
  - protect and enhance biodiversity, including offsetting unavoidable impacts, and
  - prevent pollution of waterways and improve catchment health.

### 2.0 Scope

All staff and students conducting university activities, and suppliers, visitors and contractors when on-campus are responsible for ensuring compliance with their environmental obligations under this policy.

### 3.0 Policy statement

The University acknowledges its role as stewards of the lands and waterways of its campuses. It will strive to continually improve its environmental sustainability practices towards alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, contemporary best practice, First Peoples knowledges and practices, and latest scientific knowledge. Operating always within the broader context of the University's compliance and risk management processes, the University will continue to adapt to the challenges of climate change considering the unique natural environments in which its campuses are situated.

#### 3.1 Environmental Management and Compliance

The University will manage legal, reputational, and environmental obligations and risks. It will take measures to prevent and minimise harm, and protect and enhance the natural environment, complying with relevant legislation and making decisions informed by contemporary best practices, while also protecting the University's reputation and global standing.

The University will develop and implement an Environmental Management System (aligned with the ISO:14001 principles) to support compliance with environmental obligations.

### 3.2 Environmental Sustainability Implementation

To deliver on Griffith University's strategic environmental sustainability obligations and commitments, the University will develop and implement relevant action plans to:

- Achieve net zero emissions by 2029 (based on defined emissions scope), reduce overall energy consumption, and adapt to the impacts of climate change,
- Protect and enhance the biodiversity on campus, including offsetting unavoidable impacts, and support biodiversity conservation teaching, research and engagement,
- Protect and enhance the catchments and marine environments in which the university operates, prevent polluted water entering the water system (including pollution caused by accidents and incidents at the university), maximise water reuse, provide free drinking water, and reduce environmental impacts through use of a best practice process to treat wastewater, and
- Avoid and reduce waste generated on campus through implementing the principles of the waste hierarchy, circular economy and responsible consumption and production. This will include practices for waste disposal (including hazardous materials), measuring waste sent to landfill and recycled, reducing plastic waste on campus, and ethically sourcing food and supplies.

### 3.3 Monitoring and reporting

The University will ensure accountability and cooperation on environmental sustainability initiatives through:

- reporting in a manner accessible to all, including annual environmental performance reporting,
- reviewing environmental practices and performance on at least a triennial basis to identify opportunities for improvement,
- promoting environmentally sustainable practices across academic, engagement, and operational activities, and
- integrating environmental sustainability into investment, corporate planning, management, and decision-making processes.

## 4.0 Roles, responsibilities and delegations

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Vice Chancellor	Approving Authority.
Executive Group	University environmental sustainability leadership.  Integrating environmental sustainability into investment, corporate planning, management, and decision-making processes.
Dean, SDG Performance	Environmental Sustainability Policy Advisor.

	University strategic leadership on, and coordination of, environmental sustainability through staff, community and student engagement and education.
Manager, Environmental Sustainability	Development and implementation coordination of the Environmental Management System, roadmaps, plans and procedures under this policy.
Environmental Sustainability Committee	Technical guidance to support policy implementation. Monitor and report on implementation performance.
Managers and Supervisors	Responsibility for ensuring environmental compliance within their area of control.
Staff and Contractors	Awareness of this policy and ensuring compliance with University policy, procedures and the EMS when engaged in University activities.

## 5.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and related policy documents, the following definitions apply:

**Contemporary Best Practice** for environmental management is defined in s. 21 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (Qld) and refers to techniques, methods, processes and activities that achieve an ongoing minimisation of the activity's environmental harm through cost effective and practical measures.

**Defined Emissions Scope** is the scope of the University's greenhouse gas emissions for carbon accounting purposes, which as of July 2023 included scope 1, 2 and partial scope 3 emissions.

**Environmental Management System** is processes and practices that enable an organisation to reduce its environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency. An Environmental Management System is defined under the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 14001 framework.

**Environmental Sustainability** is undertaking practices, processes and action which protects and enhances the natural environment in a manner that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Natural Environment** comprises the atmosphere, land, water, oceans, and the diversity of living things.

**Net Zero Emissions** means reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the defined scope to as close to zero as possible, with any residual emissions re-absorbed from the atmosphere.

INFORMATION		Printable version (PDF) Downloadable version (Word)
Title	Environmental Sustainability Policy	
Document number	2023/0001059	
Purpose	<p>This policy expresses Griffith University's commitment to mitigating the impact of our operations on the climate and the natural environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adopting economic, social, and environmentally responsible practices that align with the principles of the <a href="#">United Nations Sustainable Development Goals</a>;</li> <li>• complying with all relevant legislation informed by contemporary best practice, First Peoples knowledges and practices, and latest scientific knowledge to prevent and minimise harm to the natural environment;</li> <li>• developing action plans to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ achieve net zero by 2029 within the defined emissions boundary</li> <li>○ avoid and reduce waste on campus</li> <li>○ protect and enhance biodiversity, including offsetting unavoidable impacts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• prevent pollution of waterways and improve catchment health</li> </ul>	
Audience	Staff; Students; Visitors	
Category	Operational	
Subcategory	Operational	
Approval date	31 July 2023	
Effective date	31 July 2023	
Review date	2028	
Policy advisor	Dean, SDG Performance	
Approving authority	Vice Chancellor	

## RELATED POLICY DOCUMENTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Legislation	<a href="#">Biosecurity Act 2014 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Griffith University Act 1998</a> <a href="#">Environmental Offsets Act 2014</a> <a href="#">Environmental Offsets Regulation 2014</a> <a href="#">Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (C'th)</a> <a href="#">Environmental Protection Regulation 2019 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2019 (QLD)</a> <a href="#">Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2019 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Environmental Protection (Water and Wetland Biodiversity) Policy 2019 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">National Greenhouse Energy Reporting Act 2007 (C'th)</a> <a href="#">Natural Assets Local Law 2003 (Brisbane City Council)</a> <a href="#">Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Planning Act 2016 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">State Government Support Infrastructure Koala Conservation Policy 2023 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Vegetation Management Local Law 6 (Gold Coast City Council)</a> <a href="#">Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Water Act 2000 (Qld)</a> <a href="#">Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 (Qld)</a>
Policy	<a href="#">Code of Conduct</a> <a href="#">Conflict of Interest Policy</a> <a href="#">Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy</a> <a href="#">Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy</a> <a href="#">Legislative Compliance Policy</a> <a href="#">Policy Governance Policy</a> <a href="#">Risk Appetite Statement</a> <a href="#">Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025</a>
Procedures	<a href="#">Biodiversity Conservation Plan</a> <a href="#">Crisis and Recovery Management Plan</a> <a href="#">Emergency Management Plan</a> <a href="#">Guidelines for Chemical Management</a> <a href="#">Reporting and recording procedures for incidents, injuries, illness, hazards or near misses</a>
Local protocols	N/A
Forms	N/A