

Cairns

Smart Green

Economy



CASE STUDY: NET ZERO EMISSIONS

Climate Change Strategy

Cairns Regional Council

The Cairns Regional Council's Climate Change Strategy 2030 is a comprehensive plan that guides the Council's climate actions. The strategy reflects a strong commitment to achieving net zero emissions for Council operations, transitioning to 100% renewable energy, and preparing the community to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

The strategy has over 100 actions, across six key focus areas - community, natural environment, built environment, transport, energy and industry.

NET ZERO EMISSIONS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

To achieve net zero emissions, the Council has implemented a range of initiatives. These include upgrades to wastewater treatment plants, landfill gas management, fleet optimisation with hybrid and electric vehicles, and extensive solar installations.

One of the standout achievements is the electricity supply agreement with CleanCo Queensland, making Cairns Regional Council the first local government in Queensland to sign such an agreement.

This ten year contract enables Council to source renewable electricity for 76 of its largest electricity consuming assets. The deal is equivalent to powering approximately 4,000 homes each year.

BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

The strategy is also dedicated to preparing the community to adapt and thrive in a changing climate. By supporting a smart green economy, prioritising a healthy natural environment, and building resilient, informed, low-emission communities, the Council aims to lead by example.

Engagement with local residents has shown that 88% consider climate change and reef health to be critical issues, driving the Council's proactive approach.

HOW IT WORKS

Council employs a multifaceted approach to achieving its goals:

Renewable energy: An electricity supply agreement with CleanCo Queensland, enables supply of renewable electricity to Council's largest consuming facilities. Electricity is largely sourced from Kaban Green PowerHub wind farm near Ravenshoe and the Western Downs Green Power Hub solar farm, as well as its other assets, including the local Barron Gorge Hydroelectric Power Station.

Council has installed almost 3MW of solar panels on numerous public buildings and facilities, generating significant renewable energy and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

Community engagement: Educational programs and events are conducted to raise awareness about climate change and encourage local participation in sustainability efforts.

Adaptive measures: The strategy includes building the resilience of infrastructure and the built environment. This involves planning for sustainable growth of the city in a way that builds long term resilience to climate change, and improved capabilities in disaster management.

Collaborative partnerships: The Council works with various stakeholders, including state and federal governments, non-profit organisations, First Nations peoples and private sector partners, to leverage resources and expertise. Council engages with its supply chain to encourage low carbon procurement practices.

Transitioning to resilient, net zero communities: Delivering of Council's Resource Recovery Strategy and Water Demand Management initiatives, provision of community climate action and sustainability grants.

WHY IT MATTERS

The Cairns Climate Change Strategy 2030 offers numerous benefits to the community and the environment:

Environmental impact: Achieving net zero emissions and using 100% renewable energy sources can significantly reduce the Council's carbon footprint, helping mitigate the effects of climate change.

Economic benefits: Investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency save costs and stimulate the local economy, creating green jobs and promoting sustainable development.

Community resilience: The strategy ensures that residents and businesses can thrive in a changing environment by preparing the community to adapt to climate change.

Leadership and innovation: Cairns Regional Council sets a benchmark for other local governments, demonstrating how proactive climate action can drive positive change.

Net zero

Emissions target

100%

Renewable energy across
Council facilities

\$700,000

Saved annually through energy
efficiency measures

88% of residents

Support climate action

SUPPORT THIS PROJECT

Join us in positively impacting the environment and supporting a sustainable future for Cairns.

Please contact us to learn more about the Cairns Climate Change Strategy 2030 or to get involved in the Council's sustainability initiatives.

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