

Responding to climate change

Council policy

1 Policy statement

We will improve energy efficiency and transition to renewable energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We aim for net-zero emissions from the electricity, fuel and gas we use in our operations by 2030.

We will work with our community to achieve the NSW aspirational targets of net-zero emissions by 2050 and become more resilient to a changing climate; especially to increases in urban heat.

2 Scope

The Policy applies to Council representatives and employees.

3 Definitions

Council representative	Councillors, contractors, consultants, volunteers, delegates of the Council and members of Council committees who represent or act on behalf of Blacktown City Council.
Employee	Any person with an employment contract with Council and works full time, part time, or on a casual or term contract basis.
We, us, our	Blacktown City Council.
Net-zero emissions	Net-zero emissions, also known as ‘carbon neutrality’ or ‘climate neutrality’ occurs when the level of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere from human activities equals the level ‘removed’ from the atmosphere. We become carbon neutral or reach net-zero emissions by reaching an equal balance between the greenhouse gases emitted and the greenhouse gases removed.
Resilient	Resilience enables a city’s individuals, communities, organisations, businesses and systems to survive, adapt and grow, even in the face of acute shocks such as heat waves or floods and chronic stresses such as climate change.
Climate change	A change in climate patterns apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, especially carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

Mitigation

In this context, mitigation actions reduce either the severity of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, or they reduce the impacts of climate change, such as increased urban heat. In some cases, the same action assists with both, e.g. planting additional trees can provide cooling effects while also drawing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

4 Why and how we will respond to climate vulnerability

This policy is in line with the major current international climate change strategy, the Paris Agreement, Australia's commitments under that agreement, the NSW aspirational climate change targets and the aims of the Greater Sydney Commission. Our city is especially vulnerable to increased urban heat and temperatures are expected to be more extreme in the new development areas. Increases in both heat wave temperatures and duration will negatively affect human health. Heatwaves especially affect those who are older, very young and/or have chronic ill-health or disabilities, and those who cannot afford means for keeping cool.

There are five policy commitment areas

Policy commitment 1

Achieve net-zero emissions from the electricity, fuel and gas we use in our operations by 2030.

Policy commitment 2

Adopt best practice to:

- a. mitigate the impacts of urban heat in our operations, own new assets and buildings, and when undertaking major facility upgrades
- b. minimise potable water use in our operations and implement effective stormwater management through water sensitive urban design

Policy commitment 3

Assist our community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience to climate change, including through:

- a. working with the NSW Government to achieve best practice reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, potable water use and urban heat impacts via our urban planning instruments
- b. increasing tree canopy cover and vegetation in streets and reserves
- c. providing appropriate public places and systems to create refuges from extreme heat for vulnerable residents
- d. assisting our community to reach an aspirational target of net zero carbon emissions for the community by 2040

Policy commitment 4

We will reach a target of 100% renewable electricity for Council operations by 2025

Policy commitment 5

Encourage other western Sydney councils to join us in working to achieve these policy commitments.

5 Accompanying strategy

The *Responding to climate change strategy* provides information on the context, opportunities and methods for responding to climate change and our plan for achieving the policy commitments.

6 References and approvals

Category	Environment
Reports	PS3.1 CL400010
Date created	25 July 2018
Version	2
Last review	26 February 2020
Approval	Council
Next review	2022
Owner	Director City Living
Responsible Officers	Senior Environment Officer
Related policies	P000124.5 Environmentally Friendly Vehicles P000156.4 Street lighting P000334.4 Tree Preservation Controls – Implementation P000347.4 Enforcement of Tree Preservation P000349.3 Register of Significant Vegetation P000350.4 Tree Planting in Streets P000351.4 Trees for Schools, Churches and Community Groups P000352.4 Provision of Free Trees to Residents P000354.4 Tree Preservation Order – Witnesses Expenses P000458.4 Blacktown City Council Stormwater Quality Control Policy P000481.2 Street Tree Planting P000482.2 Environmental Sustainability Policy P000484.2 Sustainable Purchasing Policy P000494.1 Sustainable Events Management P000495.1 Access to Fresh Food Policy P00052.7 Awards – Buildings that Enhance Blacktown P000522 Urban Forest Policy and Guidelines.
Related delegations	N/A
Related law	N/A

Related documents	Responding to climate change strategy
Attachment	N/A