

Responding to climate change

Council policy

1 Policy statement

We will improve energy efficiency and transition to renewable energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with NSW Government targets.

We will work with our community to achieve the NSW targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030, 70% by 2035 compared to 2005 levels, 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.
Carbon neutrality or net-zero emissions	Carbon neutrality, also known as net-zero emissions, occurs when the level of greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere from human activities equals the level 'removed' from the atmosphere. In our operations, we work to reduce our emissions as much as possible and procure carbon offsets to cover the residual.
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.
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.
We, us, our	Blacktown City Council

4 Why 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 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.

5 How we respond to climate vulnerability

We have developed policy commitment areas as set out below.

Policy commitment 1

Achieve the following emission reduction targets in our operations:

- a. annual certification as a carbon neutral organisation, incrementally reducing our reliance on carbon offsets
- b. use 100% renewable electricity from 2025 onward
- c. our leaseback fleet is net zero emissions by 2030, without relying on carbon offsets
- d. a 30% reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030/31 compared to our baseline year 2020/21, without relying on carbon offsets.

Policy commitment 2

Adopt best practice in our operations to:

- a. mitigate the impacts of urban heat in existing and new assets and buildings, and when undertaking major facility upgrades
- b. minimise potable water use 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

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

6 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.

7 References and approvals

Category	Environment
Reports	PS3.1 CL400010, CL440085
Date created	25 July 2018
Version	3
Last review	24 July 2024
Approval	Council
Next review	July 2028
Owner	Director City Living
Responsible officers	Senior Coordinator Environmental Services
Related policies	P000124.6 Environmentally Friendly Vehicles P000156.5 Street lighting P000548.1 Tree management P000351.4 Trees for Schools, Churches and Community Groups P000352.4 Provision of Free Trees to Residents P000482.3 Environmental Sustainability Policy P000484.3 Sustainable Purchasing Policy P000494.1 Sustainable Events Management P000495.2 Access to Fresh Food Policy P000052.9 Awards – Buildings that Enhance Blacktown P000522.1 Urban Forest Policy and Guidelines.
Related delegations	N/A
Related law	Australian: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change Act 2022 • New Vehicle Efficiency Standard Act 2024 NSW: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Change (Net Zero Future Act) 2023
Related documents	Blacktown City Council's Responding to climate change strategy
Attachments	