



# ETHERIDGE SHIRE SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

## 1. THE ETHERIDGE SHIRE DESTINATION AUTHORITY

The Etheridge Shire covers a vast area of 38,850 square kilometres, with a population of 794 (2020 Census), in four small, local communities plus outlying farming properties.

Etheridge Shire lies in the heart of the Savannah Gulf region, Far North Queensland at the base of Cape York Peninsula. The Shire is classified as 'very remote' (Australian Standard Geographical Classifications), situated five hours drive west of Cairns on the Savannah Way, the major inland route to the Gulf of Carpentaria and the towns of Karumba and Normanton.

The Etheridge Shire Council (the Destination Authority) has existed as a local government authority since 1882 to manage the Shire for all social, economic environmental and cultural operations. The Shire has a diverse range of ecosystems and natural environmental features and lies within the northern Australian Savannah, with a tropical climate and green (wet) season from December to March.

The landscape comprises both volcanic and sandstone landscapes which attract visitors to its lava tubes and gorges. Rich in mineral resources, from gold to precious gems, and extensive agricultural land, it is dissected by large rivers and deep gorges. The Shire has a rich cultural landscape from its original Anglo-Saxon heritage of mining (1870), and beef cattle, with two First Nations cultural groups, the Ewamian and the Tagalaka Peoples.

These diverse environmental, and cultural features and the social settings of small communities attract a greater number of visitors each year, from April to late October. Specifically related to the increasing tourism demand in the Shire, the Destination Authority will commit to tourism growth, which is managed for its impact, and fully responsible in its approach to the environment, social needs and to cultural sensitivities (APEC PATA Code for Sustainable Tourism 2001), while allowing visitors to have an authentic experience of the region.

## 2. OUR SUSTAINABILITY VISION

Etheridge Shire Council has a vision to be the first certified Sustainable Outback Destination in northern Australia. The Shire will lead by example, through its vision and actions, for a sustainable future for Outback Queensland communities. The Shire strives to achieve sustainability in line with its vision to be recognised as an Australian and international sustainable, place to live and as an iconic tourism destination.

ESC is committed to working to promote sustainable practices in all areas of its operation to ensure a better quality of life for its residents, and a quality, authentic and memorable experience for visitors to the Shire.

This is an ongoing integrated and continuous process, which requires dynamic action and the adaptation of innovating techniques and methods, to align the fundamental concepts of responsible sustainable operations and tourism to benefit the Shires diverse landscapes, and the social and cultural dynamics of the community.

## 3. THE POLICY SCOPE

This is a whole-of-Council Policy that requires Council and its employees to consider Principles of Sustainability in their decisions and activities across all areas of Council business. By adopting a coordinated approach, Council will foster sustainable practices, focused on local issues in the Shire, to

achieve Environmental, Cultural, Social and Economic outcomes and benefits for the community in line with the Corporate Plan (2021-2025).

#### **4. OUR COMMITMENT**

Etheridge Shire Council is committed to working towards a sustainable future for the residents of the Shire, its unique environmental, cultural, economic betterment and social setting. The Sustainable Development 2030 Agenda “recognizes that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health, education, inequality, and spur economic growth – while also tackling climate change and working to preserve our environment” (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development 2015, (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>)).

Council undertakes to achieve as many of the 17 Goals of Sustainable Development, as possible, and applicable in the local context.

Etheridge Shire Council is committed to applying the Principles of Sustainability to all its decision making.

Specifically, Council will meet this commitment by considering the Principles of Sustainability:

- In the development of strategic documents.
- In managing social and economic resources.
- In the management and conservation of freshwater resources, environment, and cultural heritage.
- In land use, planning and development, and ecosystem management.
- To facilitate responsible energy, water and waste management which seeks to maximise efficiencies and minimise non-renewable resource use, with long-term strategies to address future needs.
- To encourage the protection of significant ecosystems and biodiversity.
- To encourage environmental awareness and the use of environmentally friendly products.
- To provide equal employment opportunities, including employment of locally based workers.
- By encouraging, training, and supporting staff in the adoption of sustainable principles and practices to achieve sustainable behaviour in the workplace.
- To achieve local sustainability through consultation, leadership, and guidance with the community, and to provide education and learning opportunities for the local community.
- To communicate with Shire stakeholders about Councils sustainable initiatives thus encouraging more Shire households to become sustainable in their daily actions.
- To set realistic targets for improving sustainable actions for the future of the Shire and its people.

Our sustainability policy connects us to the numerous sustainability efforts around the world. Although sustainability contains elements that apply everywhere, we will customise our approach to our region, people and circumstances.

**8. APPROVAL TABLE**

<b>Approved by Council</b>		<b>Meeting number and date</b>	
		<b>Resolution number</b>	
<b>Approval by CEO</b>			
<b>Effective date</b>		<b>Review date</b>	
<b>Policy Author</b>			
<b>Current incumbent</b>			
<b>Implementation Officer</b>			
<b>Current incumbent</b>		<b>Contact number</b>	<b>Official file no.</b>
		4079 9090	

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION