

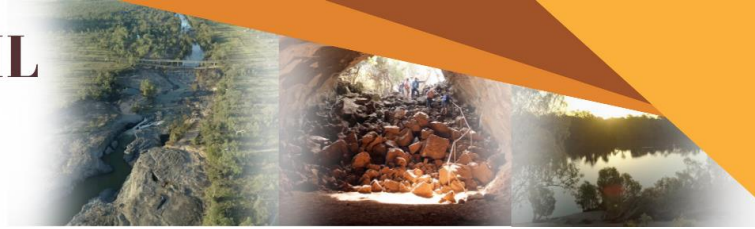


Etheridge Shire Council

Destination Management Strategy and Action Plan

2024-2029

This document has been prepared by Etheridge Shire Council in response to the requirements of the Earth Check Sustainable Destinations Program.



The document outlines the Destination's Management Strategy and Action Plan to address the 12 Key Performance Area of the EarthCheck program.

This document should be read in conjunction with the **Risk Assessment document** developed for the EarthCheck Program.

In developing the action plan and targets, the Destination Authority consulted with key stakeholders, local community, external stakeholders, and others.

These include.

- Destination Authority staff
- Local Businesses
- Residents
- Griffith University tourism experts
- Flinders University, SA. Sustainability expert
- Tourism bodies
- Tourism Tropical North Queensland
- Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
- North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils

Visitors were not included in the consultation for this plan as the timing of the Performance Report was during the non-tourism season.

This document has five sections.

1. Key Performance Areas
2. Benchmarking Data Assessment
3. Review of Plan
4. Action Plan and Targets
5. Communication and Promotion of Sustainability

1. Key Performance Areas

EarthCheck have 12 Key Performance Areas, which have been assessed using 20 indicators. These KPA's are:

1. Energy efficiency, conservation and management
2. Greenhouse gas emissions
3. Air quality protection, noise control, & light pollution
4. Management of freshwater resources
5. Wastewater management, drainage and streams
6. Ecosystem conservation and management
7. Land use planning and development
8. Transport
9. Solid waste management
10. Management of environmentally harmful substances
11. Cultural and Social Management
12. Economic Management

In addressing the EarthCheck 12 Key Performance Areas, the Etheridge Shire Council, as a small Council do not have specific plans and strategies in place to address each specific area. However, where the Corporate Plan, Operational Plan and other Plans relate to this area is noted below. Where none exist, it may be that it is not appropriate to this Shire, and/ or may need to be considered.

The ESC Corporate Plan, 2021-2025, page 7, outlines the overarching vision for the Shire: *"Etheridge Shire is a place of innovation, diversity and opportunity for all. We have a vibrant and cohesive community which is provided with quality services that maintain a high quality of life. Inclusive and progressive leadership ensures a sustainable community, economy and environment."* Table 1 identifies how the Corporate Plan aligns with the 12 KPA.



The following documents address many of the EarthCheck Key Performance Areas.

Corporate Plan: <https://www.etheridge.qld.gov.au/forms-and-publications/corporate-documents/corporate-plan>

Operational Plan: <https://www.etheridge.qld.gov.au/forms-and-publications/corporate-documents/operational-plan>

Drought Management: <https://www.etheridge.qld.gov.au/downloads/download/122/drought-management-plan-dmp>

Economic Development: <https://www.etheridge.qld.gov.au/economic-development>

Greenhouse Gas Emission Profile: For Council operations and Shire. Available on request.

Table 1. Etheridge Shire Corporate Plan alignment with EarthCheck KPA

KPA addressed	item	Aim
Energy efficiency, conservation and management	Waste Alternative energy	Aim 2. 2.4 Page 9
Greenhouse gas emissions	Alternative energy Climate change	Aim 2. 2.4 Page 9
Air quality protection, noise control, & light pollution	Clean air. Noise and light pollution not applicable in this destination	N/A
Management of freshwater resources	Water – Biosecurity Water quality	Aim 2. 2.1 Page 9
Wastewater management, drainage and streams	Waste Waste water	Aim 2. 2.1 Page 9
Ecosystem conservation and management	Ecosystem health Biosecurity Landscape	Aim 2. 2.3 Page 9
Land use planning and development	Development/ Green Space	Aim 3. Page 10
Transport	Roads/ Rail/ Air	Aim 1. Page 8
Solid waste management	Disposal /Recycling	Aim 2. 2.2 Page 9
Management of environmentally harmful substances	Landscape protection	Aim 2. 2.3 Page 9
Cultural and Social Management	Public space Wellbeing / Green Space/ Culture	Aim 3. 3.1 Page 10 Aim 4. Page 11
Economic Management	Education Economy	Aim 2. 2.5 Page 9 Aim 3. 3.2 Page 10

2. Benchmarking Data Assessment

The EarthCheck Benchmarking Data Report found Etheridge Shire exceeded Best Practice in 9 indicators, was at or above Baseline for 3 and was below Baseline in 8 from the 20 assessed indicators. See Table 2.

Indicators below baseline are specifically addressed in both the Risk document, and in this Action Plan to allow for continual improvements in the Shires' pathway to sustainability.

Table 2. Etheridge Shire Benchmarking Summary

Etheridge Shire Council indicator	ESC figure	ESC performance	Baseline	Best Practice
Above the Best Practice level – Gold Star (passed)				
<i>Waste Sent to Landfill</i>	1.4m ³	23.1% better than Best Practice	2.67 m ³	1.87 m ³
<i>Nitrous Oxides Produced,</i>	0.00018kg	100% better than Best Practice	2.60kg	1.82kg
<i>Sulphur Dioxide Produced,</i>	0.00001kg	100% better than Best Practice	0.64kg	0.45kg
<i>Particulate Matter Produced,</i>	0.00048kg	100% better than Best Practice	1.07kg	0.75kg
<i>Water Samples Passed</i>	100%	At Best Practice level	70%	100%
<i>Destination Safety - Homicide Rate</i>	0%	0.0008% better than Best Practice	0.0011%	0.0008%
<i>Unemployment Rate</i>	4.4%	0.2% better than Best Practice	6.5%	4.6%
<i>Accredited Operations</i>	83%	76.5% better than Best Practice	5%	6.5%
<i>Water Savings Rating</i>	94.5 points	14.5 points better than Best Practice	50 points	80 points
Better than Baseline / just below Best Practice – Green Tick (passed)				
<i>Waste Recycling</i>	77 points	27 points better than Baseline. 3 below Best Practice	50 points	80 points
<i>Paper Products</i>	75 points	25 points better Baseline. 5 below Best Practice	50 points	80 points



<i>Cleaning Products</i>	72.7 points	22.7 points better than Baseline. 7.3 below Best Practice	50 points	80 points
Below Baseline				
<i>Energy Consumption</i>	222 Gj	129% Below Baseline	97.1GJ	68 GJ
<i>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</i>	20.2 tCo2 e	20.2% Below Baseline	16.8 tCo2	11.8 tCo2
<i>Potable Water Consumption</i>	145 kl	5.3 % Below Baseline	137.7 kl	96.4 kl
<i>Habitat Conservation Area</i>	16%	4 % Below Baseline	20%	26%
<i>Green Space</i>	0.009%	15.% Below Baseline	15%	20%
<i>Destination Safety - Theft Rate</i>	3.31%	1.03 % Below Baseline	2.28%	1.6%
<i>Destination Safety - Assault Rate</i>	1.38%	1.15% Below Baseline	0.23%	0.16%
<i>Pesticide Products Rating.</i>	0 points	50 points Below Baseline	50 points	80 points

The 20 Benchmarking indicators assessed (Table 2) fall under many of the Key Performance Areas noted in Section 1. To facilitate ease of reading this document, the Action Plan and Targets address the 20 benchmarked indicators, rather than the KPA.

Many of the Mitigations/ Actions noted in the Risk Document are repeated here as appropriate.

3. Review of Plan

This Action Plan and associated targets will be made available on Councils website for easy public access.

The Council will monitor, review, and revise as needed, in line with reviews of Operational Plans, Corporate Plans and budgets.

Feedback from the local community (residents and business), visitors and external stakeholders will be undertaken and incorporated into ongoing updates.

4. Action Plan and Targets

Etheridge Shire

Sustainable Destinations Program 2024-2030

Destination					
Indicator	Risk	Objectives	Target/ timing	Actions	Responsibilities / Cost
Energy Consumption 129% <i>Below Best Practice</i>	Extreme	Reduce energy cost and usage through energy efficiency / self-sufficiency in community.	20% reduction from current level by 2026.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to investigate alternative energy sources to reduce consumption and cost. • Council to install energy saving measures in Council buildings. • Council to investigate solar installation on Council buildings. • Council to promote energy efficient and self-sufficiency – eg. Solar in homes and business. • Council to run workshops/ forums in energy savings. • Council to investigate funding to support solar installation in homes and businesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • Director Corporate Services • Engineer • Town Manager
Reduce impact on environment from gases and harmful by products		25% reduction in council usage by 2026	Achieve baseline by 2030		
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Destination & Authority 20.2% <i>Below Best Practice</i>	Extreme	Reduce reliance on fossil fuels.	Reduce GG Emissions To best practice level. 2025-2060	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to investigate alternative energy sources. • Council to source grants to improve landfill sites to reduce impact of gas release from sites. • Council to develop community education programs about Waste Recovery Strategies. <p>Note: Emissions Profiles undertaken.</p>	Landfill site upgrades \$ 500,000 - 1,000,000
Source integrated approaches to reduce climate change risk to community.					
Nitrous Oxides Sulphur Dioxide Particulate Matter 100% <i>Above Best Practice</i>	Low	Maintain low level of outputs.	Ongoing to maintain above Best Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to continue existing management strategy to maintain Best Practice. 	
Potable Water Consumption 5.3% Below baseline	Extreme	Reduction in water usage by local community.	5% reduction from current level by 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to develop an education program on water savings/ devices etc for local community. • Council to support the local community and farmers to attend workshops and seminars organised by Council/Government agencies, to better understand water usage and conservation. • Council to encourage the use of water tanks and water harvesting. • Council to support research into agricultural innovations for farmers, council staff and natural resource managers. • Council to consider installation of more rainwater harvesting tanks, on Council and public facilities. • Council to investigate using greywater irrigation of public lands, where appropriate. • Council to actively manage water assets including storage and use of recycled water for land management practices. • Council to collaborate with GU to Identify best practices in water use efficiency for businesses and promote to local businesses. • Council to collaborate with GU Identify the performance efficacy of water reduction innovations and promote their use to businesses/community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Corporate Services • Engineer • Town Manager • All of Council • Sustainability Team <p style="text-align: right;">\$ 100,000</p>
Reduction in water usage by Council in Council buildings and public facilities.		5% reduction in council usage by 2026			
		Achieve baseline by 2030			



<p>Waste Sent to Landfill</p> <p>23.1% Above Best Practice</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Enhance waste recycling in the community to reduce waste sent to landfill.</p> <hr/> <p>Reduce impact on environment of any leaching, gas and invasive species</p>	<p>Landfill sites to be monitored for recycling and waste disposal, by 2026.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to investigate how to monitor the Landfill sites as appropriate for the Shire. • Council to discuss with community how to expand current recycle program at landfill site for green waste and other items not currently recycled. • Council to source further funding to have paper and plastic recycling at landfill and install appropriate waste bins in towns. • Council to run community awareness programs on recycling. • Council to run business education programs on waste management best practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • Corporate Services Manager • Engineer • Town Manager <p>\$ 500,000 - 1,000,000</p>
<p>Habitat Conservation Area</p> <p>4% Below baseline</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>To identify suitable areas for habitat conservation in Council managed operations.</p>	<p>Identify one new conservation area per year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to encourage local landowners to manage their properties for habitat and endangered species protection. • Council to encourage landowners to advise Council of areas set aside for habitat conservation and endangered species protection. ie report land area set aside. • Council to provide funding to increase size of existing habitat conservation areas under Council control. • Council to fund native tree planting days in community, with stock bought from Landcare. • Council to run habitat conservation workshops in conjunction with Landcare and Dept Env. • Council to lobby State Government for additional Habitat Conservation areas if appropriate for the Shire and community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor • CEO • Town Manager • Dept of Environment <p>Cost unknown</p>
<p>Green Space</p> <p>15% Below baseline</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>To increase recreation and outdoor space in the Shire.</p>	<p>Increase green space and public facility by 10% on existing figures by 2030.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to undertake a review of current green space and plan for new green space areas appropriate to the Shire and its needs. • Council to source government funding to develop new spaces for community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • Council • Town Manager • Sustainability Team <p>Cost unknown</p>
<p>Safety - Homicide</p> <p>0.0008% Above Best Practice</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Maintain safe destination record</p>	<p>100%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to continue to work with Police and community services to maintain safety in the community and for visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor • Police • Sustainability Team • Local community groups <p>Cost minimal.</p>
<p>Safety - Assault</p> <p>1.15% Below baseline</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Increase safety, and tourists' perception of region.</p>	<p>Reduce assault rate within 2 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a tourist safety education program that communicates how to visit the region in a safe and responsible way. • Create a visitor code of conduct that outlines directives for ensuring a safe holiday experience. • Council will engage with Police and other community groups to address the theft and assault rates in the Shire through local community initiatives, youth programs and employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor • Police • Sustainability Team • Local community groups
<p>Safety – Theft</p> <p>1.03% Below baseline</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Increase safety, and tourists' perception of region.</p>	<p>Reduce theft rate within 2 years.</p>		<p>Cost unknown but should be minimal.</p>
<p>Unemployment Rate</p> <p>0.2% Above Best Practice</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Support local business to employ local.</p>	<p>Maintain low unemployment rate. Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to investigate training needs of local businesses and assist with running targeted training workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • Mayor • Local Business • Sustainability Team • Community organisations. <p>Cost \$ 5,000 -10,000pa</p>



Accredited Tour Operators 76.5% Above Best Practice	Low	Maintain accreditation for all Council operated Tourism operations. To encourage other tourism businesses to become accredited.	100% of Council operations by 2025 90% of tourism business with Shire by 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council to renew accreditation of all major tourism operations it manages. • Council to encourage tourism operations , not currently accredited, to become accredited as appropriate to their size and ability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • Mayor • Businesses <p>Ongoing annual cost.</p>
Destination Authority (Council)					
Indicator	Risk	Objectives	Target/ timing	Actions	Responsibilities / Cost
Water Samples Passed 100% <i>At Best Practice</i>	Low	Maintain Safety of drinking water	Ongoing	https://www.etheridge.qld.gov.au/water-quality-management/water-quality-management-1 Maintain frequency of water testing to ensure 100% of water samples pass State Government levels for safe drinking water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineer <p>No increased cost</p>
Water Savings Rating 14.5 points <i>Above Best Practice</i>	Low	Continue to improve water usage / savings for Council operations.	80% of facilities updated by 2030 ----- 50% increase in native plantings by 2030 ----- 90% use of after dark sprinklers by 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change all Council facility taps, toilets, showers, water outlets to low flow. • Increase native plantings in landscaping to reduce water usage. • Change water sprinklers to after dark operation. • Council to run training for staff on water usage in the workplace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineer • Town Manager <p>\$ 60,000</p>
Waste Recycling 27 points <i>Better than Baseline</i>	Low	Improve waste recycling options in Council Facilities.	Install recycling bins in Council Facilities and towns by 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with community waste recycling measures, appropriate to the destination for paper, plastics etc. • Council to run training for staff on recycling in the workplace. • Council to discuss with waste contractor recycling / recovery options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineer • Contractors • All staff • Town Manager <p>Cost unknown</p>
Pesticide Products 50 points <i>Below Baseline</i>	Medium	Reduce the impact of harmful chemical on the environment. Maintain Biosecurity	20% reduction by 2030 ----- 50% reduction by 2035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate with suppliers both domestic and international alternatives to currently available pesticides/ herbicides used in Australia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Corporate Services • Town Manager • Stores <p>Cost unknown</p>
Cleaning Products 25 points <i>Better than Baseline</i>	Low	To lead the Shire/ Region through Councils commitment to sustainable practices.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use 100% biodegradable / eco-friendly cleaning products at all Council facilities. • Council to run training for staff on cleaning products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Corporate Services • Town Manager • Engineer • Stores • All council staff <p>Minimal cost</p>
Paper Products 22.7 points <i>Better than Baseline</i>	Low	To lead the Shire / Region through Councils commitment to sustainable practices.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use 100% biodegradable paper products in all Council facilities. • Council to run training for staff on recycling paper products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director Corporate Services • Town Manager • Engineer • Stores • All council staff <p>Minimal cost</p>



5. Communication and Promotion of Sustainability

This section will indicate how the Destination Authority will communicate, promote, monitor and undertake feedback on sustainability initiatives in the community. The term Council below may mean the organisation or representative(s) of the Council.

Sustainability Advisory

- Council will need to identify/appoint someone within Council to oversee sustainability direction and operations.
- Council will form a Sustainability Advisory Group to include an elected Councillor, Administration staff, the Sustainability team, community members and others as deemed appropriate at the time.
- Council will include Sustainability Representatives in events, training and ongoing sustainability initiatives.

Sustainability training initiatives

- Council will run staff and community awareness training on “How to be more sustainable in everyday interactions”.
 - Including environmentally friendly practices such as recycling and waste disposal.
 - Biodegradable paper products, cleaning products.
 - Planting native plants and mulching, suitable for the climate and to reduce water usage, and using organic weed killers in gardens.
- Council will advise/work with local business who wish to be more sustainable in their operation and/or achieve their own sustainable business certification.

Events

- Council will discuss with staff and event organisers how business/ community groups/ events can operate / incorporate better sustainability practice into their operation.
- Council will run a biannual competition on new sustainability initiatives being used in the community in one of two categories.
 - At home
 - In business.
- Council will promote stalls at events with local community so the Sustainability Team can promote sustainable activities and obtain independent feedback and ideas.
- Council will run:
 - Forums/ training workshops for local schoolteachers to allow them to incorporate sustainability teaching into curriculum.
 - A competition for local schools for the best initiative in sustainability at home.
 - Talks to school groups/ church groups/ and community organisations.

Sustainability initiatives promotion

- Council will promote businesses, through their website and the Uneath Etheridge website that have incorporated sustainably initiatives into their operations.
- Council will promote monthly, in the Council newsletter and website, stories highlighting any new initiatives adopted by a local organization/ business / local people who are making a difference.
- Council marketing and tourism staff will promote sustainability initiatives in the Shire although events, the VIC, the monthly newsletter, on social media and at community forums and at State wide tourism events.
- Council will discuss with Ewamian & Tagalaka people how they can better communicate the Destinations sustainability journey to youth and incorporate into their organizations.

Visitors and Suppliers

- Council website and the Uneath Etheridge website will provide information specific for visitors about how to be more sustainable when they visit the region.
- Council will develop guidelines, in discussion with suppliers and external contractors how they can be involved in the Destinations Sustainability focus.