

Mount Alexander Shire Council

# Environment Strategy 2015-2025

## Evaluation Plan



## Purpose

The purpose of this evaluation plan is to enable transparent and consistent reporting on the progress and resulting impact of the Environment Strategy 2015-2015.

To this end, the document outlines the Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) from the Environment Strategy 2015-2025 and their relevant components:

- sub-key evaluation questions
- data sources
- indicators

## Stakeholders

This evaluation plan enables the community, Council and external organisations to review how the Environment Strategy will be measured and reported on. The evaluation plan is publicly available and specifies where community input will be sought to measure progress in key areas.

**Primary users:** The primary users of this plan are members of the Mount Alexander Shire Council, Healthy Environments - Environment Management Team. Unless otherwise noted, this Team is responsible for carrying out the evaluation of the Strategy.

**Secondary users:** Secondary users who may need to be aware of this plan are:

- Internal - Councillors, staff
- External - local community groups and organisations
- External - the wider community

## Methodology

Data for answering the evaluation questions will be collected from a ranges of sources as outlined below. Where appropriate, existing data collection methods and/or records will be preferred.

Annual reports based on the implementation of the evaluation plan will be produced. At the end of the 10 years the reports will be collated into a Strategy Evaluation Report.

## Communiity engagement

As the evaluation plan is implemented stakeholders will be engaged according the appropriate measures in accordance with the IAP2 spectrum for public participation (see Table 1 below). Table 2 outlines the specific approach for each user group.

**Table 1: IAP2 spectrum for public participation**

	<i>Increasing Level of Public Impact</i> 				
	<b>Inform</b>	<b>Consult</b>	<b>Involve</b>	<b>Collaborate</b>	<b>Empower</b>
<b>Public participation goal</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutionsw	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/ or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
<b>Promise to the public</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
<b>Example techniques</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Web sites</li> <li>• Open houses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Public meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Deliberative polling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen advisory committees</li> <li>• Consensus-building</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen juries</li> <li>• Ballots</li> <li>• Delegated decisions</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Community engagement plan**

Stakeholder group	Expectations of the strategy	Stake in the Strategy (L/M/H)	IAP2 level	Messages	Tools
<b>Community groups and organisations</b>	Strategy implementation leads to tangible actions to improve the local environment	High	Involve/ collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress</li> <li>• Key achievements</li> <li>• Benefits/ outcomes</li> <li>• What does it mean for them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop as part of scheduled review of the Environment Strategy after each new Council is elected</li> <li>• Feedback (online, written)</li> <li>• Council’s Enews</li> <li>• Shire news</li> <li>• Media releases</li> <li>• Annual Council report</li> <li>• Involvement in collaborative projects</li> </ul>
<b>Wider community</b>	Key projects are making improvements to the local environment	Medium	Inform / consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress</li> <li>• Key achievements</li> <li>• Benefits/ outcomes</li> <li>• What does it mean for them?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shire news</li> <li>• Media releases</li> <li>• Annual Council report</li> </ul>
<b>Councillors, staff</b>	Strategy implementation is driving a range of efficient works that are the responsibility of Council	High	Involve/ collaborate/ empower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress</li> <li>• Benefits/ outcomes</li> <li>• What does it mean for Council and ratepayers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop as part of scheduled review of the Environment Strategy after each new Council is elected</li> <li>• Briefing reports</li> <li>• Involvement in projects</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Evaluation Questions**

**Key Evaluation Question 1**

**What opportunities have there been for the community to engage in sustainability and environment as a result of partnerships with council?**

Outcome: Enable the community to take action

Sub-key Evaluation Questions	Data Sources	Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what extent have the following KSTs been achieved?                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Continue to provide financial support to community groups, for example through the annual Community Grants Program</li> <li>b. Develop and implement community engagement and behaviour change programs and initiatives</li> <li>c. Develop and implement memoranda of understanding with key community groups</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. What other opportunities have there been for the community to engage in sustainability?</li> </ol>	<p>Council records of community grants</p> <p>Record/s of community engagement activities and/or offers and/or information focused on sustainability</p> <p>Feedback discussions relating to MOUs</p> <p>Community feedback (e.g. via community survey)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community grant projects funded and outcome testimonials</li> <li>• Number of participants at workshops</li> <li>• Number of partnership events utilising the existing or new MOU</li> </ul>

## Key Evaluation Question 2

**What evidence is there that Council has developed collaborations and that these are delivering tangible community benefits?**

Outcome: Collaborate with external organisations

### Sub-key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent have the following KSTs been achieved?
  - a. Continue membership of the Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group
  - b. Establish a local government natural environment regional alliance
  - c. Continue membership of the Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance
  - d. Develop a strategic plan for urban waterways in Castlemaine, Campbells Creek and Chewton
2. Have there been other collaborations that have been developed that are delivering benefits to the community?

### Data Sources

Agreements and actions with key groups such as the CVGA, NRM network, waste and resource recovery group.

Records of other Council collaborations that are delivering environmental benefits

### Indicators

- Commentary on Council's collaborations and their direct relationship to (evidence of) tangible benefits for the community and the environment

## Key Evaluation Question 3

**What evidence is there that Council sustainability and environment leadership is recognised in the Shire community and more broadly?**

Outcome: Council leads by example

### Sub-key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent have the following KSTs been achieved?
  - a. Develop policy and/or position statements relating to key issues
  - b. Use statutory responsibilities to influence better sustainability and natural environment outcomes
  - c. Advocate to the State and Commonwealth Governments

### Data Sources

Evidence of policy and position statements

Use of statutory responsibilities to influence outcomes

Advocacy

Community satisfaction surveys

Feedback from other councils in the surrounding area (e.g. among the Central Victoria Greenhouse Alliance partners)

Awards for non-local recognition

### Indicators

- Commentary about position and policy statements, and innovative statutory projects and advocacy efforts
- Community satisfaction surveys
- Awards

## Key Evaluation Question 4

**What evidence is there that sustainability and environment priorities and considerations are embedded in Council operations?**

Outcome: Sustainability and Environment Team is a corporate resource

### Sub-key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent have the following KSTs been achieved?
  - a. Identify, rank and reduce the significant environmental impacts of all Council projects and services
  - b. Utilise internal sustainability and environment expertise particularly at project scoping stages
  - c. Enable and encourage staff to fully consider sustainability and environment matters

### Data Sources

Environmental impact assessment of Council projects and services  
Project plans

Green Team outcomes and other project outcomes that demonstrate the consideration of the environment

### Indicators

- Environmental impact assessment of Council operations and dashboard for environmental performance

## Key Evaluation Question 5

**To what extent is Council demonstrating best practice sustainable procurement and resource use activities?**

Outcome: Reduce resource consumption across Council

### Sub-key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent have the following KSTs been achieved?
  - a. Implement the Sustainable Procurement Policy
  - b. Develop and implement new Sustainable Water Use Plan
  - c. Continue to improve resource efficiency, including energy efficiency, across Council operations
  - d. Undertaking independent benchmarking of Council practices

### Data Sources

Policy and plan implementation

Resource consumption data

Ecobuy's Sustainable Procurement Assessment Tool

### Indicators

- Ecobuy sustainable procurement rating (gold, silver or bronze)
- Resource consumption data including energy and water

## Key Evaluation Question 6

**To what extent have Council programs and services reduced waste to landfill, including the separation and diversion of waste?**

Outcome: Improve resource recovery facilities and services

### Sub-key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent have the following KSTs been achieved?
  - a. Develop and implement a new Waste and Resource Recovery Management Plan
  - b. Implement the Castlemaine Waste Management Facility Master Plan
  - c. Maximise the diversion of waste from landfill, including organic waste

### Data Sources

Plan implementation  
Diversion rate for kerbside garbage collection

### Indicators

- Kerbside diversion rate

## Key Evaluation Question 7

**What evidence is there that prioritised natural environment assets are being protected and have improved?**

Outcome: Protect natural environment assets

### Sub-key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent have the following KSTs been achieved?
  - a. Develop and implement a Public Open Space Strategy
  - b. Implement the Roadside Conservation Management Plan
  - c. Implement recommendations from the Rural Land Study
  - d. Develop and implement site specific environmental management plans for priority assets
  - e. Review and amend the planning scheme

### Data Sources

Strategy, plan and study implementation

Planning scheme review/ amendment

Council staff qualitative reflection on actions and observed changes

Databases of environmental monitoring collected by state government and other bodies (e.g. North Central CMA). For example:

- Index of stream condition
- Native vegetation
- Biodiversity etc.

### Indicators

- Commentary about the development and implementation of strategies, plans and studies and changes to the planning scheme, and how this has led to the protection and improvement of natural environment assets
- Amount of land where improvement been made

## Key Evaluation Question 8

**To what extent has Council integrated climate change across its operations and actively influenced and advocated to the community and others?**

Outcome: Integrate our response to climate change

### Sub-key Evaluation Questions

1. To what extent have the following KSTs been achieved?
  - a. Implement the Regional Climate Adaptation Plan
  - b. Develop and implement the Climate Change Action Plan
  - c. Through relevant planning manage and minimise the impacts on Council and the community from heatwaves, fires, floods, and other extreme weather events

### Data Sources

Plan implementation

Emissions data from energy retailer and from other relevant sources such as fuel cards

Evidence of the integration of climate change thinking across the organisation including as it relates to emergency management

Advocacy efforts

### Indicators

- Commentary about the development and implementation of plans and the management and minimisation of climate risks and vulnerabilities
- Greenhouse gas emissions

## Review and reporting

The evaluation plan is a living document. As such regular review of the outcomes of the evaluation plan is important to the continuous improvement of the Environment Strategy 2015-2025.

Alterations to the evaluation plan need to be recorded and communicated to the relevant staff. The below table can be used as a record of this.

**Table 4: Record of evaluation plan review**

Date	Review participants	Changes made	Communication of results
1.12.15	Sustainability Officer	Final Draft	To Council

## Annual reporting

A key principle of this evaluation plan is the need to show the community what has been completed or achieved and how this moves the Shire closer towards the vision outlined in the Environment Strategy.

A common method used in evaluation is annual reporting against the KEQs. The evaluation report can then be published and accessible to the community.

The simple structure for the annual report will be:

- Executive Summary (what are the main points / achievements for the year)
- Introduction
- Key Evaluation Questions (the questions being considered, i.e. the KEQs and sub-KEQs listed in Table 3.

- Methodology (how was data collected against the KEQs)
- Results (against each Key Evaluation Question or relevant sub-question)
- Implications of the results and improvements for the next 12 months
- Conclusion

This annual report then forms the key data source for the end-of-strategy reporting.

## End-of-strategy reporting

At the end of the Environment Strategy the Shire will have a set of nine annual evaluation reports, spanning 2015-2024. The final annual report will then act as the evaluation report of the Environment Strategy, and contain a judgement on the extent to which the vision had been met.