Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030

maitland
city council

RECOGNITION FOR THE WONNARUA PEOPLE

The Maitland area has been, for tens of thousands of years, the home of the Wonnarua People. As the first people of this country - and the longest continuous culture on earth - Aboriginal People are the original Keepers and Custodians of this place utilising complexed systems of farming and land management strategies such as fire to sustain the lands and waters of this place for thousands of generations.

Before Europeans arrived, the floodplain of the ***Mayan, Yimmang and Dooribang*** (the Hunter, Paterson and Williams Rivers) were covered in lush rainforest. Aboriginal people called the district Mindaribba and the place of modern day Maitland Bu-Un, or place of the heron waterfowl, and made use of the abundant resources provided by the river and the rainforest for food, medicine, tools and shelter.

Wonnarua People have a strong connection to the ***Mayan, Yimmang and Dooribang*** flowing through and around Maitland. These rivers were created by the Rainbow Serpent who is responsible for all of the water dreaming tracks, rivers, streams, lakes and waterholes making its way inland and now sleeping deep inside the mountain area known as the Barrington.

After European colonisation, vast swathes of rainforest, including the mighty red cedar, were cleared bound for Sydney for furniture building. Historical documents reveal that there was so much cedar removed from Maitland and its surrounds and floated down the river that it was too dangerous for water vessels to use during certain times. The removal of these great trees also made way for the highly productive farmland the valley is famous for, followed by the townships that make up Maitland today.

Maitland City Council acknowledges the Wonnarua People as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters within Maitland. We pay respect to all Aboriginal Elders past, present and future, and commit to improving the way we care for the local environment as a sign of this respect for First Nations people and their spiritual connection with the land and waters of this area.

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This is a strategy for a more liveable and sustainable Maitland. It sets out a pathway to improve community health and wellbeing and economic opportunity through improving the health of our local environment.

PURPOSE

Where we want to be

Maitland is a vibrant river city, where community health, wellbeing and economic opportunity is supported by healthy ecosystems. It's a place where we can access high quality local bushland, wetlands and waterways for recreation, keep cool in hot summers and respond well as a community to natural hazards like floods, storms, bushfires and drought. Our Council shows environmental leadership and supports us to reduce our environmental impacts and avoid waste.

Why is this important?

This Environmental Sustainability Strategy (ESS) responds to community feedback on environmental priorities received over recent years, it focuses on meeting our obligations under National, State and Regional plans, policies and legislation. It aligns with Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and Maitland + 10 Community Strategic Plan (CSP) and builds upon the CSP's – Let's live sustainably theme. It identifies our significant challenges such as flooding, urban heat, reducing landfill space and declining ecosystem health whilst our population and urban footprint expands significantly. It also identifies opportunities to improve the quality of our environment and make our city more liveable and sets out our commitment to lead, facilitate, collaborate and advocate for a more sustainable Maitland. This ESS sits as an informing strategy within Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. It has a timeframe aligned with the Maitland +10 and will be reviewed at the start of each Council Term.

The Integrated reporting and planning framework

At Maitland City Council, the IP&R framework comprises of the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Along with informing strategies like the ESS.

PLAN ON A PAGE

The strategy includes 13 targets across four theme areas, with actions Council will take and indicators which will be measured and reported upon over time to track our progress.

Themes

THEME 1: A GREEN & BLUE MAITLAND
A healthy and resilient natural environment where people and native wildlife can thrive.

THEME 2: LIVEABLE & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
Neighbourhoods that enable high quality of life with connected communities that bounce back from natural hazard events and adapt to a changing climate.

THEME 3: LIVING SUSTAINABLY
A community that is supported to reduce its reliance on non renewable resources and use water wisely.

THEME 4: GOING CIRCULAR WITH WASTE
A community with access to services, facilities and products designed to maximise the value and end of life options for valuable materials.

Targets

GREEN & BLUE MAITLAND	LIVEABLE & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES	LIVING SUSTAINABLY	GOING CIRCULAR WITH WASTE
1.1 Deliver functional biodiversity corridors	2.1 Increase community preparedness for natural hazards	3.1 Increase active and sustainable transport opportunities	4.1 Divert 80% of domestic waste from landfill by 2030
1.2 Protect important natural spaces	2.2 Understand and plan for our climate risks	3.2 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to net zero by 2050	4.2 Use more recycled products
1.3 Improve waterway health			
1.4 Increase community participation in environmental events and volunteering	2.3 Aim for 30% canopy cover in residential areas	3.3 Reduce per capita water consumption from potable sources	4.3 Reduce illegal dumping

Reporting

Communicating the status of progress is essential for the success of our first comprehensive environmental sustainability strategy. Regular measurement of indicators and reporting on progress will help us track how we're going and identify areas that need more attention.

If you want to see live data on how we're performing against the goals of this strategy or make your own commitment to help us become more sustainable, visit data.maitland.nsw.gov.au/pages/home to view our Smart & Sustainable City Platform.

HOW THIS STRATEGY HAS BEEN DEVELOPED

BACKGROUND DATA REVIEW

To get us started on our journey, we first looked at what had already been achieved and previous engagement data to provide a clear picture of the current status and community needs.

CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENT PEAK BODIES, AND ADJOINING LOCAL COUNCILS

Speaking with State, Federal and Local governments on relevant strategies to ensure policy compliance and opportunities for alignment.

TECHNICAL STUDIES

Detailed studies across heat mapping, vegetation, flooding, waste and other relevant topics to gain baseline data relevant to our local environment.

DEVELOPER FORUM

Meeting with local developers to identify opportunities for sustainability initiatives and any barriers.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION

By working across disciplines in Council to identify priorities, needs and opportunities, we have sought to create a strategy that is relevant to all teams and can deliver economic, environmental and community outcomes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Asking community what they see as the most pressing environmental issues has helped us prioritise key issues and actions and helped us understand how community are already implementing sustainability behaviours at home. Consultations included:

- Environmental attitudes online survey measuring our communities' attitudes and behaviours towards sustainability issues (August 2022, 400+ surveys)
- Environmental attitudes phone polling from a representative resident sample (August 2022, 500 surveys)
- Pop up community engagement kiosk (August 2022)
- Waste services online survey measuring our communities support for existing and future waste (November 2022, 2000+ surveys)
- Waste service phone polling from a representative resident sample (November 2022, 500 surveys)
- Maitland Environmental Youth Forum 2023 (May 2023 50+ students from local primary and high schools)

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is a way of considering how our economy, natural environment, social interactions and governance structures (laws and ethics) interact to define the world we live in with the aim of balancing and improving them all with our decision making.

These four pillars of sustainability are all important and need consideration. The focus of this strategy is to consider environmental goals and actions in detail to provide a pathway to achieving these goals while considering the other sustainability pillars.

> **'SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS THE PATHWAY TO THE FUTURE WE WANT FOR ALL. IT OFFERS A FRAMEWORK TO GENERATE ECONOMIC GROWTH, ACHIEVE SOCIAL JUSTICE, EXERCISE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE.'**
> **– Ban Ki-Moon**

WHY WE NEED AN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

The health and wellbeing of our community is linked to the health of our environment. Improving the quality of the natural environment, reducing our impact and becoming more resilient to environmental change are important steps to secure the social and economic wellbeing of our community for generations to come. As a rapidly growing community with a population increase of 54,800 or 61% by 2041, Maitland faces environmental challenges and opportunities that require strong planning and strategic action. A strategic focus on environmental sustainability is required so that the community's aspirations, as outlined in our Local Strategic Planning Statement and Community Strategic Plan, can be achieved.

The development of this comprehensive Environmental Sustainability Strategy is an opportunity to collate and update existing actions supporting environmental sustainability in Maitland. This strategy also proposes new priority areas (themes), targets, actions and resources required to envision and create a more environmentally sustainable Maitland.

Importantly, this includes how we will play our part in meeting our obligations under National, State and Regional plans, policies and legislation.

HOW THIS STRATEGY WAS DEVELOPED

Maitland's first comprehensive environmental sustainability strategy has been developed from extensive technical studies to understand the current state of Maitland's environment, international, national and state policy review, identification drivers of environmental change, and community and stakeholder feedback to set realistic goals for improvement that are aligned with community expectations and State government targets.

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted in 2015 by 193 countries, including Australia. The goals promote prosperity, while protecting the planet. They provide us with an internationally agreed framework to improve sustainability.

The Maitland Environmental Sustainability Strategy contributes to the sustainable development goals relating to the environment, especially goals 11 to 15.

HOW THIS STRATEGY IS LAID OUT

As our first comprehensive Environmental Sustainability Strategy, this document combines the following to guide and communicate progress to the community:

THEMES

While there is cross over between them, having four theme areas allows the range of environmental sustainability considerations to be identified and communicated effectively. For each theme area the strategy describes the current state, challenges and opportunities.

What Success Looks Like

Each theme has a set of statements articulating what success looks like based on community input and State government requirements.

Targets

When setting targets, we considered community priorities and alignment with State Government Policy positions. Some targets can be clearly defined in numbers, while others communicate a direction that requires the broader use of indicators to track progress.

Indicators and Reporting

Communicating the status of progress is essential for our first comprehensive Environmental Sustainability Strategy. Regular reporting showing progress of a target will help us and the community celebrate progression and identify where more attention is needed.

How Council will show leadership

Key actions Council will take to contribute to meeting the targets and report on indicators of progress.

Timeframes for Actions

- Immediate (2023-2024)
- Short term (2023-2025)
- Medium term (2024-2030)
- Ongoing

MAITLAND'S ENVIRONMENT AT A GLANCE

GREEN & BLUE MAITLAND

ECOLOGY

APPROXIMATELY **8534 ha** native vegetation

15.6% overall canopy cover

425.6 km of river and creeks

695 flora species

45 threatened fauna species

3 active landcare sites

9 threatened ecological communities

85 ha public bushland revegetated

229 ha net gain of native vegetation

536 fauna species

15 threatened flora species

The Hunter River estuary is classed **126/160** in waterway health in NSW

LIVEABLE & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

POPULATION AND URBAN GROWTH

	2001	2021	2041
Population (people)	56,060	89,750	144,550
Dwellings (number)	20,650	36,680	61,870
Urban footprint (ha)	4,200	6,200	8700

396km² Total land area

CLIMATE

190mm estimated maximum rainfall intensity in 24 hours

16 days/year Very high to extreme fire danger days

120/year Rainy days

>37°C averaged hot days: 7 days/year

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

63% of residents felt prepared or very prepared for natural disasters in 2022 Environmental Attitudes Survey

75% of residents felt somewhat or very connected with **88%** seeking to be somewhat or very connected

LIVING SUSTAINABLY

ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND GREEN HOUSE EMISSIONS

Council operational emissions
9,313 t CO_2 in 2019-20

Community emissions
732,000 t CO_2 in 2019-20
9 tonnes of CO_2 per person

31% of households had solar in 2022 saving an estimated **90,000 t** CO_2 per year

WATER EFFICIENCY

186L per person per day residential use

Total (residential, industrial commercial) use **7,022,822 kL**

106,829 kL used in Council Facilities

TRANSPORT

108 Electric Vehicles Registered in January 2023

4 Destination charging locations

0 fast charger locations

5% distance travelled not in a passenger vehicle

GOING CIRCULAR WITH WASTE

WASTE COLLECTION

25,987 t waste were collected in 2021-22

5,462 t recyclables were collected in 2021-22

12,153 t organics were collected in 2021-22

2,137 mattresses were collected for recycling in 2021-22 via the mattress muster program

WASTE COMPOSITION

Food waste makes up **24%** of the general waste bin by weight

A further **21%** by weight is recyclable material

RESOURCE RECOVERY

Maitland is achieving a domestic resource recovery rate of approximately **40%**

WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY WANT?

We've looked at everything the community has been telling us about Maitland's environment over recent years, including during the development of our Local Strategic Planning statement and the most recent Community Strategic Plan.

Further, we specifically engaged the community about environmental sustainability in July and August 2022 via phone and web survey.

What we have heard is that environmental sustainability is a priority, and as a community we are seeing the pressures on our environment but also the opportunities to shape a more sustainable Maitland.

We heard you want to be involved in the journey and see our organisation lead with our own actions, supporting you to do more.

You told us you want:

COUNCIL'S ROLE

You made it clear that everyone has a role in the journey to a more sustainable Maitland, including all levels of government and the community itself.

You expect us to show leadership and take on a level of responsibility that is appropriate to our level of control and influence.

As we have done in our Community Strategic Plan, we will lead, facilitate and advocate as appropriate to progress toward the aims of this Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

Lead

For the things that Council can directly control, we will take a leadership role and commit to embedding the principles outlined in the strategy in our decision making processes.

Facilitate and Collaborate

Where Council has the capacity to create linkages between community, business and other organisations to achieve better environmental outcomes we will do so. This may include resources to attract additional opportunities, such as grant funding, to achieve more than we can on our own.

Advocate

Where Council cannot lead or facilitate, we will advocate for action from other levels of government to support progress.

Powerful Owl

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

15 LIFE ON LAND

THEME 1: A GREEN & BLUE MAITLAND

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE

Over the years, Maitland's natural ecosystems have changed significantly due to land clearing for timber, agriculture and urbanisation leading to widespread land degradation, habitat loss and reduced biodiversity. In addition, various activities have impacted aquatic ecosystems negatively through the discharge of pollutants, erosion and sedimentation of our local waterways.

The community highly values Maitland's remnant rural landscape and local environment, the protection and improvement of which was highlighted during consultation as a key priority.

Over the last two decades the community has contributed significantly to revegetation, regeneration and weed management projects for the improvement of the natural environment under the Maitland Greening Plan. This plan, adopted in 2002, provides a framework for the management of native vegetation and has contributed to a net gain of 229ha of native vegetation over the last 20 years. A summary of achievements under the Maitland Greening Plan to date is available in Appendix 1 to this strategy.

Maitland possesses remnant bushland that provides habitat for a vast array of species, including threatened species such as squirrel gliders and powerful owls. In turn, these species are essential for the health of our local ecosystems. For example, powerful owls are apex predators that play an important role in regulating populations of small mammals, while squirrel gliders are crucial to the pollination of our native plant species.

The Hunter River, Paterson River and Lochinvar, Wallis, Swamp-Fishery, Stony and Four Mile Creeks are our key waterways. Creeks, rivers and floodplains provide important 'ecosystem services' to our community including storm water drainage, flood storage and mitigation, water for irrigation and stock, visual amenity and recreation opportunities and cultural values.

Maitland retains a variety of significant wetland habitats including Tenambit, Woodberry, Wentworth and Dagworth Swamps. These wetlands provide feeding habitat for internationally important migratory species such as Latham's Snipe, a shy wetland bird that breeds in Japan and Russia and flies 8,500 km to eastern Australia each year to spend its non breeding season feasting on tasty critters in mudflats and shallow open water.

VEGETATION

8,534 ha native vegetation

9 threatened ecological communities

15.6% overall canopy cover

85 ha bushland revegetated

270,000 seedlings given away for planting on private and public land 2002-2023

SPECIES

536 fauna species

695 flora species

5 threatened flora species

45 threatened fauna species

25 Migratory bird species identified in the past 25 years

WATERWAYS

425.6 km of river and creeks

The Hunter River estuary is ranked **126 out of 160** NSW estuaries for health

Algal blooms are common in Maitland's lagoons such as Rathluba and Telarah

COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

3 active landcare sites

16% participation in environmental volunteering

OUR CHALLENGES

- Bushland is fragmented and lacks connectivity
- Risk of further clearing and fragmentation associated with development
- Threats from invasive species
- Erosion, sedimentation and pollution of our waterways leading to low water quality
- The Hunter River is a dynamic system which is impacted by activities upstream

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

- Biodiversity corridors can be used to connect between larger areas of habitat in Dungog, Cessnock and Port Stephens
- Our rivers, floodplain and wetlands, although currently in poor health, can become an important opportunity for local recreation and eco-tourism as our city grows
- The Maitland community is interested in environmental volunteering
- Maitland has established the Hunter Estuary Alliance to focus on improving the health of the tidal part of the Hunter River and its tributaries

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- ✓ A healthy and resilient natural environment that supports a good quality of life for the community
- ✓ A well connected and accessible network of bushland reserves, wetlands and waterways that provide functioning habitat for wildlife
- ✓ A growing sense of ownership and pride in our local environment and the way it is managed to balance conservation and development as our city expands

'I can observe birds in their natural habitat in my own area.'

'My kids can see native animals in the wild locally.'

TARGETS

1.1 Deliver functional biodiversity corridors

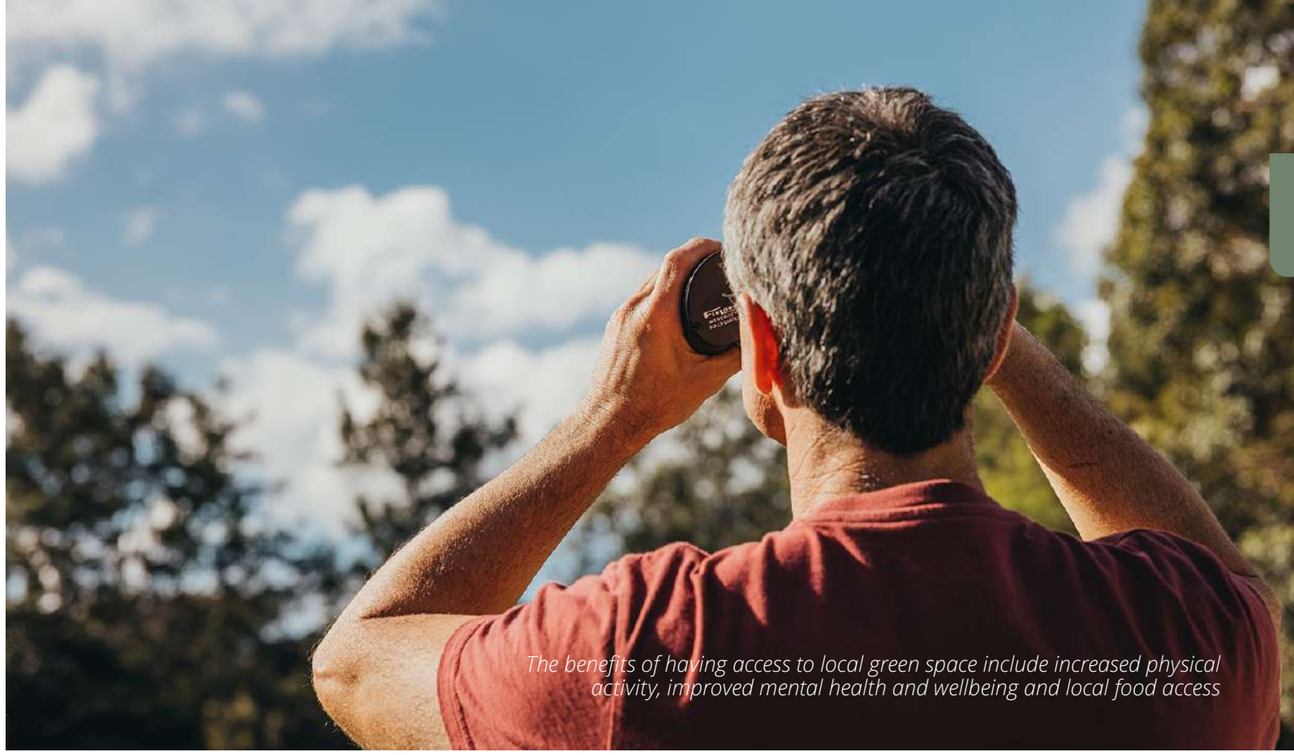
1.2 Protect important natural spaces

1.3 Improve waterway health

1.4 Increase community participation in environmental events and volunteering

'I can access the river for recreation.'

'I can meet like minded people while we care for our local environment.'



The benefits of having access to local green space include increased physical activity, improved mental health and wellbeing and local food access

HOW COUNCIL WILL SHOW LEADERSHIP

We will:

1.1.1 Include controls in our plans and strategies to establish and protect biodiversity corridors, reduce clearing of native vegetation and improve water quality controls (short - term)

1.1.2 Review our approach to clearing for Council projects such as road upgrades, sports fields and community buildings including avoiding and minimising clearing and establishing an offsetting policy where clearing cannot be avoided (immediate)

1.1.3 Prepare more detailed guidance to improve the quality and connectivity of Maitland's Green and Blue Grid, including restoring and connecting existing green and blue areas, and completing missing links (short - term)

1.1.4 Investigate mechanisms to facilitate restoration outcomes through the Biodiversity Offset Scheme including opportunities to create Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement sites with private landowners (medium - term)

1.1.5 Explore opportunities to address local barriers to connectivity through urban areas (ongoing)

1.1.6 Investigate the feasibility of utilisation of Maitland City Council owned and other land as carbon offsets within the Maitland LGA

1.2.1 Review and update the Maitland Greening Plan

1.2.2 Seek out opportunities to establish and protect publicly accessible environmental reserves (ongoing)

1.3.1 Work with our neighbours and state government to improve the health of the Hunter River and local wetlands and waterways (ongoing)

1.3.2 Lead the development of the Hunter Estuary Coastal Management Program

1.4.1 Increase opportunities for the community to be involved in Landcare on public land and conservation projects (ongoing)

1.4.2 Investigate community interest and models for council to support a community led Sustainable Communities committee (short - term)

WHY IT MATTERS

Healthy ecosystems are important for community health, wellbeing and economic opportunity.

Our bushlands, wetlands and waterways provide a range of 'ecosystem services' to the community. These services translate into social, economic and environmental benefits including improved air quality, cooling of urban environments, improved scenic and visual amenity of streets, parks and neighbourhoods, improved property values, access to passive recreational uses, cultural services, sediment and erosion control, protecting water quality and providing wildlife habitats, to name a few.

The benefits of having community access to green space are well documented and include increased activity providing physical and mental health benefits.

Latham's Snipe

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE IMPROVING?

We will report our progress via our Smart and Sustainable Cities Platform[1] to allow the community to view the latest information available. Headline indicators and trends we are aiming for will include:

TARGET	INDICATOR	TREND	SOURCE AND REPORTING FREQUENCY
1.1	Hectares of bushland revegetated each year and in total	Increasing	Reported on Council Greening Plan report card as new sites are rehabilitated and annually
1.1	Hectares of native vegetation in the LGA	Increasing	Updated aerial photography and LiDAR is collected for the city
1.2	Water Quality Report Card	Improving	Council measures water quality at sites along the river and in the catchment and this will be used to report trends in water quality as collected and annually
1.2	Report on waterway health	Improving	Reported as the health rank reports are produced
1.3	Report on participation in community conservation events	Increasing	Reported as events occur and annually

1 data.maitland.nsw.gov.au/pages/home

Earthcare Park 2023

DEFINING THE GREEN & BLUE GRID

In 2021-22, Council undertook native vegetation, waterway, habitat and fauna movement mapping to prepare the 'Green and Blue Grid' map shown on pages 24-25. The map shows how native vegetation, wetlands and waterways can link together throughout the LGA to provide an interconnected network of green and blue spaces. When protected and enhanced, these spaces:

- Protect biodiversity and provide wildlife movement corridors
- Help the urban environment to cool
- Contribute to cleaner air and waterways
- Provide new opportunities for community recreation and
- Support improved physical, social and psychological health.

The Green and Blue Grid map includes a hierarchy of 'biodiversity corridors', that is, connections across the landscape that link up areas of habitat. An assessment of native wildlife 'indicator species' specific to the Maitland LGA and mapping of existing native vegetation was used to identify biodiversity corridors of:

1. Local significance - i.e. linkages facilitating wildlife movement within the LGA
2. Sub regional significance - i.e. linkages enabling movement into, or out of the LGA
3. Regional significance - i.e. where the LGA forms a critical role in connecting external core habitat areas, enabling wildlife to move across Maitland.

More detailed information is available on council's website.

The Green and Blue Grid map builds on the opportunity corridors identified in the Maitland Greening Plan 2002, and the 85 hectares of public land Council has revegetated since that time. It provides a high level, strategic direction for biodiversity corridors and preservation and enhancement of bushland, wetlands and waterways within Maitland. The map shows 'green blue corridors', including areas of core habitat, existing biodiversity corridors, and areas where links are missing.

The Green and Blue Grid map presented here is a starting point for further detailed investigation and delivery of a protected green and blue grid via the planning process and in relevant planning documents such as the Maitland Local Environment Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plan (DCP).

Amendments to the LEP can be produced through Planning Proposals, while detailed consideration of individual sites may take place through Development Applications.

In both processes, detailed ground truthing and assessment under the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 occurs. Potential development impacts to existing biodiversity values can be minimised through the application of the 'avoid, minimise, offset' hierarchy.

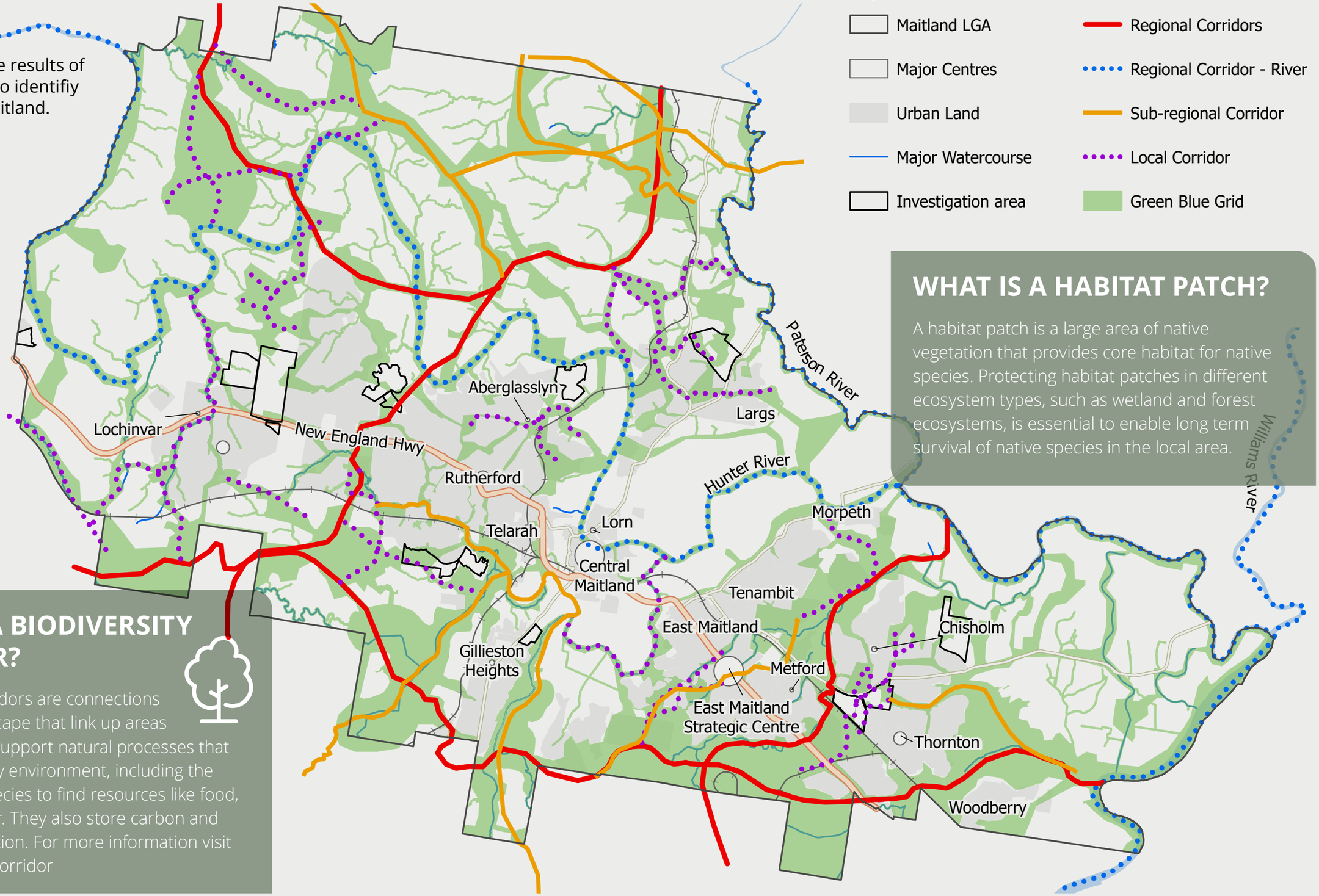
Missing links in the existing green and blue grid can also be created through restoration projects, including reinstating native vegetation along creek lines in both urban and rural areas.

Just like the achievements gained over the last 20 years through the Maitland Greening Plan, continued improvements to the green and blue grid will be delivered through the conservation efforts of the whole Maitland community, including public and private landholders in both urban and rural locations, developers, businesses, residents, schools and volunteers. Our combined effort is required both to preserve existing areas of biodiversity value, repair and improve degraded areas and to complete missing links.

More detailed guidance is required to ensure that the combined efforts of the Maitland community deliver the best outcomes on the ground. Commitments under How Council Will Show Leadership (especially items 1.1.1 to 1.1.4) indicate how Council will work with all stakeholders towards the community's aspirations for a Green and Blue Maitland.

GREEN & BLUE GRID MAP

This map shows the results of a range of studies to identifiy key corridors in maitland.



LEGEND

- Maitland LGA
- Major Centres
- Urban Land
- Major Watercourse
- Investigation area
- Regional Corridors
- Regional Corridor - River
- Sub-regional Corridor
- Local Corridor
- Green Blue Grid

WHAT IS A HABITAT PATCH?

A habitat patch is a large area of native vegetation that provides core habitat for native species. Protecting habitat patches in different ecosystem types, such as wetland and forest ecosystems, is essential to enable long term survival of native species in the local area.

WHAT IS A BIODIVERSITY CORRIDOR?

Biodiversity corridors are connections across the landscape that link up areas of habitat. They support natural processes that occur in a healthy environment, including the movement of species to find resources like food, water and shelter. They also store carbon and enable conservation. For more information visit mait.city/wildlifecorridor

HOW TO USE THE GREEN AND BLUE GRID IN STRATEGIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT

With ongoing urban development in the Hunter, the habitats of species and ecological communities have declined. These habitats are becoming increasingly fragmented and isolated.

The Hunter Regional Plan 2041 acknowledges development certainty and conservation outcomes are best achieved by strategic planning, rather than development application processes. The Hunter Regional Plan requires local councils to apply the 'avoid, minimise and offset' hierarchy prior to or at the rezoning stage to provide certainty for development outcomes and streamline subsequent assessment processes.

Strategic planning is the preparation of planning instruments and policies and includes the making of Local Environmental Plans, Development Control Plans, strategies and other planning instruments that identify proposed uses and land zonings.

Considering Green and Blue Grid (G&BG) early in the strategic planning processes (i.e. place strategies, scoping proposals, planning proposals etc) is the key to identify the biodiversity value of the land and quantify the impacts on biodiversity through more detailed assessments (including ground truthing) in accordance with the relevant legislation. This will allow Council and the proponent to consider the outcomes of those investigations and translate them into appropriate land use zones. Once a decision has been made to rezone an area within an identified G&BG corridor - applying development controls provides site specific details to manage biodiversity and development outcomes in accordance with the applicable land use zones.

It is acknowledged that there are existing urban release areas within the LGA that have already been through the strategic planning process and are currently zoned for urban development. Consideration of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy during the development assessment process needs to occur in these locations to encourage retention and restoration where necessary.

An interactive version of the G&BG map will be available on Council's website for public access. In addition to the corridors identified in the map, it will show the sites subject to planned or on-ground restoration works, partnerships and tree planting sites etc. The Map will be reviewed and updated regularly, to reflect the outcomes of the detailed investigations completed at the rezoning and development application stages.

How Council will deliver the Green & Blue Grid

LEP Zoning:

- C1 National Parks and Nature Reserves
- C2 Environmental Conservation
- C3 Environmental Management

LEP Local Claues:

- Terrestrial Biodiversity
- Riparian land and watercourses
- Coastal protection
- Wetlands

DCP detailed planning, design guidelines and map:

- Requirements for:
- Biodiversity assessments
- Planting native species
- Local offsets

Contribution Plans:

- For habitat creation or enhancements in URAs
- Land dedications

Development Assessment

- Biodiversity assessment
- Conditions of consents
- Covenants
- Compliance
- Monitoring

Incentives:

- Free native trees
- Grants (weeds control, bush regeneration, habitat creation)
- Rebates
- Biobanking
- Voluntary conservation agreements

Other Mechanisms:

- Partnerships (landowners, LLS)
- Cross boundary partnerships
- Use of council land
- Strategic acquisition

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

13 CLIMATE ACTION

THEME 2: LIVEABLE & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE

Maitland and our surrounding Hunter Region is well known for its historic climate variability and extremes. Historical records show that rainfall varies between years and decades, and we can move quickly from drought conditions and extremely hot summers to wet, rainy seasons and floods.

Our town centres are surrounded by floodplains and we are known for large historic floods, as well as our recent event in July 2022. We benefit from the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme which provides flood risk management to 250,000 people across the Hunter. The scheme includes management areas in Morpeth, Largs, Wentworth, Maitland and East Maitland. Despite the protection the scheme provides, average residual flood damages across the Hunter are estimated at $200 million annually.

Our climate is changing. The latest climate science shows that Maitland is likely to experience increasing temperatures, more hot days and increased fire weather. We are also likely to experience increasing rainfall in autumn and decreasing rainfall in winter and spring.

In recent years we've experienced extreme heat, drought, bushfires and flood, and our community has pulled together through these events. Community resilience to natural hazards like extreme heat, drought, bushfires and floods refers to our capacity to bounce back after a shock or disturbance. This includes not only how we maintain our livelihoods and lifestyles, but also how we transform them in response to change.

Two key indicators we have used to understand our community's current level of resilience include preparedness (how prepared we feel for an extreme event) and connectedness (how connected we feel to our community). We found there is room for improvement both in connectedness and preparedness.

CLIMATE AVERAGES FOR MAITLAND (1980-2007)

Hot days ↑ **37°C** 7 days/year

Estimated Max 24 hour rainfall intensity **190mm**

120 Rainy days/year

16 Fire danger days/year (very high – extreme)

CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIO

- hot days
- maximum and minimum temperatures
- rainfall to increase in autumn
- rainfall to decrease in winter and spring
- fire danger days

HOW PREPARED WE FEEL FOR EXTREME EVENTS

63% of residents felt prepared or very prepared for natural disasters in 2022 Environmental Attitudes Survey

HOW CONNECTED WE FEEL TO OUR COMMUNITY

75% of residents felt somewhat or very connected with **88%** seeking to be somewhat or very connected

HEAT VULNERABILITY

1.2% to **52.4%** suburban canopy cover

In 2019-20 urban zone surface temperature was **3.7°C** warmer on average than surrounding rural areas

Suburbs most vulnerable to heat impacts include Gillieston Heights, Aberglasslyn, Rutherford, Oakhampton and South Maitland

OUR CHALLENGES

- Some communities become isolated during large flood events
- 33% of the community reported a moderate to low level of preparedness for an extreme event
- Those least likely to feel prepared are renters and young people
- Maitland's urban areas already show signs of the urban heat island effect
- Urban canopy varies across different suburbs, with higher canopy cover being correlated with lower heat impact on communities
- Areas more vulnerable to heat are located in the west. This is also where the next urban release areas are located

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

- Collaborating with other agencies is a key strategy to provide strong disaster response
- Improved technology provides opportunities to quickly share information with residents and visitors
- Community centres and libraries can provide hubs for information and skill sharing to support community preparedness
- Increasing urban vegetation including street and park trees is a good way to improve community resilience to heat
- As new suburbs are planned, the latest tools and techniques can be used to improve grey, green & blue infrastructure and housing so that communities are more resilient

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- ✓ A resilient community that can adapt to natural hazards and changing climate
- ✓ A strong and shared understanding of climate risks and natural hazards that affect the local area
- ✓ Active liveable neighbourhoods with an urban forest that cools down our suburbs

TARGETS

2.1 Increase community preparedness for natural hazards such as flood, heat, bushfire, and drought

2.2 Understand and plan for our climate risks

2.3 Aim for 30% canopy cover in residential areas

'I can sit in the shade of a tree while my kids play at the playground.'

'I can walk from home to shops, parks and playgrounds.'

'I feel more prepared for floods and storms and I know how to get information to support me.'

'Staying cool in hot summers is affordable and easy for me.'

HOW COUNCIL WILL SHOW LEADERSHIP

We will:

2.1.1 Deliver a community education and awareness program to improve community understanding of natural hazards and support community preparedness (ongoing)

2.2.1 Undertake a climate change risk assessment and invest in key preparedness and adaptation plans including floodplain risk management and flood planning (short - term)

2.2.2 Implement built environment and engineering approaches to heat management (short - term)

2.3.1 Plant a minimum of 200 street trees per year focusing on vulnerable suburbs of Aberglasslyn, Rutherford, Gillieston Heights etc (ongoing)

2.3.2 Include a budget allocation for environmental works in all projects within the capital works program (ongoing)

2.3.3 Develop an Active Transport Plan incorporating updated Shared Pathway / Cycleways/ Bike Plan and public transport advocacy plan with State and Federal agencies (short - term)

WHAT IS URBAN HEAT?

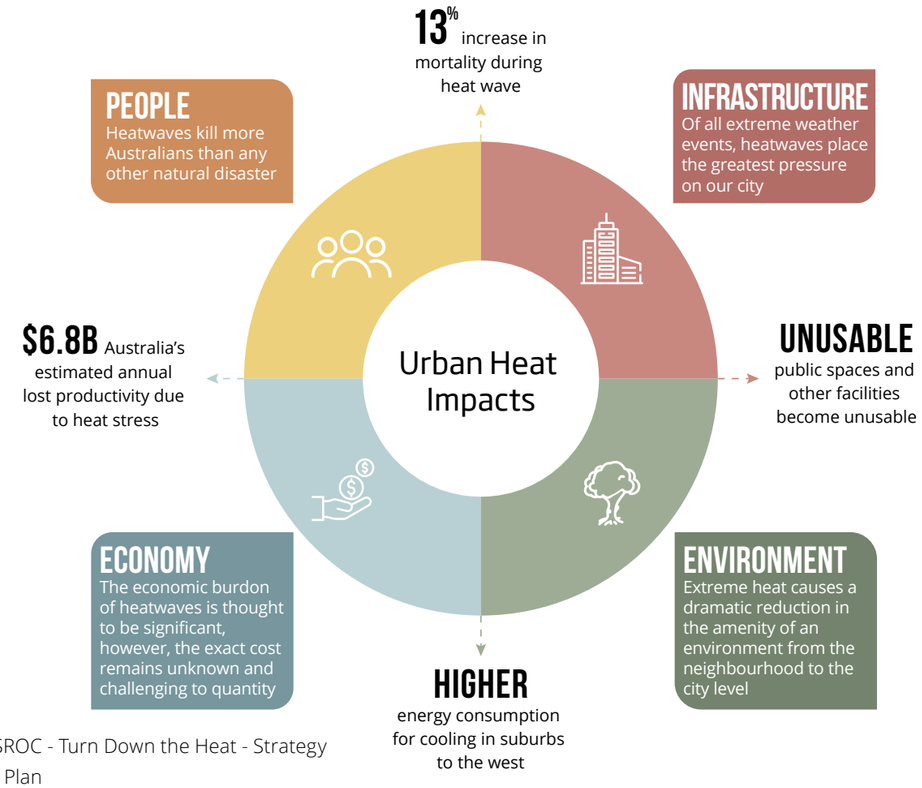
The 'urban heat island' phenomenon is temperature differences caused by urbanisation. Urban areas become significantly hotter than surrounding rural areas when there is less green cover and more hard surfaces. This happens because buildings and impervious surfaces absorb and store solar radiation during the day and then release it slowly back into the environment at night.

WHY IT MATTERS

Challenges of Urban Heat

The urban heat island situation occurs when buildings and roads within our cities and suburbs heat up from the sun during the day and then take a long time to cool down at night. When cities and suburbs also have a good amount of trees they provide shade to reduce the amount of heat that gets stored in buildings and roads. Trees and grasses also pump water into the atmosphere acting as a natural air conditioner. This keeps the places we live at cooler temperatures, reduces the risk for people that hot days can harm, such as people that are very young or old. It also means we can use less energy for air conditioning. Having more trees in our urban environment also provides shade for walking and cycling pathways and provides more places for native animals and birds to live and move through.

To complement the benefits of trees and vegetation, we can also make choices in our built environment such as lighter colored roofs and exteriors, shade structures and use of new materials that reduce heat absorption.



Source: WSROC - Turn Down the Heat - Strategy and Action Plan

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE IMPROVING?

We will report our progress via our Smart and Sustainable Cities Platform[2] to allow the community to view the latest information available. Some key indicators and trends we are aiming for include:

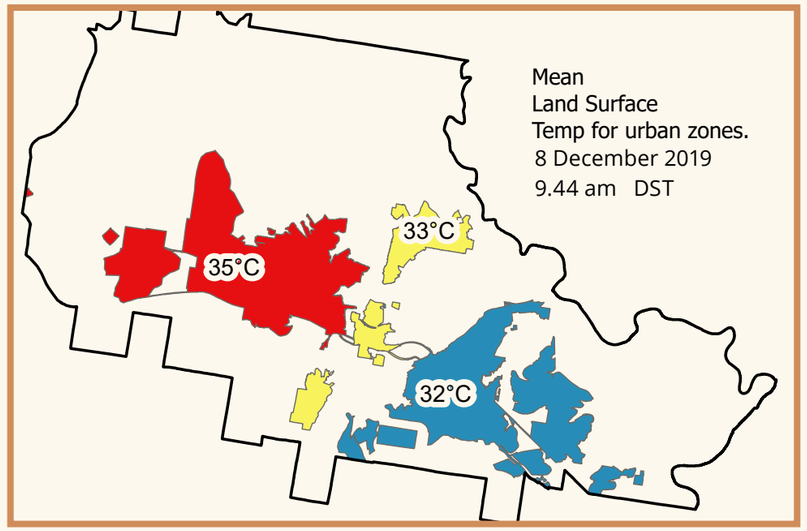
TARGET	INDICATOR	TREND	SOURCE AND REPORTING FREQUENCY
2.1	Level of community preparedness for natural hazards (prepared or very prepared)	Increasing	Reported as Council repeats its community attitudes survey
2.1	Level of connectedness people feel with the local community	Increasing	Reported as Council repeats its community attitudes survey
2.2	Kilometres of shared pathway in the city	Increasing	Reported as Council delivers new shared pathways
2.2	% of Council Asset Management Plans including climate risk assessment	Increasing	Reported as asset managment plans are reviewed
2.3	Number of street trees planted annually	200	Reported at the suburb level via a street tree dashboard
2.3	% canopy cover in residential areas	30%	Updated as aerial and LiDAR data is collected for the city, with new urban released areas assessed for their capacity to reach 30%

2 data.maitland.nsw.gov.au/pages/home

URBAN HEAT MAP

This map shows the results of studies that have identified areas of existing vulnerability to urban heat and where future areas of development need to incorporate measures to reduce potential impacts

Vulnerable areas have been identified based on heat signature and population characteristics from the last census (ABS, 2020)



WHAT IS THE BENEFIT OF URBAN TREES?

Good urban tree canopy cools cities, provides shade and protects against over exposure to sunlight. Strategically placed trees can reduce home air conditioning needs and energy bills.

Hunter River
Anambah
Windella
Lochinvar
Aberglasslyn
Rutherford
Farley
Telarah
Central Maitland
Lorn
Largs
Paterson River
Morpeth
Hunter River
Tenambit
East Maitland
Chisholm
Gillieston Heights
East Maitland Strategic Centre
Metford
Thornton
Woodberry

Vulnerability for existing urban areas
- Medium Vulnerability
- High Vulnerability

Vulnerability for future urban areas
- Medium - Potential Vulnerability
- High - Potential Vulnerability
- New England Highway
- Major Centres
- Major Roads
- Major Watercourse

THEME 3: LIVING SUSTAINABLY

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE

Maitland is facing similar challenges and opportunities for living sustainably as other similar communities across Australia. We are mostly reliant on energy sources for our homes and transport that are currently based on non renewable resources but which are undergoing rapid changes. A focus of this strategy is preparing Council, community and businesses for changes in these sectors, positioning us all to face the challenges and benefit from opportunities.

In this space, the community are taking action. The community is reducing its reliance on non renewable resources through the uptake of solar energy and responding proactively to reducing water consumption in times of drought.

Yet there are many challenges in how to be prepared for new modes of transport and reduce our reliance on private vehicles for transportation.

We are basing our actions on the community expectations and federal and state government policies in regard to greenhouse gas emission reduction and future transport options. We will advocate for support to ensure Maitland has effective plans in place to ensure our community is supported to prepare and benefit from changes ahead.

EMISSIONS, ENERGY USE, SOLAR 19/20

Council operational emissions
9,313 t CO_2

Community emissions – (19/20)
732,000 t CO_2
9 tonnes of CO_2 per person

WATER CONSUMPTION 19/20

186 L per person per day residential use

Total (residential, industrial Commercial) use **7,022,822 kL**

106,829 kL used in Council facilities

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

108 Electric vehicles registered in January 2023

4 Destination charging locations

0 Fast charger locations

5% of total distance travelled was not in a passenger vehicle

ACTIONS OUR COMMUNITY HAVE TAKEN/ WANT TO TAKE

31% of households had solar in 2022 saving an estimated **90,000 t** CO_2 per year

Daily per person water consumption was **173 L** per person per day down **19%** from 215 in 2017-18

OUR CHALLENGES

- We are currently heavily reliant on non renewable resources to power our homes and businesses
- Our residential and commercial buildings have generally been built to meeting minimum standards for energy efficiency
- Transport is largely reliant on by non renewable and imported sources of fuel and limited public transport options
- We lack the infrastructure to be prepared for global shifts to electric and hydrogen transport technologies
- Water security is largely dependent on mains water supply
- Our businesses and work force skills need support to be prepared for future technologies and associated jobs as local and global markets shift

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

- Businesses and homes are using renewable energy to reduce costs and increase energy security, with local renewable energy businesses bringing skills and jobs
- Increases in residential and commercial buildings to meet population growth can show Maitlands construction industries capacity to produce sustainable buildings with lower energy and water costs
- Maitland can build upon its public transport (train stations) and shared pathways to reduce reliance on cars for recreational and work related transport
- Alternative sources of water (recycled and harvested) are available to support our outdoor spaces and other non drinking uses such as industry

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- ✓ A built environment that supports a decreasing reliance on imported, finite and non renewable energy sources
- ✓ Where water is used wisely and appropriately based on quality and end use
- ✓ A community where residents and business have the information they need to consider sustainability in their decsion making

TARGETS

3.1 Increase active and sustainable transport opportunities

3.2 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to net zero by 2050

3.3 Reduce per capita water consumption from potable sources

'I can cycle and walk between town centres and sites like Walka.'

'I can see Council facilities using solar power.'

'I want young people to have a say in their future, and sustainable job opportunities.'

'I can attract tourists to my business through local Electric Vehicle Charging.'

HOW COUNCIL WILL SHOW LEADERSHIP

We will:

3.1.1 Increase community engagement resources at Council facilities and access to smart and digital technology to provide learning opportunities and support informed decision making (ongoing)

3.2.1 Use sustainable design principles to reduce lifecycle environmental impacts and operating costs on new and upgraded facilities (ongoing)

3.2.2 Develop a Net Zero Emission Plan for the City that includes community involvement to guide and benefit Council operations from a renewable energy transition (medium - term)

3.2.3 Prepare a plan for priority EV charging locations for public charging within the city (short - term)

3.2.4 Prepare a low emission council fleet preparedness plan including an assessment of whole of lifecycle emissions for different vehicle technology options (short - term)

3.3.1 Develop a comprehensive water resilience plan for outdoor spaces, incorporating drought response and alternative water sources (immediate)

WHY IT MATTERS

Reliance on non renewable resources

There is strong evidence to show that human activities based on the use of fossil fuels including coal, gas and oil that were formed millions of years ago are releasing once locked up greenhouse gases into our atmosphere increasing the power of the greenhouse effect that regulates the earths temperature. This is resulting in changes that are predicted to increase the number and impact of weather events that can impact on our lives such as flooding and drought. Also, although there are significant reserves of some of these fuels they will eventually run out, and in the case of the petrol that fuels our cars they are imported from other countries and our local supply is limited. This reliance on other countries for very important resources for our economy is referred to as a fuel security problem. Using renewable resources such as wind and solar energy can reduce our reliance on these fuels and reduce the greenhouse gases we are producing. Renewable energy can be harnessed locally and used to power our homes, businesses and increasingly our public and private transport using battery powered electric vehicles and in some cases hydrogen. People in Maitland are using solar power for their homes with over 31% of people with solar on their homes. When it comes to electric vehicles while many people will do a lot of charging at home many people will still need options to charge up in public and Maitland has work to do to make this option for people visiting our city and those that need to charge when not at home.

Council also needs to be prepared for new low emission vehicle options entering Council's fleet as vehicle manufacturers move away from traditional fuels and as new options become the cheaper option.

Embracing new technology comes with challenges like making sure we have ways of recycling them at the end of their life but they provide options to enjoy the benefits that current energy resources have given us without the long term environmental impacts.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE IMPROVING?

We will report our progress via our Smart and Sustainable Cities Platform[3] to allow the community to view the latest information available. Headline indicators and trends we are aiming for will include:

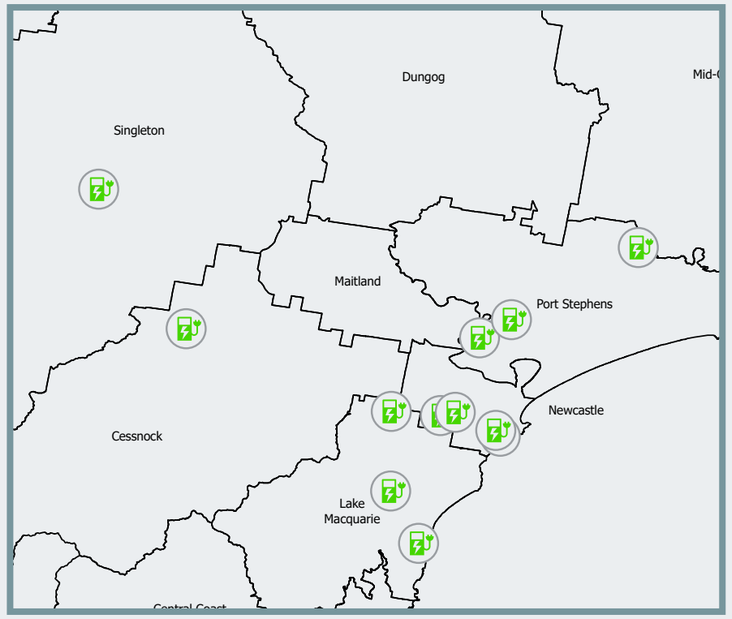
TARGET	INDICATOR	TREND	SOURCE AND REPORTING FREQUENCY
3.1	No of public EV chargers in the city	Increasing	Reported via public EV charging websites plugshare and smart cities platform
3.2	Number of low emission vehicles (Hybrids, Electric, PHEVS, H2) in the city and council fleet	Increasing	Transport for NSW data Council fleet data
3.2	Community emissions - Tonnes – CO2 per year	50% by 2030	Reported annually using data from publicly available resources
3.2	Council's operational emissions - Tonnes – CO2 - per year	50% by 2030	Reported annually using data from utilities and Council data
3.3	Average residential water consumption litres per person per day (L/p/day)	155 L/p/day	Reported via Hunter Water annual data for the LGA
3.3	Council's potable water use per year per population serviced	Reducing	Reported annually taking climate and population serviced into account

3 data.maitland.nsw.gov.au/pages/home

Considering how we use water even in times where storage levels are high sets us up for being better prepared when times of restricted supply occur. Also we need to think about how the way we use water can have impacts on water quality in our creeks and rivers

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT MAP

A sustainable transport system provides options for people to move through the city. This map shows Maitland's train and bus network and growing shared pathway network. It also identifies target areas for attracting investment in EV Charging based on NSW Government projected needs for locals and visitors.



Existing Regional Fast EV Charger Network

Hunter River
Anambah
Windella
Lochinvar
Aberglasslyn
Rutherford
Largs
Paterson River
Farley
Telarah
Lorn
Morpeth
Hunter River
Tenambit
Central Maitland
East Maitland
Chisholm
Gillieston Heights
East Maitland Strategic Centre
Metford
Thornton
Woodberry

LEGEND

- Target Fast EV Charger Zones
- Bus Interchange
- Railway Station
- Railway Line
- New England Highway
- Existing Off-Road Shared Pathways
- Major Roads
- Major Watercourse

THEME 4: GOING CIRCULAR WITH WASTE

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STATE

Maitland's 35,000 properties have waste collected at the kerbside. Residual waste in the red bin goes to landfill, with recycling and garden organics going to reprocessing facilities outside the LGA. Our waste transfer station will bring some of this processing back to Maitland, creating jobs and better circular economy outcomes.

Recent community consultation showed the community is supportive of Council providing additional recycling, composting, and other services to enable 80% of household waste to be diverted from landfill, in line with National and NSW State Government targets.

The engagement also showed strong community support for improving access to local recycling and resource recovery facilities to reduce landfill.

Maitland currently achieves a 38% diversion of domestic waste from landfill.

There are opportunities for a reduction to waste to landfill, particularly food organics, soft plastics, textiles, and recyclables (cans, glass, cardboard etc) in the wrong bin. Capture and recycling of these materials will progress Maitland towards the 2030 target.

35,000 properties have three bins

1,200 new households are added to the collection service every year

7,000 waste bins get serviced by Council's garbage trucks every day

25,987 t waste collected in 2021-22

5,462 t recyclables collected in 2021-22

12,153 t organics collected in 2021-22

2,137 mattresses were collected for recycling in 2021-22 via the Mattress Muster program

Food waste makes up **24%** of the general waste bin by weight

A further **21%** by weight is recyclable material

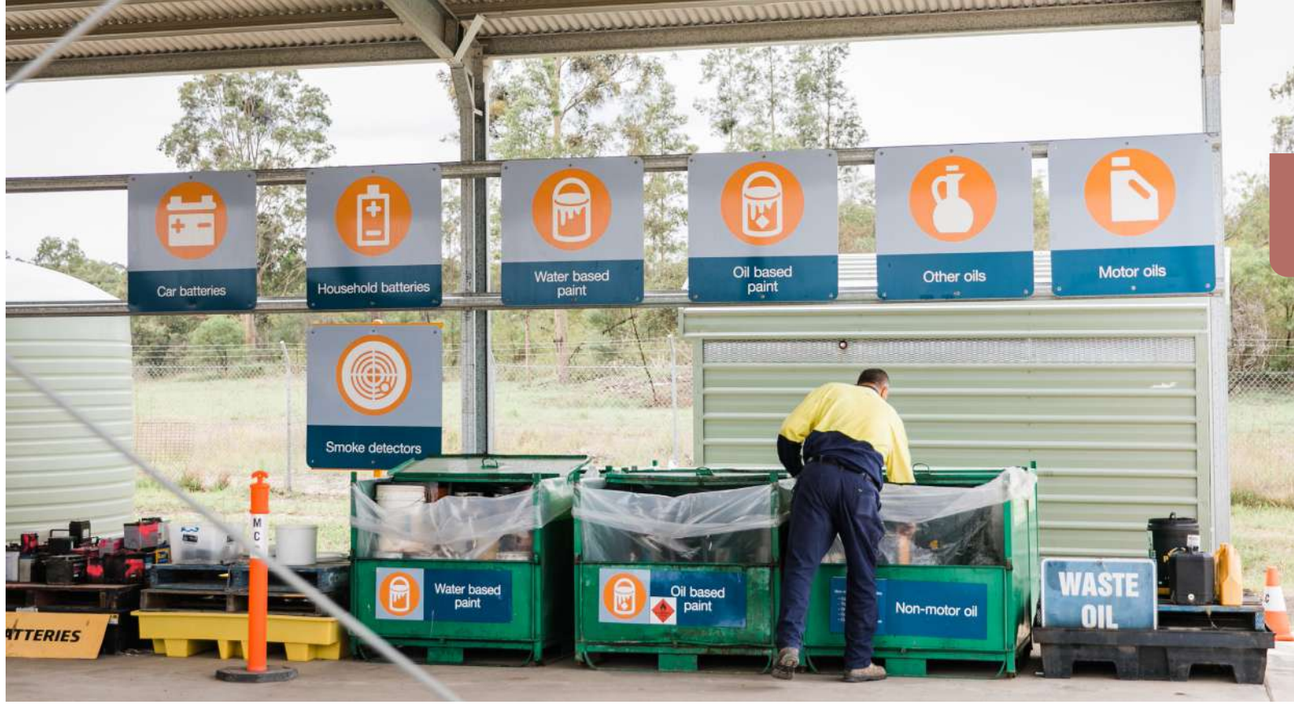
Maitland is achieving a domestic resource recovery rate of approximately **40%**

OUR CHALLENGES

- The Waste Management Centre is expected to reach its capacity in less than ten years
- The current diversion rate for domestic waste from landfill is 38%, which is significantly lower than the 80% target set by the State and Federal Governments
- Waste and resource collection vehicles and services will need to support strong population growth in the City
- Recycling rates are constrained by available end markets for use of recycled materials

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

- Our Maitland Resource Recovery Facility, once built, will allow us to recycle more waste and divert what can't be recycled to landfill or alternative treatment facilities in the region, once they become available
- We can use our combined buying power between businesses, Council and residents, to increase demand for recycled products and materials
- Libraries are the original share economy and there are opportunities to increase reuse through borrowing programs



WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- ✓ Deliver efficient and effective waste management and recycling services that are accessible to all
- ✓ Contribute to a shift towards a circular economy in which resources are conserved, the value of materials is maximised and markets are created for reused, recycled and recovered resources and products
- ✓ A clean and well presented city where illegal dumping is being reduced

TARGETS

4.1 Divert 80% of domestic waste from landfill by 2030

4.2 Use more recycled products

4.3 Reduce illegal dumping

Recycled glass sand mix used for pipe bedding

'I can see Council using recycled and recyclable materials for equipment in parks.'

'I have access to services and facilities that make it easy for me to reduce waste and recycle.'

'I can see Council using a circular economy approach to reduce waste.'

'Our local environment is free of litter and waste.'

HOW COUNCIL WILL SHOW LEADERSHIP

We will:

4.1.1 Start a food organics collection service from March 2025 (short - term)

4.1.2 Provide access to local recycling and resource recovery facilities for existing and emerging wastes within Maitland and via partnerships with others (short - term)

4.2.1 Implement sustainable provisions within Council's procurement policy to support circular economy principles and maximisation of recycled content where fit for purpose and economically viable (immediate)

4.2.2 Review and update our Manual of Engineering Standards (MoES) to facilitate use of recycled materials in Council and developer civil works (short - term)

4.3.1 Develop and deliver a waste avoidance and reuse education program

4.3.2 Monitor and investigate illegal dumping and undertake compliance action to reduce illegal dumping (ongoing)

WHY IT MATTERS

Each item we buy is produced from natural resources like wood that is grown or metals and plastics that are mined. In the past we have not always considered what will happen to items when they are no longer useful with materials ending up in landfill. This is referred to as a 'Take, Make, Waste' linear economy. This creates long term impact as materials decay and valuable materials like steel and aluminium are lost from the economy.

Recycling has been successful at keeping some materials out of landfill for longer. A circular economy builds on recycling to also focus on good design and recycling practices that can reuse materials many times over, reducing environmental impact and increasing the economic and social benefits that these resources provide.

Maitland City Council has a specific role as waste managers to keep things like metals, compostable food and garden waste separate so they can be turned into useful things. A circular economy also needs Councils, businesses and everyone to buy products that contain recycled materials. Supporting companies that allow for easy recycling of their products is something we need to consider when we shop.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WE'RE IMPROVING?

We will report our progress via our Smart and Sustainable Cities Platform[4] to allow the community to view the latest information available. Headline indicators and trends we are aiming for will include:

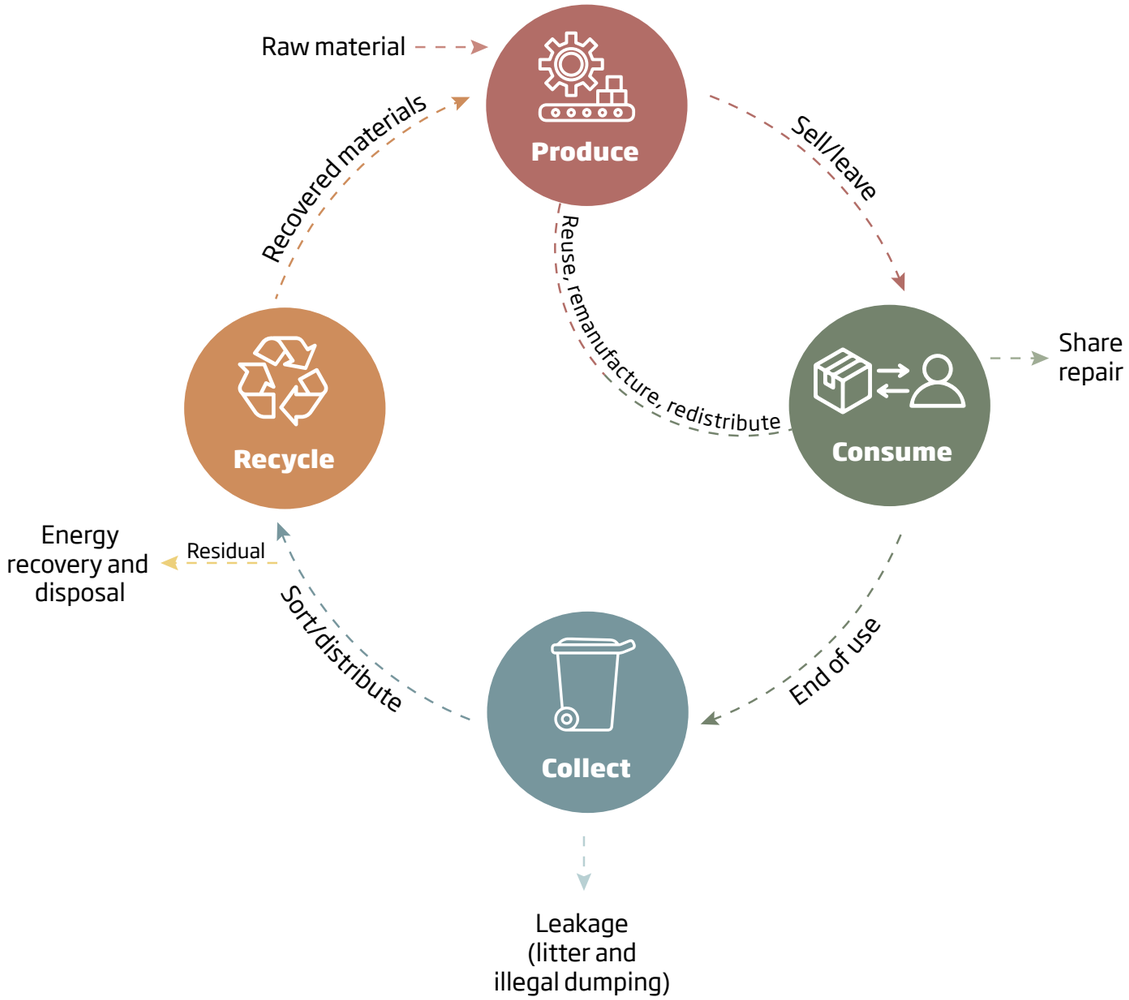
TARGET	INDICATOR	TREND	SOURCE AND REPORTING FREQUENCY
4.1	% waste diversion from landfill	80%	Using tonnages from our three bins and weighbridge to calculate our diversion % annually
4.1	% of food waste diverted	Increasing	Report food diversion % with periodic waste audits
4.2	% recycled materials in capital works	Increasing	Annual report the % of recycled materials used in council's construction projects
4.3	Tonnage of materials collected from illegal dumping sites	Decreasing	Report annually the amount of material collected from illegal dumping sites
4.3	% of illegal dumping incidents with infringements issued	Increasing	Report on number of public infringment notices issued

4 data.maitland.nsw.gov.au/pages/home

What is the circular economy?

A circular economy is an economic system aimed at minimising waste and promoting the continual reuse of resources. It aims to keep products, equipment and infrastructure in use for longer, thus improving the productivity of these resources.

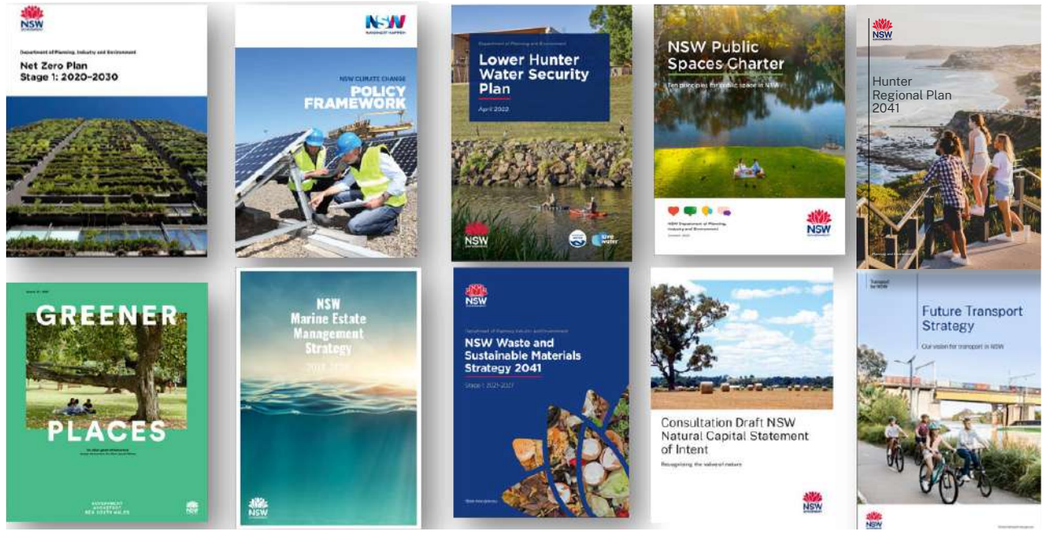
Waste materials and energy be used for other processes: either a component or recovered resource for another industrial process or as regenerative resources for nature (e.g. compost).



HOW THE STRATEGY ALIGNS WITH OTHER POLICIES AND PLANS

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy has been prepared to ensure consistency and compliance with national, state, regional and local policies and plans relevant to environmental sustainability. A summary of how the themes and targets address different policies and plans is provided in the following table.

NSW POLICY CONTEXT



HOW THIS STRATEGY RELATES TO THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

In 2020, Council endorsed its first Local Strategic Planning Statement. The preparation of an Environmental Strategy is a key action identified in this statement. The Environmental Sustainability Strategy outlines priority action areas, and provides a basis for informing the future review and amendment of:

- Maitland Local Environment Plan 2011 where it relates to environmental land
- Maitland Development Control Plan 2011 which gives requirements for preparing and assessing Development Applications
- Hunter Region Plan 2041
- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036
- Lower Hunter and Greater Newcastle City Plan (to be developed by Greater Cities Commission)

This strategy is also a starting point for more detailed assessment of the environmental aspects of changes to land through planning proposals and development applications, for example, impact to biodiversity, water quality, urban heat and so on. In all cases Planning Proposals and Development Applications must address the relevant environmental legislation, planning policies and plans in force at the time.

POSITION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY WITHIN THE PLANNING FRAMEWORK

NSW

- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)
- Housing 2041: NSW Housing Strategy

Regional

- Hunter Regional Plan 2041
- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036

Local

- Maitland Local Strategic Planning Statements 2040+
- Maitland Local Housing Strategy 2041
- Maitland Rural Land Strategy 2041
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2030
- Other local strategies

- Maitland Local Environmental Plan 2011
- Maitland Development Control Plan 2011
- Maitland Manual of Engineering Standards 2014

MAITLAND THEME AND RELEVANT SDGS	MAITLAND TARGETS	STATE & REGIONAL POLICY ALIGNMENT *(INCLUDING CROSS REFERENCE TO PLAN ACTIONS OR TARGETS WHERE RELEVANT)*											
		MAITLAND COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN	HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN 2041	GREATER NEWCASTLE METROPOLITAN PLAN	NSW GREENER PLACES INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK	NSW PUBLIC SPACES CHARTER	NSW MARINE ESTATE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE	HUNTER AND CENTRAL COAST ENABLING REGIONAL ADAPTATION	LOWER HUNTER WATER SECURITY PLAN	FUTURE TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2056	NET ZERO PLAN STAGE 1: 2020 - 2030	WASTE & SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS STRATEGY 2041
1. GREEN & BLUE MAITLAND	1.1 Deliver functional biodiversity corridors												
	1.2 Protect important natural spaces												
	1.3 Improve waterway health												
	1.4 Increase community participation in environmental events and volunteering												
2. LIVEABLE & RESILIENT COMMUNITIES	2.1 Increase community preparedness for natural hazards												
	2.2 Understand and plan for our climate risks												
	2.3 Aim for 30% canopy cover in residential areas												
3. LIVING SUSTAINABLY	3.1 Increase active and sustainable transport opportunities												
	3.2 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 and to net zero by 2050												
	3.3 Reduce per capita water consumption from potable sources												
4. GOING CIRCULAR WITH WASTE	4.1 Divert 80% of domestic waste from landfill by 2030												
	4.2 Use more recycled products												
	4.3 Reduce illegal dumping												

Example of rural land revegetation - Luskintyre Before - 2002

Example of rural land revegetation - Luskintyre After - 2012

APPENDIX

CELEBRATING PROGRESS ACHIEVED UNDER THE MAITLAND GREENING PLAN

The Maitland Greening Plan was developed by Maitland Council with support from The Natural Heritage Trust. The Plan followed two consultant reports for Stage 1: a bushland inventory (Manidis Roberts 1996) and Stage 2A: conservation and management options (Pittendrigh, Shinkfield and Bruce Landscape Architects et al. 1998). After attaining broad community support for the Greening Plan process, the Greening Plan Reference Group was established, in partnership with the Mindaribba Local Aboriginal Land Council and relevant government and non-government organisations. With input and advice from the Reference Group, Maitland Council developed the Maitland Greening Plan Stage 2B that was adopted by Maitland Council in February 2002 (Maitland City Council 2002).

Maitland City Council (2002) states that the Greening plan is essentially a collection of information about vegetation and related environmental issues in the Maitland Local Government Area and a framework for the management of that vegetation towards increased sustainability in the long term.

The Greening Plan makes 13 recommendations for improved vegetation management, which are currently being worked towards by Council.

Three vegetation mapping and progress reports have been produced since the Greening Plan was adopted by Council, being the Natural Vegetation of the Maitland Local Government Area (Hill 2003), Update to Ecological Significance of the Natural Vegetation of Maitland LGA Mapped in 2003 (Umwelt 2009), Maitland Vegetation Canopy Assessment (NGH 2022). These have been used to help Council monitor and report on the greening plan implementation and adjust approaches over time.

Walka National Tree Day 2016

GREENING PLAN RECOMMENDATION	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
That Council ratify the vegetation retention targets established in Section 3.5 to establish clear goals for bushland conservation in the Maitland LGA	Overall there has been a net gain in native vegetation of 229ha across the city between 2009 and 2021. Conservation targets of no clearing, and no net loss have been achieved for some vegetation communities, while for other community types further work is needed. A full report card against the targets is provided below.
That Council raise the necessary revenue to achieve sustainable vegetation management and revegetation endeavours, including implementation of a Special Rate (Environmental Levy)	Council implemented an environmental levy which raised $500,000 to enable the recommendations of the greening plan to be implemented . Through the environmental levy and using matched grant funds, funds were raised that resulted in the revegetation of 85 hectares of public land over a 20-year period, delivery of a weed management program, administration of the seedling distribution program and educational initiatives as well as coordinating applications for grant funding to support further implementation of the greening plan. Photographs of the activities undertaken and examples of revegetation achieved both directly through the greening plan, as well as through the efforts of Landcarers and individual land holders are provided in the following pages. A full report card on greening plan revegetation activities is available at data.maitland.nsw.gov.au/pages/greening-plan/
Acquisition of bushland with a high conservation significance and development threat	In 2003 Council identified principles for strategic acquisition of high conservation significance bushland, noting that in some cases land should stay in private ownership under a voluntary conservation agreement. Council has received through land dedication strategic bushland parcels associated with the eastern wildlife corridor along Four Mile Creek, including parcels in East Maitland, Ashtonfield and Thornton North. Further opportunities are being identified as development continues west.
Council establish a native plant distribution program	In 2002, Council established a native plant distribution program which aims to provide 5,000 seedlings to local residents per annum. Between 2002 and 2023 Council has provided 270,000 seedlings to the community for planting on public and private land.
Community education trial sites	Community education trial sites were established to demonstrate the different techniques identified in the greening plan. This included the Wallis Creek Demonstration Site rebuilding the riparian zone and removing honey locust, the Rural Residential Landholder Education Project, Four Mile Creek Lower Hunter Spotted Gum Ironbark Forest project increasing diversity of species of trees to try reduce the dominance of the Bell Miner bird.
Council undertake urban bushland reserve management	Council has won grant funding from the Environmental Trust matched with funding from the greening plan environmental levy to undertake weed management and revegetation activities across a range of urban bushland parcels including Walka Water Works, behind Mt Vincent Landfill, Brooklyn Park, Magnetic Drive (Four Mile Creek) and revitalisation of the Hunter Lowland Redgum Forest Working together with the community, Council has also renewed its efforts through the establishment of landcare sites at three urban reserves in East Maitland, Bolwarra and Rutherford and attraction of grant funds to assist in ongoing management of bushland in these locations.

GREENING PLAN RECOMMENDATION	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED
Provision of conservation grants to individual landholders	Council has supported revegetation on private rural landholdings through the rural seedling distribution program , TREES project and joint efforts with the previous catchment management authority with a community support officer. Projects have also included fencing to protect native regeneration sites in sensitive locations including around Wentworth Swamp.
Provide equipment for restoration/rehabilitation projects	Following the endorsement of the Greening Plan equipment was purchased for community groups to utilise on projects. Today we assist the community with providing tools at Council run events and discussing with the community their needs for sites to cover maintenance as a joint initiative.
Environmental awards	A schools environment program was established to educate the young people of Maitland about environmental issues and to provide awards recognising the efforts of local schools. Today the program includes provision of resources to schools for environmental projects.
Council review current LEP Provisions	A review of provisions of the Maitland Local Environment Plan 2011 and Development Control Plan was committed to in the Local Strategic Planning Statement Maitland 2040+, adopted by Council in 2020. At the time of writing, the DCP review is in progress.
Conservation Incentives Clause	As above.
Council employ a vegetation advisory officer to implement recommendations of the Greening Plan and educate and involve the community	A greening plan officer position was established in 2002. Now titled the Biodiversity and Resilience Officer, this position resources practical on ground revegetation activities, and reviews and makes recommendations on ecological assessments and Biodiversity Assessment Reports for planning proposals, development applications, and works on Council land.
Review the greening plan	Three vegetation mapping and progress reports have been produced since the Greening Plan was adopted by Council. Report cards were also produced in 2012 and 2022. A comprehensive review and update of the Maitland Greening Plan is a commitment of Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2023-2030.

MAITLAND GREENING PLAN

VEGETATION COMMUNITY NAME	2003 REMNANT EXTENT (HA)	2020/21 REMNANT EXTENT (HA)	CHANGE IN REMNANT AREA (HA)	NEW AREAS SINCE 2003 (REGROWTH / DISTURBED REMNANT / ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION)	TOTAL CHANGE	% CHANGE	GREENING PLAN CONSERVATION OUTCOME	2021 PROGRESS AGAINST GREENING PLAN CONSERVATION OUTCOME
ALLUVIAL RIVER OAK FOREST	89.06	89.06	0.00	90.79	90.79	102%	No further clearing	No clearing has occurred. Considerable maturing regrowth (+102%)
ALLUVIAL TALL MOIST FOREST	105.21	103.30	-1.91	6.43	4.52	4%	No further clearing	1.91ha of clearing has occurred
CENTRAL HUNTER RIPARIAN FOREST	130.08	129.67	-0.41	21.63	21.22	16%	No net loss. Limited clearing (10%) with revegetation	No net loss achieved to date. Very limited clearing, and considerable regrowth/restoration (+16%)
FRESHWATER WETLAND COMPLEX	1705.50	1700.28	-5.23	0.00	-5.23	0%	N/A Wetland	N/A
HUNTER LOWLANDS REDGUM FOREST VARIANT	1127.77	1060.05	-67.72	88.10	20.38	2%	No net loss. Limited clearing (10%) with revegetation	No net loss achieved to date. Limited clearing has occurred (-6%), along with regrowth/ecological restoration (+8%).
HUNTER LOWLANDS REDGUM MOIST FOREST	41.99	35.78	-6.21	0.00	-6.21	-15%	No further clearing	6.21ha clearing has occurred
HUNTER STRINGYBARK SPOTTED GUM IRONBARK FOREST	542.83	542.08	-0.75	26.71	25.97	5%	Hunter Valley Moist Forest - No Net Loss	No net loss achieved to date. Very limited clearing, and considerable regrowth/restoration (+5%)
HUNTER VALLEY DRY RAINFOREST	222.92	221.53	-1.39	15.30	13.91	6%	No further clearing	1.39ha clearing has occurred
HUNTER VALLEY MOIST FOREST	239.95	239.14	-0.81	25.28	24.47	10%	No net loss	No net loss achieved to date. Very limited clearing, and considerable regrowth/restoration (+10%)
KURRI SAND SWAMP WOODLAND	41.52	41.52	0.00	4.32	4.32	10%	No greening plan equivalent not mapped in LHCCREMS.	No net loss achieved to date. No clearing, and considerable regrowth/restoration (+10%)
LOWER HUNTER SPOTTED GUM IRONBARK FOREST	2909.68	2488.50	-421.18	52.66	-368.52	-13%	Loss of either 341ha (Option 3) or 437ha (Option 4) remnant, supplemented by longer term revegetation. 863ha in long term conservation	At risk. Clearing approaching Option 4 threshold (421ha cleared compared to 437ha target). 355ha C zoned land compared to 863ha target one local biobanking site. Under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, vegetation cleared has been offset thereby contributing to regional community conservation outcomes.
REGENERATION	124.46	119.39	-5.06	0.00	-5.06	-4%	N/A	N/A
SCATTERED TREES	537.49	456.96	-80.54	55.41	-25.12	-5%	N/A	N/A
SEAHAM SPOTTED GUM IRONBARK FOREST	336.90	335.93	-0.98	32.58	31.61	9%	No net loss	No net loss achieved to date. Very limited clearing, and considerable regrowth/restoration (+9%)
SWAMP OAK ALLUVIAL FOREST	149.11	138.38	-10.73	43.96	33.23	22%	Swamp Oak Sedge Forest. No further clearing.	10.73ha clearing has occurred
SUBTOTAL	**8304.47**	**7701.55**		**463.18**	**-139.74**	**-2%**		

VEGETATION COMMUNITIES NOT MAPPED IN HILL (2009)	2003 REMNANT EXTENT (HA)	2020/21 REMNANT EXTENT (HA)	CHANGE IN REMNANT AREA (HA)	NEW AREAS SINCE 2003 (REGROWTH / DISTURBED REMNANT / ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION)	TOTAL CHANGE	% CHANGE	GREENING PLAN CONSERVATION OUTCOME	2021 PROGRESS AGAINST GREENING PLAN CONSERVATION OUTCOME
CENTRAL HUNTER RIPARIAN FOREST AND HUNTER LOWLANDS REDGUM FOREST VARIANT				21.15	21.15		No net loss. Limited clearing (10%) with revegetation	No net loss achieved to date
COMMUNITY NOT IDENTIFIED				228.62	228.62			
HUNTER LOWLAND REDGUM FOREST				7.07	7.07		No net loss. Limited clearing (10%) with revegetation	No net loss achieved to date
NATIVE PLANTING				0.99	0.99			
RIPARIAN				3.86	3.86			
SPOTTED GUM IRONBARK FOREST				107.33	107.33			
SUBTOTAL	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**369.01**	**369.01**			
GRAND TOTAL	**8304.47**	**7701.55**	**-602.92**	**832.19**	**229.27**	**3%**		

DEFINITION

No Net Loss: Under a 'no net loss' policy, Council would adopt the principle of mainting the levels of bushland at or above certain defined levels. There would be a presumption against the clearance of vegetation but Council would be able to consider applications for the removal of vegetation, subject to satisfactory compensation in the form of revegetation

MAITLAND GREENING PLAN

Native Seedling Distribution Workshops 2003

Native Seedling Distribution Workshops 2003

Schools Environment Program Showcase Evening 2003

Nest boxes being prepared for installation 2003

National Tree Day 2005

Somerset Park National Tree Day 2007

Tocal Field Day Display 2006

Tenambit Wetlands Revegetation Project Planting Event 2005

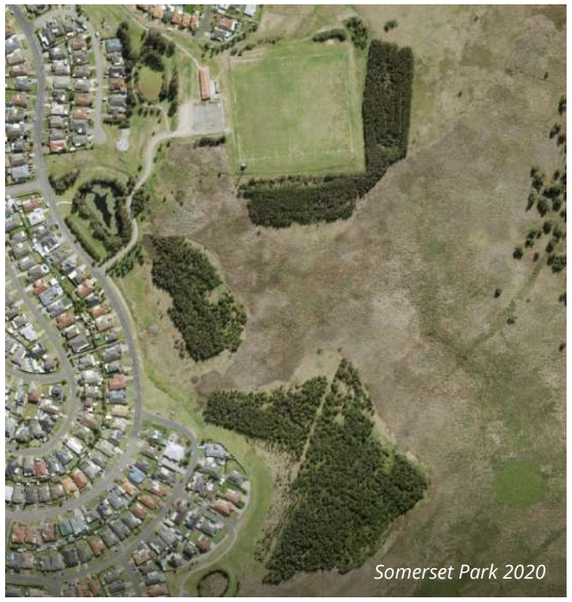
Earthcare Park 2002 before

Planting event 2023

Earthcare Park 2019 after

Planting event 2023

Somerset Park 2007


Somerset Park 2020

Tenambit Wetlands 2007

Tenambit Wetlands 2020

Earthcare Park 2023

For more information about the
Environmental Sustainability Strategy

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