



Hornsby Shire Council

Sustainable Action Committee Charter

*"...The time to act is now. Let us not lose this opportunity;
there may not be another..."*

The Johannesburg Callⁱ

1.0 Introduction

This document provides a framework for the Sustainable Action Committee's operations, decision-making and action planning processes.

It has been developed by Committee members for adoption by Council in May 2007.

Its history goes back to the *Hornsby Shire Local Agenda 21 Committee Strategic Plan* adopted by Council in 1998. It was revised in 2003, 2005, and 2006 and brings together the previous Strategy and Charter into one clear document. The current Sustainable Action Committee recognises the history and the achievements of the Committee since its establishment in 1997.

Section One comprises the vision, mission, values and objectives of the Committee.

These directives are used by Committee members in the development and implementation of initiatives that contribute towards achieving the vision for sustainability in Hornsby Shire, *"Creating a living environment..."* The framework is consistent with Council's strategic framework, which aims for environmental, economic and social sustainability.

Section Two comprises matters regarding the operation of the Committee.

2.0 Section One: Vision and Mission

2.1 Vision

The Committee has adopted as its vision Council's strategic intent of *'Creating a living environment...'*

2.2 Mission

Our mission is to ensure a healthy future for Hornsby Shire by fostering sustainable practices.

We will support Council in making all its planning and development decisions based on sustainable values.

We are committed to the facilitation of information, education and support necessary for informed action on sustainability throughout the community. The community includes individuals, community groups, businesses, Council and other organisations.

We see a healthy community, empowering each other to conserve resources and to preserve and enhance the natural environment. We work within our own networks to support and bring about this change.

We believe these initiatives will contribute to a vibrant and self-sufficient community.

2.3 Values

In dealing with the challenge of progressing towards our vision, the Committee has identified the following core values held by its members. The;

- belief in the principles of sustainability;
- desire to be part of building a sustainable future for Hornsby Shire;
- willingness to make a positive contribution;
- intention to improve the quality of life in the Shire; and a
- commitment to set an example ourselves.

2.4 Objectives – in line with Local Agenda 21

- To raise community awareness about sustainability and to help promote sustainable practices and education.
- To assist Council with integrating sustainability into Council policy and planning and with developing sustainability initiatives that forward the strategic intent.
- To engage the community in the development and implementation of sustainability initiatives and activities.
- To work towards positive outcomes in all matters pertaining to sustainability for both future and current generations, but particularly in the areas of management of the eight community sustainability themes and their associated indicators.

3.0 Section Two: Operational matters

3.1 Purpose

- The purpose of the Committee is to assist the Council and community of the Shire to realise the objectives of Council's Management Plan, particularly the development and implementation of initiatives that contribute towards achieving the vision for sustainability in Hornsby Shire, "*Creating a living environment...*"
- Subcommittees may be established to work on specific projects or activities.
- The Committee may seek information and briefings from Council staff and from organisations and individuals other than Council.
- Council is responsible for the budget and overall coordination of the committee.

3.2 Primary roles for the Sustainable Action Committee

The Sustainable Action Committee has two primary responsibilities to Council each year, whilst also working on specific projects and activities that contribute to Council's strategic intent.

3.2.1 Contribute to the development of Councils Management Plan

SAC's first responsibility is to assist Council in its annual strategic review and production of its Management Plan. The Management Plan outlines Councils strategic direction and contains information on Councils future activities which are summarised by the key actions, performance measures and resources required to deliver these activities. Essentially, the Management Plan describes how council is "*creating a living environment...*" and managing for the needs of residents today and in the future.

3.2.2 Review the annual State of Environment Report

SAC's second key responsibility is to assist Council with its annual State of the Environment Report (SoE). The production of a SoE is a statutory requirement under the Local Government Act (1993). It provides a summary of the physical and social condition of the Shire and the human impacts on our environment. Council uses the findings of the SoE, along with other corporate documents to identify priority actions for inclusion in the coming years Management Plan. Additionally, the reporting process enables Council to reflect upon and provide a public record of its activities, and those of businesses and the community, that protect, enhance and restore the environment.

In planning and reporting terms the Management Plan and State of the Environment Report are integrally linked. The SAC therefore has the opportunity to strategically contribute to Council planning through assisting in developing and reviewing these documents. Because the Committee consists of community representatives, Council staff and Councillors, extensive community networks, communication skills and local knowledge of sustainability issues can guide specific Council activities related to the environment and sustainability. The Committee also benefits from the support of elected Council representatives and the skill and enthusiasm of Council staff.

3.3 Working Group supporting the Sustainable Action Committee

The Working Group is to be made up of interested community members to discuss, research, provide information, suggestions and recommendations to the full Committee.

The Working Group must:

- be coordinated by one elected representative for a period of twelve months
- invite all Committee members to attend the Working Group
- update the full committee on the Working Group at each meeting
- reviewed annually in line with the review of the Charter
- provide notice of meetings and minutes that are to be circulated to all Committee members

4.0 Name

The name of the Committee is the "Sustainable Action Committee." The committee has historically evolved over time from the Hornsby Shire Local Agenda 21 Committee which was established as the Local Agenda 21 Committee in 1997. In 2003, to reflect the Committee's

commitment to an action-oriented approach its name was revised to the Hornsby Shire Sustainable Action Committee.

5.0 Membership

- The membership of the Committee shall comprise self-nominated Councillors (including the Chairperson), Council staff and up to twenty community representatives.
- Council and the Committee members shall proactively seek the involvement of community members, including stakeholders with little or no previous involvement, such as youth, people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Indigenous people and business representatives.
- There is no defined period of membership or formal selection process, other than a declared willingness to help fulfil the purposes of the Committee. This is to be documented by completing a Statement of Commitment which is placed on Council records.
- Advertisements for Committee membership as well as additional volunteer support for Committee projects will be placed either quarterly in local newspapers, or as required.
- Members are required to attend at least two of the four core strategic meetings per year. Members are encouraged to contribute to the activities of the Sustainable Action Committee and attend supplementary project or sub-committee meetings when they occur. Non-attendance at strategic meetings without advance apology will be taken to indicate withdrawal of membership.
- Additional volunteer support beyond the core Committee membership may be recruited. These volunteers may apply to join the Committee and should be notified when a position becomes available. These volunteers would be included in information sharing with the Committee.

6.0 Councillor participation

- All Councillors are invited to participate and contribute to meetings.

7.0 Arbiter

- The Environmental Education & Policy Officers in consultation with the Committee and the Manager, Environmental Health & Protection Team, shall be responsible for arbitrating on questions of membership and for interpreting the relevance of submissions or requests received for the Committee's support.

8.0 Committee Meetings

- For full Committee meetings the quorum of the Committee shall be two Council staff (not including the minutes secretary) and 5 community members. For project meetings these numbers are not required

- The Chairperson shall be a self-nominated Councillor, or in the absence of the self-nominated Councillors, the Chairperson shall be a Committee member or Council Officer with suitable facilitation experience.
- Four core strategic meetings shall be scheduled per year. Two meetings shall focus on inputting to and reviewing Council's State of Environment Report, while the remaining two shall focus on inputting to and reviewing Council's Management Plan. Additional project specific meetings can be held at the discretion of the Committee. Committee members shall be provided documents for these meetings two weeks prior to the meeting.
- Core strategic meetings will be held from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on the third Monday of the scheduled month, where possible. A schedule of meetings will be produced at the beginning of each financial year.
- Communication outside of core meetings will occur by direct email (other than when email is inaccessible or when hard copy materials are required for comment). Emails must be responded to within seven (7) days, except where circumstances require a more urgent response. Those who do not respond to an email will be deemed to have abstained. Members should use the email guidelines (adopted 2005) and provided to all members when communicating by email.
- The Environmental Education & Policy Officers shall ensure that the details of each Committee meeting are included in the Councillors' Calendar and the Committee's webpage found on Council's website.
- The Committee venue will generally be the Council Chambers. However, upon agreement at previous meetings by this Committee, from time to time meetings may be held at other venues, encouraging broader community participation.
- Visitors are welcome, but are not able to vote on Committee issues.

9.0 Minutes and reports

- The Environmental Education & Policy Officers shall arrange for the minutes of each core meeting to be taken and circulated within two weeks of the meeting, whilst the agenda will be circulated to all Committee members at least one and preferably two weeks prior the next meeting.
- The Environmental Education & Policy Officers shall be responsible for reporting the outcomes of each meeting to appropriate Council staff and Council.

10.0 Review of operations

- The Committee is to review this charter when seen necessary. The Committee is to determine if a review is needed by 30th June each year. The Environmental Education and Policy Officer shall invite the Committee to review and debate the strategic direction and operations of the Sustainable Action Committee, and coordinate the development and finalisation of the revised charter.

- The Environmental Education & Policy Officers shall submit to Council a report on the operation of the Committee in April/May each year according to the budget cycle. The Environmental Education and Policy Officer shall invite the committee to debate through an email discussion surrounding the report, and coordinate the development and finalisation of the report.
- The Council may, at its absolute discretion, confirm, amend or withdraw the Committee Charter.
- HORNSBY EARTH WISE
 - ‘Hornsby earthwise’ is a program promoting a sustainable approach to the development of the community, economy and environment in the Shire.
 - Sustainability initiatives developed by the Committee will be included under this brand.

11.0 Expected results of the Sustainable Action Committee’s contribution to local activities

- More sustainable practices are adopted by the community.
- Sustainability is integrated into all Council policies, procedures and practices.
- Community developed sustainability initiatives, activities and actions are widely known, supported and adopted.
- An increased number of community members are involved in sustainability practices and projects.

Charter endorsed by Council May 9 2007

ⁱ Local Action Moves the World, A Short Summary. ICLEI World Secretariat, 25 September 2002.
<http://www.unedforum.org/news/outreach/wssd/Issue%20VII.pdf>