

Draft Sustainability Building and Infrastructure Policy 2021

Community Engagement Summary



21 October 2021

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1 Engagement overview

This document provides a summary of stakeholder and community feedback on the *Draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy 2021*, conducted in September and October 2021.

Revision of this Council Policy seeks to drive improved sustainability outcomes in its buildings and assets. The Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy will set clear expectations for ESD to be integrated into Council's building and infrastructure projects.

The community engagement objective was to reach targeted stakeholders and receive at least 15 responses from community groups and individuals. The key research question asked was '*Will the revised Draft Sustainable Buildings & Infrastructure Policy lead to improved sustainability outcomes in Council's buildings and assets?*'

2 Background

Since 2017, implementation of the Sustainable Infrastructure Policy has sought to embed Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) initiatives in Council capital projects. Using new processes and tools in project management has increased the standard and amount of ESD features in the design and construction of buildings.

The initial Sustainable Infrastructure Policy 2017 is being updated as per the scheduled review to occur at least every four years.

A revised policy, named the Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy, has been drafted with expanded objectives. The revised policy would be applied to all projects within Council owned and/or managed buildings, roads, drainage and open space assets, throughout all project stages.

The objectives of the Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy are to:

- establish a consistent approach to best practice ESD for the design, construction and disposal of all Council owned and managed buildings and infrastructure to reduce environmental impact and improve climate resilience
- set clear expectations for ESD to be integrated into the operation of buildings and infrastructure and new lease and licence agreements
- support Council's commitments to achieve our environmental sustainability targets and to maintain our status as a 'carbon neutral' organisation
- ensure upfront project costs to incorporate ESD requirements are viewed as an investment that will return financial savings and other co-benefits over the life of the asset.

The objectives have changed to ensure that intent of the revised Policy is applied consistently in all capital works in every project stage. The Climate Emergency has added impetus to reduce environmental impact in the operation of buildings and infrastructure, which is achieved with ESD initiatives embedded in project planning, as well as clear expectations in new leases.

The revised Policy acknowledges that fully integrating ESD initiatives into projects requires additional costs and resources, and that there are set budget constraints on capital works through Council's Long Term Financial Plan. The revised Policy therefore includes an incremental approach to increasing investment in ESD initiatives, so that the additional costs of fully integrating ESD initiatives can be absorbed over time. This means that project specific requirements of the Policy will be practically achievable within budget and resource constraints.

The Policy will be accompanied by the internal Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy Guidelines. This document is intended for internal use by Council officers and will detail how to effectively implement the Policy. The Guidelines will be reviewed and updated periodically, as officers identify improvements to processes and tools to achieve the Policy outcomes. As such, the Guidelines are an internal document, not for consultation with the community.

3 Consultation process

3.1 Consultation purpose

The consultation was designed to provide stakeholders and the broader community with the opportunity to provide comment on the draft Policy, including input into the general ESD objectives, ESD process and Project specific requirements.

The goal of communications was for external stakeholders to understand that the revised Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy will lead to more sustainable outcomes in Council's buildings and infrastructure.

Internal engagement of officers involved in the planning, delivery and maintenance of capital works was also undertaken. A Steering Group to review the Policy was supported by a Working Group which were both involved in development of the draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy approved by Council for external community consultation. These groups will continue to be involved in ensuring the implementation of the endorsed Policy and Guidelines.

3.2 Consultation methodology

The draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy was developed from April to August 2021. Council endorsed the draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy on 14 September 2021 for community consultation.

The engagement plan considered the project's complexity, the level of change/impact, and reputational risks. The tools and techniques selected for this project were informed by the project content, stakeholders and type of feedback sought.

Information on what could or could not be influenced by feedback was provided. Feedback was sought on the standards used in the revised Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy. The types of buildings and infrastructure covered by the revised Policy, whether or not Council uses prescriptive rating tools, and Council's continued reduction of environmental impact, were 'non-negotiable'.

All community stakeholders were intended to be engaged at the 'Consult' level of the IAP2 spectrum. External stakeholders of which Council is a member were engaged at the 'Inform' level, including the Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) and the South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA).

Community consultation on the draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy was conducted open for a four-week period from 16 September to 14 October 2021.

The following engagement activities were undertaken:

Activity	Details
Have Your Say Page - Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy	16 September 2021 to 14 October 2021 (15 responses, 2 questions submitted)
Email submissions invited from selected community groups	16 September 2021 to 14 October 2021 (1 submission)
Email submissions invited from other Councils	16 September 2021 to 14 October 2021 (1 submission)

3.3 Communications tools and reach

Direction to the Have Your Say Page was via Council communication channels (i.e. 'This Week In Bayside', Bayside Sustainable Living e-newsletter) as well as the 'Have Your Say' platform for registered users.

Between 16 September 2021 to 14 October 2021, the Have Your Say page generated the following traffic:

388 Views	311 Visits	240 Visitors	17 Contributions	17 Contributors	10 Followers
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Views – the cumulative number of times a visitor visits the page

Visits – the number of end-user sessions associated with a single visitor

Visitors – the number of unique public or end-user in a site. A visitor is only counted once

Contributions – the total number of responses of feedback collected

Contributors – the unique number of visitors who have left feedback, and

Followers – the number of visits who have subscribed to the page using the follow button.

Council received 15 contributions to the Have Your Say survey and 2 questions submitted.

The traffic through this site indicates that community were aware of the proposal and had opportunity to provide feedback. Albeit low, the target of 15 responses was met. The profile of engagement over the duration was seen as typical for a revision of a Council policy, with over half of views and visits in the first few days, then under 20 views and visits over the remaining weeks.

Direct emails to stakeholder groups provided one written submission from a community group, and one submission from a Council officer at Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

4 Participant profile

The consultation collected basic participant data including age range and gender.

Of the 15 'Have Your Say' survey respondents:

- 14 Live in Bayside
- 1 Own/operates a business in Bayside
- 1 Works or studies in Bayside
- 1 Visits Bayside but lives outside Bayside
- 7 Are Bayside City Council Ratepayers
- 5 Use Council facilities (e.g. sporting clubs)

The number of responses to Have Your Say was relatively small compared to other engagements. Compared to the Bayside demographic there were more responses from males and people aged between 50-84. The respondents represented most suburbs with the exception of Cheltenham and Hampton East. Almost 40% of respondents live in Brighton. The majority of respondents (80%) found the information provided for the survey was 'easy' or 'mostly easy' to find or understand.

Notably, 5 respondents use Council facilities, which may show a preference to respond to the 'Have Your Say' survey rather than respond to a direct email.

5 Consultation findings

Council received 15 contributions to the Have Your Say survey, one written submission from a community group, and one submission from a Council officer at Shire of Mornington Peninsula.

Of the 15 Have Your Say respondents: 60% were 'somewhat satisfied' that the Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy will lead to improved sustainability outcomes in Council's buildings and assets; 13.3% were 'neither satisfied or dissatisfied'; and 26.6% were 'somewhat dissatisfied' or very dissatisfied'.

This information, combined with feedback received below, suggests that ***while there is support for the draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy, most respondents would like to see the Policy strengthened and to be more ambitious.***

The following sections summarise the key themes from the community feedback on the Draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy. In the interest of stakeholder and community privacy, individual quotes have not been included within this public document. Where there was more than one mention of a topic or item, the number of mentions has been specified in brackets and italics.

5.1 Support for actions

One submission congratulated Council on its draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy that reinforces Council's commitment to Climate Emergency Action. It supported:

- the clear setting of targets and goals towards best practice ESD in its buildings and infrastructure thus improving climate resilience
- the outlining of roles and responsibilities of relevant staff, contractors and stakeholders
- Council's forward-looking approach to the need to change to a circular economy, the importance of climate resilience and moving away from fossil fuels towards a zero or low carbon economy. The Council also sets a tone for the
- including broader social and environmental values, by placing value on community wellbeing, character, the heritage of neighbourhood and other harder to quantify targets
- aligning with Australian best practice by using BESS or the Green Building Council Sustainable Buildings pathway.

5.2 Item-specific feedback

5.2.1 Monitoring and Reporting

The submissions supported the clear outlining of the roles, responsibilities, monitoring and reporting that demonstrate Council's commitment to increase transparency and accountability.

The following items were noted by respondents as needing to be provided or addressed in the Policy:

- more specific reporting measures
- an action plan with timelines for achieving the Policy
- clearer definition of when exemptions to requirements may be granted
- an assessment of the lifetime cost of carbon emissions associated with a project.

A range of specific concerns were raised during the consultation regarding this item:

Topic	Community feedback
Reporting performance (5 mentions)	<p>An action plan with timelines for achieving the policy outcomes is required.</p> <p>The reporting measures should not be the percentage (%) of total capital expenditure on ESD initiatives in building projects as this encourages arbitrary spend to achieve targets. The measures should be a reduction of energy consumption and increase of environmental star ratings to show the benefits of implementing ESD initiatives are reduced operating costs and capital budgets.</p> <p>What does 'best practice' actually mean?</p> <p>Is this reporting done at the project level? Who has responsibility – the ESD officer, the project manager or the architect?</p> <p>The Policy needs real numbers, targets and ROI in years. ESD can be a lot of paperwork that later cradle to cradle analysis shows little improvement to the lifecycle of the development. Suggest Council puts in place a clear matrix that includes ROI and emissions reduced per dollar of capex and KWH produced. Projects should then be D&C based on a performance scope that is then independently checked at 6 and 12 months to meet the performance requirements. Focus on spending less money on things that really produce results.</p> <p>Many of the statements in the Policy are aspirational and fail to show specificity that would offer a Council representing a financially elite demographic the possibility to lead the nation in sustainable building and infrastructure policy.</p>
Approval of exemptions (Clause 4.5)	<p>Allowing exemptions to be approved when it is 'not feasible' for one or more objectives or requirements to be met provides a wide opening for abuse. The clause must clearly define the circumstances under which an exemption may be granted and include provision of an analysis of life-time emissions implications of such exemption.</p> <p>How does this authority to approve/refuse exemption work practically? Is there a 'hold' point? Or is this included as part of transition from concept to detailed design/budget allowance? Has this actually been effected in the past?</p>
Investment in ESD	<p>The Policy requires an assessment of the lifetime cost of carbon emissions associated with the project, thus ensuring compliance with Council's carbon neutrality goal, and its approach of 'Avoid, Reduce, Switch then Offset'.</p> <p>This requirement should be specified in all tender and procurement documentation and will help avoid unnecessary offset costs being imposed from failure to assess lifetime emission costs.</p> <p>Clause 4.9 – there is no cost specified. How is this implemented practically? Is there a rule of thumb for project planners?</p>

It is noted that a Council Policy is a set of ongoing commitments, as opposed to a Council Strategy or Action Plan which would include specific actions with timelines. Clarification of this definition may have avoided expectations of more specific performance measures.

5.2.2 ESD in the context of Heritage

The overall feedback was that economically feasible, science based ESD modifications and retrofitting should be given preference over aesthetic heritage considerations.

A range of specific concerns were raised during the consultation regarding this item:

Topic	Community feedback
Cultural heritage	Indigenous cultural sustainability - how is this embedded into Council's 'sustainability' protocols?
ESD in the context of Heritage controls (3 mentions)	<p>The policy fails to address ESD in the context of Heritage controls</p> <p>Concerned that Council supports retention of 'heritage' buildings that are not worthy of retention e.g. Beaumaris Art building and supported new Cheltenham Station (over retaining the heritage station in situ).</p> <p>It is important to consider old buildings that are not going to be brought up to modern standards to become useable and reuse the materials elsewhere e.g., the small scout hut at MacDonald Reserve, Black Rock.</p> <p>The Policy needs to address ESD in the context of Councils current and future stock of Heritage listed buildings.</p> <p>Heritage related building controls negatively impact Councils' ability to incorporate environmentally sustainable design, construction and operational practices into Heritage buildings.</p> <p>With the IPCC's most recent Climate Change report declaring 'code red', Council must do everything economically feasible to reduce GHG emissions and not carve out Heritage buildings from the scope of the SB&I Policy.</p> <p>The Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy should be amended to include explicit guidance that the policy, and the related Bayside Climate Emergency action plan have precedence over the Councils Heritage Action Plan i.e. economically feasible, science based ESD modifications & retrofitting should be given preference over aesthetic heritage considerations.</p>

5.2.3 Other items that need to be addressed in the Policy or by Council

Topic	Community feedback
Climate resilience	Need alignment with ICC (International Climate Change)
Green leases (Clause 4.6)	How is this getting implemented? Has the Property/Leasing team taken ownership?
Management of contractors (2 mentions)	Need to manage contractors who don't apply themselves for the rate payers benefit and confirm that building contractors meet certain green accreditation in their own operations (beyond the materials)
Maintenance of Improved buildings (Clause 4.10)	How is this built into existing maintenance contracts/in-house delivery? Is it simply replace with newest model asset, or does it include expanding scope of renewal?
Energy (4 mentions)	<p>Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • initiate discussions with energy supply companies and have them tender to supply all Council buildings including, for example the pavilion at Hurlingham Park • install Australian made solar panels where possible • align with Green Star. <p>2nd Energy objective – Possibly could rephrase to 'Restrict new and phase out existing gas connections for all buildings, using efficient electrical appliances for heating, cooling, hot water and other uses, except where not currently possible' to strengthen slightly and prevent exemptions for all but extreme cases</p> <p>3rd Energy objective – Is electricity purchasing managed at a project level or a whole-of-Council level? Suggest specifically targeting this at onsite generation and storage, something like 'Use 100% renewable energy, preferably through installation of onsite generation to suit energy demand. Install batteries where viable (or could say 'where payback is < 5 years'), or futureproof if not'. I think this sets the expectations a little stronger.</p>
Integrated water management (2 mentions)	<p>Install rainwater tanks made from recycled materials at sporting grounds and parks and align with WELS ratings.</p> <p>I think these objectives could be reorganised a little, e.g.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 – Water efficiency/potable water reduction, e.g. appliances, fixtures, fittings and plant 2 – onsite retention and re-use, e.g. water tanks, raingardens, other WSUDs 3 – drainage/quality, e.g. flood mitigation, downstream effects, water quality BPEM, etc. <p>There's a lot of overlap in these areas and some initiatives will have impacts in all areas, but I think this mix might help apply it more directly to projects, and help with reporting</p>

Indoor environment quality	Recommend apply Passive House principles for all buildings with optimised insulation and 'a no draught' building envelope combined with mechanical ventilation (heat pump) to achieve the <i>'wellbeing of building occupants through provision of fresh air intake, cross ventilation, selection of materials with low toxicity, thermal comfort, natural daylight and minimising....'</i>
Circular Economy (3 mentions)	<p>Recommend use the word 'require' rather than 'encourage' waste avoidance, reuse and recycling during the design, construction and operation stages of development</p> <p>Needs more commitment to provide composting arrangements.</p> <p>What about supply chain management - abolish modern slavery back to back agreements with all contractor and suppliers.</p> <p>1st objective – 70% seems very low? I'd recommend 90%, possibly just as an aspirational target if needed (e.g. minimum 70%, aiming for 90%)</p> <p>Not sure exactly where this goes but might be good to include the whole-of-life / life cycle terminology in here</p>
Transport (2 mentions)	<p>Higher ambition for transport and EV's required</p> <p>3rd objective – The building/destination/precinct is really important when making this choice, and guidance for the project planners/managers is important. Depending on whether you're planning on providing EV charging services for the public, or just for staff, or for partner organisations/contractors, the answer will be different.</p>
Urban Ecology (3 mentions)	<p>Great to see 'Retain and protect existing canopy trees, biodiversity and biodiversity corridors wherever possible' up front - It's so important! Especially for civil works like footpaths and roads where there's often a large amount of prioritising/trade-offs.</p> <p>Needs more commitment to green roofs, minimising building footprint and maximising open space that provide food, water and shelter for bees and birds.</p> <p>As population density increases, particularly in the Highett area, new developments must allow for sufficient open space per capita for the green shade cooling.</p> <p>A reference to the climate change mitigation framework identified in the Melbourne Plan must be broadened and included in ESD policy. Passive cooling of both open space and built form needs to be addressed.</p>
A Suggested Additional Objective	Education. It's really important to include education elements within projects (e.g. signage, live energy displays, interactive water elements, influencing communications plans). This helps educate the community, contractors and industry - so important for capacity building.

5.2.4 Recommendations for Appendices

Topic	Community feedback
Appendix 1: General ESD Objectives	Provide relevant quantifiable targets, for example 10% less upfront carbon emissions – a target aligned with Green Star 4 requirements. Targets related to building efficiency or indoor quality should be quantifiable and above a reference building that is compliant with the National Construction Code (for example, energy efficiency requirements should be 10% more stringent)
Appendix 2: ESD Process Requirements	<p>To the Concept stage – add ‘Develop an Energy and Water Monitoring plan’ to ensure that building data is collected and can be used to optimise building operations, reporting, analytics or efficiency purposes. The data can be later used to provide that the completed building meets requirements and achieves ESD outcomes.</p> <p>Add ‘Demonstrate Compliance with the Policy process’. Require that builders provide evidence of compliance to the Policy that match performance expectations e.g. air leakage testing results, waste recycling report, thermal imaging, photos of work or specifications of windows installed. Knowing that actual performance relative to estimates is to be made public will help ensure that designers and builders take the requirements seriously and collect evidence during the implementation.</p>
Appendix 3: Project Specific Requirements	<p>For projects of cost greater than \$1 million, increase the BESS minimum score to 65% which is aligned with the Green 4 Star pathway that is claimed to be best practice.</p> <p>Apply a BESS minimum score or a 5 star NABERS rating for energy, water and waste when leasing new premises as a condition to send signals to the industry about the level of environmental performance it expects.</p> <p>I’d recommend looking at requiring a Life Cycle Analysis, likely just for the >\$1M case, to quantify total emissions and emissions reductions. This would help with carbon neutral accounting, business case development and reporting.</p>

5.2.5 Planning Controls:

The following Planning items were noted as also needing to be addressed by Council:

Topic	Community feedback
ESD needs to be encouraged within the Planning framework as well (2 mentions)	<p>It should not be just public sector buildings that this kind of requirement applies to.</p> <p>Why is there a separate policy for Council owned buildings? Can the same rigour be applied to all buildings (in Bayside)?</p> <p>Property values and prices would actually be higher if a truly innovative and progressive Council (policy) agenda was allowed to play out.</p>
Over development and heritage controls (2 mentions)	<p>Council has been slow and complacent in allowing massive apartment buildings to go ahead despite multiple objections against developments on, for example Hampton Street and Thomas Street, and group and civil protests against development on Service Street where there 2 Edwardian homes and multiple trees have been lost.</p> <p>Concerned that Council allows beautiful old houses to be pulled down to be replaced by small poorly designed homes. Council is failing to monitor the actions of developers.</p>

6 Project Evaluation

While there were a relatively small number of respondents and submissions, the engagement demonstrated support and generated feedback that will add value to the final Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy.

The community engagement objective to reach targeted stakeholders and receive at least 15 responses from community groups and individuals was achieved.

The engagement is considered to have been effective.

Bayside City Council thanks all community stakeholders who have taken the time to provide valuable feedback on the *Draft Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy 2021*,