



SUSTAINABLE COORONG ACTION PLAN

2009 - 2012



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Executive Summary

The Coorong District Council is committed to providing a sustainable future for its community. The *Sustainable Coorong – Action Plan 2009 – 2012* provides a policy framework and practical guide for Council to achieve sustainability through the protection of natural resource assets.

Context

A key feature of the Coorong District Council Strategic Management Plan is its focus on sustainable development and this is reflected in three of the key objectives.

Environmental Objective	Sustainability
Economic Objective	Prosperity
Social Objective	Well Being

A sustainable future will not simply happen. Even with innovative policy initiatives it will require the leadership of the Council and the support of the community. It will require an integrated approach to decision making and tools and techniques for measuring progress. Council's forth key objective in its Strategic Management Plan is Leadership.

The creation of a Coorong District Council Sustainability Plan is an action identified in the Coorong District Council Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012 as well as Councils 2009-10 Annual Business Plan.

The aim of the Sustainable Coorong Action Plan is to provide a policy framework and practical guide for Council to achieve sustainability through its day to day activities and business as well as provide leadership to its community with regard to achieving sustainability.

Sustainability has been broadly defined as 'Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Australia's National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development 1992 (NSED) defines ecologically sustainable development (ESD) as 'using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased'.

Sustainability recognises the relationship between environmental, social and economic factors, the three dimensions of the triple bottom line.

It is important to remember that sustainability is a direction and not a destination, it requires a commitment to continually seek ways to improve our environmental, social and economic performance.

Principles of Sustainability

The principles of sustainability are:

- Recognising your ability to act sustainably in all you do;
- Playing an active role in promoting more sustainable practices;

- Through education, promote a behavioural change which exemplifies sustainable practices;
- Not compromising the possibilities of future generations through unsustainable activities; and
- Encouraging consideration of alternative and more sustainable solutions, strategies and perspectives in addressing concepts, problems or issues in business, government and communities.

The guiding steps towards sustainability include:

1. Developing an environment which supports human dignity through gender and racial equality and promotes intergenerational respect.
2. Developing honesty and integrity in daily life.
3. Encouraging the fair distribution of wealth.
4. Working to strengthen local communities and safeguard the health and safety of all.
5. Committing to maintaining and enhancing the integrity and biodiversity of the natural environment
6. Using natural resources, such as water and land wisely and aim to reduce consumption.
7. Reduce, reuse, repair and recycle.
8. Where possible buy “green” products, locally produced with reduced packaging.
9. Understanding the synergies between advances in technology and behavioural change to achieve sustainability.
10. Encouraging ethical business practices.
11. Developing business strategies which promote good corporate governance.
12. Encouraging financial success through openness and transparency.

The Sustainable Coorong Action Plan has been created using the principles and guiding steps towards sustainability as parameters and key objectives of the Plan.

Policy Direction and Action Plan

In order to attain best practice natural resource management and environmental sustainability the Plan provides Council with a suite of actions and policy guidance which align with the following key areas for sustainability:

- Governance and Legislation
- Natural Resource Management and Local Action Plan
- Land Use, Built Environment and Economic Development
- Water
- Biodiversity Conservation
- Resource Use
- Waste Management
- Community Participation and Education

Many of the actions within the Plan reiterate Councils commitment to sustainability in its Strategic Management Plan. In some circumstances the actions formalise current Council practice, in other cases they will bring Council performance into line with accepted best practice management. Many of the actions focus upon development and implementation of standard procedures and capacity building programs.

Implementation

Implementation of the Plan will require leadership from the elected members and the leadership team and a commitment from all Council staff.

It will involve staff learning new ways to approach policy and operational issues to ensure the best outcome for the local environment.

This cultural change will be easy for some actions, but may take some time for others. It will be important that staff are regularly reminded of Councils Strategic objectives and goals and how the actions within this plan underpin Councils objective of 'Attaining Sustainability'.

Governance and Legislation

The Council is bound to several sustainability goals in accordance with legislation that the Council must comply with. Along with meeting its legislative responsibilities the Council is committed to ensure an emphasis on including sustainability principles in its policy development, service provision and planning processes.

The Council has made a deliberate effort to ensure sustainability is a key feature of its vision, mission, values and objectives.

Role of Council in Natural Resources Management and Protection

The Council has had a major role in Natural Resource Management across the district mainly through the activities of its Local Action Plan (LAP) Committee. The support of the Council has been an important mechanism to promote sustainable land management practices to the community.

The Council will be proactive in seeking partnerships with external bodies, including the local Natural Resource Management (NRM) Boards, neighbouring LAP Committees, and other associated NRM groups to achieve its goals regarding natural resource management. This assistance may be in the form of information provision, technical support, training or funding.

Land Use, the Built Environment and Economic Development

The Council is committed to ensuring the structure of its planning policy and assessment reflects the Planning Strategy, local needs and sustainability principles. The Council is committed to facilitate economic development and promote sustainable growth across the district. Long term strategic land use planning and updating Councils Development Plan are initiatives Council is committed to.

Water

Water had been a major issue for the Coorong District Council due drought and the current perilous state of the River Murray. This has caused extreme strain on the local community, economy and environment.

The Council has commenced a major wastewater reuse program for the CWMS in Tailem Bend, Meningie and Tintinara. The Council has also commenced participation in the ICLEI water campaign. The ICLEI water campaign will result in Council formulating a local action plan to ensure the integration of water conservation and water reuse into its operations and infrastructure management projects.

Council will support programs to increase environmental flows to the Murray-Darling system in the interest of the protection of the local environment and the long term sustainability of the local community.

Biodiversity Management

The Coorong District Council area has unique biodiversity values, including internationally significant wetlands of the lower lakes and the Coorong.

Council will ensure that activities on public land, in particular road reserves, comply with the Coorong District Council Roadside Vegetation Management Plan through the development and formalisation of standard operating procedures.

Existing partnerships with NRM Boards will be strengthened to address local pest plant and animal priorities.

Resource Use

For Council to perform its functions in a sustainable manner it will ensure that the products it uses or services it acquires minimise impacts on the natural environment. Furthermore, the Council will implement initiatives to reduce its resource use and greenhouse gas emissions and to encourage the use of alternative energy.

The Council will aim to become Carbon Neutral and to reduce its ecological footprint.

Waste Management

The Council has been a leader in implementing recycling programs and promotes recycling and best practice waste management practices. It has invested considerable funds in recent years closing land fills and constructing waste transfer stations across the district. It has also committed \$370,000 to construct a new landfill cell at its Tailem Bend Landfill in 2009-10. The Council resolved at its meeting in October 2009 to undertake a comprehensive review of all its waste management practices with a view to ensure they reflect industry best practice, meet community expectations and provide an appropriate and cost efficient service.

Community Participation

Council will continue to engage the community and ensure it promotes sustainability by providing relevant information at Council Offices and on its website and at community events such as the Coonalpyn and Meningie Shows. An opportunity to facilitate community participation and to emphasise sustainability will be through a Community Participation in Renewable Energy Program (C-PREP).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is Sustainability?

We hear the words 'sustainable' and 'sustainability' almost every day. But what does it mean exactly?

Sustainability could be defined as an ability or capacity of something to be maintained or to sustain itself. It's about taking what we need to live now, without jeopardising the potential for people in the future to meet their needs.

If an activity is said to be sustainable, it should be able to continue forever.

Sustainability has been broadly defined in the Bruntland Report, *Our Common Future* (1987) as "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Ecological Sustainable Development (ESD) takes the concept of sustainability further and is defined as "using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased." Put more simply ESD is development which aims to meet the needs of Australia today, while conserving our ecosystems for the benefit of future generations." (Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage, 1992)

The concept of ESD requires changes in how we currently view the nature of development, production and consumption so that we can better satisfy human needs whilst using less raw materials and producing less waste.

It is important to remember that sustainability is a direction and not a destination, requiring a commitment to continually seek ways to improve our environmental, social and economic performance.

1.2 Background and Context

The Coorong District Council Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012 includes an action 1.3.1.1 to complete a Coorong Sustainability Plan. This is in line with Goal 1.3 – *To responsibly manage the natural environment to ensure its sustainability and to implement natural resource management principles* and Strategy 1.3.1, *To establish and maintain policies and procedures to adequately protect and conserve our natural environment* and Strategy 1.3.2, *To adopt sustainability in all of Councils activities*.

The Sustainable Coorong Action Plan aims to meet these goals, actions and strategies. Councils commitment to sustainability is further explained in Section 1.4.

The Coorong District Council has a reputation for providing comprehensive support to the community in relation to on ground works provided through its award winning Local Action Plan Committee and Staff. The Council now wishes to ensure that all elected members and staff are committed to environmental sustainability and the protection of natural resources. The Sustainable Coorong Action Plan 2009-2012 aims to provide a set of policies and actions to guide staff and elected members and to implement the philosophy of sustainability in all Councils activities.

The Sustainable Coorong Action Plan 2009-2012 has been developed:

- In response to Councils identified need to provide greater protection for the regions natural resources and thereby aid the development of a strong, growing and diversified economy; protect social and cultural values; and maintain natural assets for their ecological value, and
- To place Council in the best position to achieve sustainable management of the regions natural resources.
- To guide Council in responding to the demands of climate change.

1.3 Climate Change

Climate change is potentially one of the greatest threats to the future of our economic, social and environmental stability and growth. Governments worldwide are taking action to reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions and adjust to the impacts of climate change.

In Australia the Commonwealth Government is developing a mechanism for a national Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, anticipated to commence in 2010. It has been noted that South Australia is the most vulnerable state in terms of the damaging impact of climate change but that it also has the most potential to capitalise on the opportunities an emissions trading scheme may have and the global effort to move towards alternative energy sources.

Councils have a significant leadership role in helping their local communities understand and adapt to climate change and to take advantage of the opportunities. The physical and regulatory impacts and opportunities climate change may bring need to be understood, planned for and integrated into systems, functions and culture as the future way of life. Long term behavioural change required to successfully adapt to and mitigate climate change should be underpinned by sound knowledge, understanding and having the capacity to change.

The Sustainable Coorong Action Plan will aim to ensure the Coorong District Council provides leadership with regard to climate change for its community.

“Each and every one of us can make changes in the way we live our lives and become part of the solution.” Al Gore, Chairman, Alliance for Climate Protection

1.4 The Coorong District Councils Commitment to Sustainability

The importance of practicing and embracing the philosophies of sustainability is becoming a greater priority for communities due to: declining water supply and species biodiversity; the impacts of climate change; and our ecological footprint, which in 2002 was estimated to exceed the Earth’s biological capacity by 20%.
City of Salisbury, 2007.

A key feature of the Coorong District Council Strategic Management Plan (SMP) is its focus on sustainable development and this is reflected in the key objectives, vision, mission and core values.

Vision Statement

Council's vision for the district.

The Coorong District Council area will be recognised for its cohesive community, prosperous economy and unique and highly valued environment.

Mission Statement

Council's business purpose and role in contributing to the Vision.

The Coorong District Council is committed to:

- Responsibly managing the natural and built environment with the aim of attaining **sustainability**.
- Facilitating economic **prosperity**, sustainable growth and employment throughout the district.
- Enhancing the quality of life for the community by encouraging health, **well being** and safety;
- Providing **leadership** for the community and ensuring efficient and effective management of the community's resources.

Council's Core Values

The principles, attributes and qualities the Council will display and practice in the way we go about our business.

The Council will be:

- Accountable and transparent
- Engaging (participatory, consultative and informative)
- Creative and innovative
- Responsible and responsive
- Equitable
- Proactive and progressive
- *Committed to Sustainability*

Furthermore, the SMP describes what Council believes must happen during the five year period to ensure the district is developed according to community expectations and to provide a platform to become a 'Sustainable Region'.

A 'Sustainable Region' is one that recognises the current values of the community, the importance of the history of the Region and the character of its built environment. Based on this information the Region is then in a position to ensure that it has long term goals for maintaining, and moving further towards becoming, a community that:

- Is caring, informed, connected and accessible;
- Pursues economic prosperity; provides social equity; and,
- Acts in an environmentally responsible way.

A sustainable future will not simply happen. Even with innovative policy initiatives it will require the leadership of the Council and the support of the community. It will require an integrated approach to decision making and tools and techniques for measuring progress. A sustainable future will be characterised by:

- a proactive approach to improving social, economic and environmental outcomes,
- greater transparency, as social and economic issues need to be identified alongside environmental issues, and
- creativity and innovation in seeking solutions.

The Coorong District Council is committed to achieving these goals. In achieving these goals Council needs to be aware of accepted definitions of sustainability or Ecological Sustainable Development to ensure policy and actions are able to achieve a balance between social, economic and environmental needs.

The guiding principles of ESD are:

- Precautionary Principle – that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;
- Intergenerational equity – that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations;
- Decisions and actions should provide for broad community involvement on issues which affect them;
- The need to develop a strong, growing and diversified economy to enhance the capacity for environmental protection, should be recognised;
- Decision making processes should effectively integrate both long and short term economic, environmental, social and equity considerations; and
- Reduction of the community's ecological footprint.

(Adapted from Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage (1992) and Tourism NSW (2001))

As evident in Councils Strategic Management Plan and the objectives of the Sustainable Coorong Action Plan, sustainability and responding to the issue of climate change should not be a stand alone policy, but rather an overriding strategy that impacts on all actions and responsibilities of Council. This should include the way we maintain our roads, collect and recycle waste, plan urban development and transport, and even the way individual employees, behave in performing their everyday roles. Sustainability and responding to climate change is about behavioural change in terms of reinforcing sustainability and continuing to look at ways of doing things better and smarter.

The Coorong District Council's commitment to the environment was recognised when it was proud to accept the National Local Government Landcare Award in 2004. Council was recognised for fully incorporating the environment into their strategic and development plans, their on-going support to the Local Action Plan and for their waste management programs. Council was automatically nominated for the National Award after it received the State Local Government Landcare Award in 2003.

Council can encourage, promote and facilitate change and awareness in the community through education, regulation and supporting local sustainability initiatives.

2. KEY AREAS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The aim of this section is to identify the key areas of Councils business and activities where sustainability principles and initiatives can be implemented.

2.1 Governance and Legislation

In accordance with Councils Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012:

Objective

Provide leadership for the community and ensuring efficient and effective management of the community's resources.

Goals

- 4.1 Establishing a 'best practice' governance framework.
- 4.2 To facilitate open and transparent relationships with the community and key stakeholders.
- 4.5 To ensure Councils finances are managed to maintain financial sustainability.

There are several acts and legislation that Council must comply with that set specific sustainability principles that need to be adhered to.

2.1.1 Local Government Act 1999

The need for Local Government to undertake its functions in a sustainable manner is now a fundamental principle guiding Council activity with in the Local Government Act 1999. Specifically, an Object of the Act is "*to encourage Local Government to manage the natural and built environment in an ecologically sustainable manner.*"

Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1999 requires Council's to have Strategic Management Plans. Part of the requirements of these Strategic Management Plans is to assess the financial sustainability of the Council and to ensure long term financial planning and infrastructure and asset management planning. Section 122(1a) of the Local Government Act 1999 specifically requires Councils to have a Long Term Financial Plan for at least 10 years and an Asset and Infrastructure Management Plan for at least 10 years. The Coorong District Council has adopted both a Long Term Financial Plan and an Asset and Infrastructure Management Plan.

2.1.2 Development Act 1993

The Objects of the Development Act 1993 explicitly set out the need for Development Plans to reflect sustainability principles, such as:

- Enhance the proper conservation, use, development and management of land use and buildings;
- Facilitate sustainable development and the protection of the environment;
- Encourage the management of the natural and constructed environment in an ecologically sustainable manner; and
- Advance the social and economic interests and goals of the community.

There are a number of formal referrals under the Development Act 1993 that relate to the protection of natural resources and the environment in general, in particular

referrals relating to the Environmental Protection Act 1993, River Murray Act 2004 and the Natural Resource Management Act 2004.

2.1.3 Natural Resource Management Act 2004

The purpose of the Natural Resources Management Act 2004 (NRM Act) is to promote sustainable and integrated management of the states natural resources and provide for the protection of those resources.

Local Government involvement in Natural Resource Management as defined in the objects of the NRM Act is *“the local government sector is to be recognised as a key participant in natural resource management, especially on account of its close connections to the community and its role in regional and local planning.”*

The NRM Act also provides for the collection of a NRM levy via Councils.

The Coorong District Council is located within the South Australia Murray Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Board (SA MDB NRM) region and the South East Natural Resource Management Board (SE NRM) region.

The Council has membership on the Mallee and Coorong Local Government NRM Advisory Group. This group provides advice and recommendations to the SA MDB NRM Board in accordance with the Local Government Engagement and Communication Plan.

Councils Local Action Plan Committee and staff have close links to the NRM Boards and this will be identified in Section 2.2.

2.1.4 Council Plans, Policies and Actions

The Key Objectives of Councils Strategic Management Plan are below.

Environment - Sustainability

Responsibly manage the natural and built environment to ensure its sustainability and diversity to the community.

Economic – Prosperity

Facilitate economic prosperity and sustainable growth for the district.

Social – Well Being

Enhance the quality of life for our community by encouraging health, wellbeing and safety.

Governance - Leadership

Provide leadership for the community and ensuring efficient and effective management of the community's resources.

When Councils Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012 (SMP) was being created there was a deliberate effort to ensure sustainability was a key feature of Councils vision, mission, values objectives and day to day business.

The focus on sustainability is reflected in the Key Objectives of the SMP. Section 1.4 also elaborates on Councils commitment to sustainability in the SMP.

2.1.5 Further Actions

The Action Plan in Section 3 will outline activities, initiatives and tasks that Council will aim to meet to ensure the emphasis on sustainability in policy development, service provision and planning processes.

Several actions with regard to Governance and Legislation include:

- Implementation of Triple Bottom line assessment for all Council reports;
- Initiatives to engage and improve communication between Council and the NRM Boards;
- Agreement with Ngarindderri regarding construction works to ensure the protection of aboriginal heritage.
- Include the sustainability objectives in all Council policies where appropriate;
- Include sustainability statements in job and person specifications for all Council staff.

2.2 Natural Resource Management and Local Action Plan

In accordance with Councils Strategic Management Plan:

Objective

Responsibly manage the natural and built environment to ensure its sustainability and diversity for the community.

Goal

1.3 To responsibly manage the natural environment to ensure its sustainability and to implement natural resource management principles.

The Coorong District Council has had a major role in Natural Resource Management across the district through the activities of its Local Action Plan Committee and staff (LAP).

The implementation of the Coorong LAP commenced in 1997 and is involved in:

- Controlling groundwater recharge through the broad scale planting of deep rooted perennial plants,
- Conserving and enhancing biodiversity through the protection of remnant native vegetation and wetlands and extensive revegetation using local native species,
- Supporting and promoting sustainable agricultural productivity which maintains and enhances the long-term productive capacity and environmental health of the land,
- Improving groundwater management.
- Empowering the community through education and awareness about the natural resource management issues.
- Provision of professional support to community NRM groups and individuals.

The support of the Coorong District Council has been a leading factor in the success of the LAP. The LAP program is an important mechanism to promote sustainable land management practices to the community.

The LAP Committee and Staff work closely with the local NRM Boards and local environmental community groups. They also work closely with neighbouring LAP's such as the Goolwa to Wellington LAP, in particular with regard to issues and programs around the Lower Lakes and River Murray.

Some of the achievements and activities of the LAP are below:

2.2.1 Community Participation with On Ground Works

There is a steadily increasing level of landholder participation and on-ground works has been a highlight of the LAP success, with more than two thirds of the areas landholders being actively involved in more than 130,000 hectares of on-ground works projects in 11 years.

Landholders can access a wide range of incentives to assist with projects on their properties. Incentives are based on a sound cost-sharing framework determined by a benefit cost analysis. All works are subject to an agreement with strict guidelines

including maintenance periods. Payments are only made following a successful inspection of completed works.

The LAP'S on-ground works program has been able to deliver up to 90% of NHT/NAP funding on-ground. This is due to the large scale of the project and the considerable support of the Coorong District Council.

Works eligible for funding under the incentive scheme include:

- Perennial pasture establishment
- Saltland pasture establishment
- Sandhill stabilisation and retirement
- Clay spreading
- Revegetation using local native species
- Protection & enhancement of remnant native vegetation
- Establishment of fodder shrubs
- Establishment of farm forestry
- Fencing of lake shore and establishment of alternative watering points

2.2.2 Land and Water Management Plan (L&WMP)

A L&WMP has been prepared for the Tintinara Coonalpyn area by the South East NRM Board with the aid of the LAP Committee. The goal of the L&WMP is to ensure sustainable use of land and water while maintaining biodiversity and farm profitability. This is being achieved through well planned sustainable irrigation, reduced off-farm impacts, responsible drainage and improved efficiency. This plan is complementary to the Local Action Plan and is now managed and implemented by the LAP Committee.

2.2.3 Fodder Shrub Research

The LAP Committee has recently commenced a four year joint research project with the South Australian Research and Development Institute and the Cooperative Research Centre for Future Farming Industries. This will research opportunities and pitfalls of introducing new perennial forage systems into grazing enterprises, particularly on mixed cropping farms.

2.2.4 Community Education

The LAP Committee is committed to working with the district's schools in projects such as water monitoring, revegetation, wetland rehabilitation, walking trails, boardwalks and assisting with grant applications.

2.2.5 Caring for our Country Funding

The Caring for our Country funding was announced on Thursday 2nd July 2009. The Coorong District Local Action Plan (LAP) Committee submission for the Implementation of the Coorong and Tatiara Local Action Plans joint on ground works project received \$2,158,200 over 4 years.

This project will maintain the momentum for change among landholders in the Coorong District achieved through the local action plan on-ground works program and also expand the LAP program throughout the Tatiara District. It will enhance partnerships between the community, local government, statutory bodies, government, industry, indigenous groups and individuals. The on-ground works

program will include the establishment of perennial vegetation, clay spreading to reduce wind erosion risk, sand stabilisation and levelling of sand drift and blows outs, establishing shelter belts of native vegetation and provision of technical support. The on ground works program will cover up to 11,910 hectares and include 155 kilometres of fencing.

The project will be undertaken collaboratively with the Tatiara District Council.

2.2.6 Further Actions

The success of the LAP program and Councils focus of ensuring Natural Resource Management is part of its core business is reflected in Council's commitment to continue the LAP program and its role in Natural Resource Management. The continuation of the LAP is dependent on successfully obtaining funding through the State and Commonwealth Governments. The successful Caring for our Country funding submission has guaranteed the future of the LAP program until 2013.

The Council is committed to continue to seek new funding sources to continue the LAP program and to continue being a leader in natural resource management.

Further actions for the LAP Program with regarding to promoting sustainable land management practices will include:

- Continuing the very successful LAP program throughout the Council district;
- Commencing a LAP program in the Tatiara District Council utilising resource sharing and the expertise of the current Coorong LAP staff;
- Reviewing the Coorong Local Action Plan and updating it to reflect new Natural Resource Management priorities, climate change and new carbon initiatives implemented by the Federal Government; and
- Continuing to engage and work closely with the local NRM Boards, other LAP groups and relevant stakeholders.

2.3 Land Use, the Built Environment and Economic Development

In accordance with Councils Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012:

Objective

Responsibly manage the natural and built environment to ensure its sustainability and diversity for the community.

Facilitate economic prosperity and sustainable growth for the district.

Goals

- 1.1 To have up to date Development Plan provisions that reflect the needs and aspirations of the community and ensure its development assessment processes reflect best practice principles and consistent decision making.
- 1.2 To ensure the long term economic, social and environmentally sustainable future of its community, as well as meeting the community's aspirations.
- 2.3 To have infrastructure planning that is adequately resourced, integrated with land use planning and minimises risk.
- 2.1 Attract new and support existing economic, industrial and commercial development opportunities to ensure the on going prosperity of the Coorong District Council district.

The Coorong District Council is committed to ensure the structure of Councils planning policy and assessment reflects State Planning Strategy, local needs and sustainability principles. The Council is also committed to facilitating economic development and sustainable growth across the district.

2.3.1 Land Use Issues

The main land use issues in the Coorong District Council arise from trying to encourage development and diversify the economy. There is not a major demand or pressure in the Council for any type of development. Development Activity has been steady for the last few years as indicated in the tables below.

Year	Number of Development Approvals	Value (\$)
2005	159	6,346,107
2006	181	7,238,471
2007	192	6,738,535
2008	204	8,797,802

The Coorong district is very reliant on Primary Industry and it is imperative that Council encourages development of primary industry and ensures no land use conflicts that may undermine primary production. An issue that has arisen in the district is regarding minimum allotment sizes allowed in the Primary Industry Zone coupled with the ability to divide off an existing dwelling that may have become superfluous for the owner of a farm. With the current trend of farm land holdings becoming larger it is not uncommon for existing dwellings to no longer be required by farmers. However, it would be appropriate to encourage the purchase of these dwelling by those employed on the farms (farm managers etc) so the dwellings are maintained. The ongoing use of these dwellings meets the aims of sustainability. This issue will be addressed in the upcoming Section 30 review (refer Section 2.3.5).

2.3.2 Diversifying the Local Economy

The Council is keen to promote further industrial and commercial development in the district. While it is important to continue to support primary production it is also imperative to diversify the local economy and create new employment opportunities.

The location of the council on the main Adelaide-Melbourne rail and road routes creates opportunities for logistics management and storage and interchange facilities for bulk goods. The proximity to Adelaide, located at the end of the South Eastern Freeway and with good access to gas supplies, may present opportunities to create an industrial precinct aimed at industries that are restricted in urban environments or that meet the region's current aims to promote and facilitate alternative energy such as wind, solar and bio fuels.

The Coorong District Council area presents many distinctive and diverse economic opportunities. The Coorong National Park along the ocean boundary is an undeveloped natural wonderland offering significant opportunities for tourism development. The Coorong National Park features four-wheel driving country, fishing, indigenous tourism and recreational activities.

Underground water supplies have presented opportunities for re-location of intensive dairy production to Tintinara. The rapidly developing township of Tailem Bend, strategically placed at the hub of major road and rail networks, presents exciting opportunities for large scale industrial growth including transport logistics and renewable energy facilities.

The major towns of Meningie, Tintinara, Coonalpyn and Tailem Bend have unique differences but common to all are the aims of diversification and expansion. The major towns in the region have well established comfortable housing as well as land set aside for new housing developments. The Coorong has good quality education for both primary and secondary students.

In partnership with the other Regional Councils in the Murraylands and the Murraylands Regional Development Board, the Coorong District Council has supported the strategies for investment attraction through the Regional Investment Opportunities Prospectus Project. Furthermore, expanding opportunities for young people has a high priority across the region. Resilience and determination are key qualities demonstrated by the rural communities throughout the Murraylands.

The Council is working closely with the Murraylands Regional Development Board to seek new development opportunities for the district. The Council has recently purchased the old Mitsubishi Test Track site with the express aim to encourage and facilitate economic development.

The Council will be creating an Economic Development Policy in 2009-2010 with the aim to encourage economic, sustainable development.

Further development in the district will facilitate the potential expansion of the townships in the district which is another land use issue that needs to be addressed. This will occur in Councils Strategic Land Use Planning process.

2.3.3 Strategic Land Use Planning

The Council will be undertaking a Strategic Land Use Planning (SLUP) exercise for all its major townships (Tailem Bend, Meningie, Tintinara and Coonalpyn) as well as land adjoining the River Murray and the Narrung Peninsula.

The aim of the SLUP will be to identify infrastructure opportunities, issues and constraints and to create plans to determine how the towns may potentially develop over the next 20-30 years. This long term planning will assist Council to identify any issues and costs that may need to be considered in the future.

The SLUP will be a process to assist Council with future Development Plan Amendments and the Section 30 review. The SLUP will assist Council to ensure the future orderly, economic and sustainable development of its townships and areas where there is the potential for development pressure such as along the River Murray.

2.3.4 Councils Development Plan

The Coorong District Council Development Plan is a statutory development control document established under the Development Act 1993. The Development Plan aims to promote sustainable, orderly and economic development in line with the aims and aspirations of the Coorong District Council and its community.

The Development Plan specifies the Objectives and Principles of Development Control against which all development within the Council is assessed and encompasses the many diverse land uses and characteristics of the district. The Coorong District Council Development Plan has had a tradition of having a strong emphasis on natural resource management and environmental sustainability.

Recent Development Plan Amendments (DPAs) to the Development Plan include:

- Wellington East DPA, consolidated 23 April 2009.
The aim of the Wellington East DPA was to rezone land at Wellington East to facilitate further residential and wetlands development.
- Warrengie Development Zone DPA, consolidated 15 May 2008.
The aim of the Warrengie Development Zone DPA was to rezone land at Meningie to facilitate a canal type residential development.
- Coorong General DPA, consolidated 6 March 2008.

The next planned amendment to the Development Plan is a Better Development Plan Conversion which is due to be completed in 2009.

Better Development Plan Conversion

Council is currently undertaking a Better Development Plan Conversion. The Better Development Plans approach is designed to help ensure Development Plans:

- align with the State Planning Strategy,
- have statewide consistency in structure, presentation and use of clear, plain English wording, with the elimination of repetition,
- are generally consistent in policy content across the state, but can readily cater for significant local circumstances
- promote desired character statements to guide development and provide clearer context to the policy directions presented in Development Plans

- deal only with development matters that require approval under the Development Act 1993, and
- describe what forms of development are appropriate using clearly expressed objectives and principles.

The Better Development Plans project will provide greater certainty, consistency and ease of use for the community and industry, and ultimately provide substantial time and resource savings for all spheres of government.

At the heart of the Better Development Plans project is a set of Development Plan policies developed by Planning SA that deal with a wide range of issues and land uses common to most councils. These policies form the core of a Better Development Plan.

The Better Development Plans Planning Policy Library has been developed through a collaborative process involving Planning SA, local government, state government agencies, the Environment, Resources and Development Court, Crown Law Officers, the Development Policy Advisory Committee and planning consultants. The policies it contains are consistent with the Planning Strategy and considered to be current leading practice.

The policies are grouped in to modules under the headings 'General', 'Zone' and 'Policy Area' reflecting the consistent structure of Better Development Plans.

It is intended that relevant Council wide modules applicable to the Council area will be selected and incorporated into the draft Development Plan Module Conversion. These modules need to reflect the current Council provisions. The Coorong District Council Development Plan has a strong emphasis on Natural Resource Management and Sustainability and this will be reflected in the modules selected. Accordingly, the following Council wide modules focussing on natural resource management and sustainability will be inserted:

- Energy Efficiency
- Natural Resources (with local additions pertaining to Ramsar and the Coorong)
- Orderly and Sustainable Development
- Renewable Energy Facilities
- Waste
- Waste Management Facilities

2.3.5 Section 30 Review

The Council is planning to undertake a Section 30 Review of its Development Plan in 2009-2010. The aim of a Section 30 Review is to determine the appropriateness provisions and zoning contained within the Development Plan and to ensure it is consistent with the Planning Strategy.

A Section 30 review involves Council preparing a report, a "Strategic Directions Report", that will:

- address the strategic planning issues within the area of the council, with particular reference to;
 - the Planning Strategy; and
 - any other policy or document prescribed by the regulations; and

- addresses appropriate amendments to any Development Plan that applies within the area of the council; and
- sets out the council's priorities for
 - achieving orderly and efficient development through the implementation of planning policies; and
 - the integration of transport and land-use planning within its area; and
 - implementing any relevant targets set out in the Planning Strategy; and
 - implementing affordable housing policies set out in the Planning Strategy within its area; and
 - infrastructure planning (with respect to both physical and social infrastructure).

The Section 30 Review will commence once the Murray Mallee Land Use Framework (MMLUF), which will replace the Country Planning Strategy for this region, will be completed. The MMLUF is being undertaken by the Department of Planning and Local Government.

The Section 30 Review will identify further ways the Development Plan can encourage economic and sustainable development of the district.

2.3.6 Further Actions

Several actions with regard to Land Use, the Built Environment and Economic Development have been identified in Councils Strategic Management Plan. These actions include:

- Completion of Strategic Land Use Plans of townships indicating long term development opportunities;
- Completion of a Better Development Plan Conversion to ensure the Development Plan meets current best practice development policy;
- Investigate the feasibility of Council becoming a 'green' energy production precinct;
- Investigate further initiatives to encourage alternative energy, water conservation, water sensitive urban design; and
- Completion of an Economic Development Policy to promote diversity of the local economy and sustainable job creation.

2.4 Water

In accordance with Councils Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012:

Objectives

Responsibly manage the natural and built environment to ensure its sustainability and diversity for the community.

Provide leadership for the community and ensuring efficient and effective management of the community's resources.

Goal

- 1.3 To responsibly manage the natural environment to ensure its sustainability and to implement natural resource management principles.
- 1.4 To have infrastructure planning that is adequately resourced, integrated with land use planning and minimises risk.
- 1.5 To establish an Asset Management system and plans to ensure the long term sustainability of Councils resources, plant, equipment, buildings and infrastructure.

Water has been a major issue for the Coorong District Council in recent years due to drought as well as the current disastrous state of the Murray River, the Lower Lakes and the Coorong. Water supply is a critical issue for the future survival of our natural environments, communities and economy. It is necessary to investigate alternative sources of water supply including recycling and wastewater reuse and more efficient and responsible urban and rural water use in order to reduce the stress on the environment as well as supply adequate water to the community and industry.

The Coorong District Council has been proactive in its support for the community with regard to water and drought issues. It has made submissions to senate enquiries into the River Murray and is regularly corresponding and attending meetings with the Community, State and Commonwealth Governments to raise awareness of the issues being faced by the local community. The Council has formed the Coorong and Lower Lakes Infrastructure Committee as a committee focussed on the issues associated with the Lower Lakes, River Murray and Coorong. The committee includes members of the community and Council.

The Coorong District Council has also created several fact sheets promoting water conservation around the home and garden and these are available on the website.

The Council has undertaken several initiatives regarding water use including implementation of Wastewater Reuse Schemes and participation in the ICLEI Water Campaign.

2.4.1 Wastewater Reuse Project

The Coorong District Council will be spending \$2.835 million to upgrade and expand the Community Wastewater Management Schemes (CWMS) at Tailem Bend, Meningie and Tintinara. The upgrade of the wastewater management systems will help reduce the use of water from Lake Albert by up to 55,000 kilolitres a year and from the River Murray by up to 89,000 kilolitres a year.

The provision of reclaimed wastewater to facilities such as the Lake Albert Golf Course and the Meningie Oval will ensure the long term sustainability of these amenities.

Council will replace all three existing treatment lagoons with new 'state of the art' package treatment plants, and will also install a reticulation network to irrigate the township gardens, ovals and other reserves. The package treatment plants will receive all current township flow as well as predicted flows from future development. The calculated reclaimed wastewater output from all three treatment plants is 390 kilolitres per day.

2.4.3 ICLEI Water Campaign

The Coorong District Council has joined the International Council for Local Government Environmental Initiative (ICLEI) Water Campaign in 2008. The milestones and initiatives from this campaign are reflected in this Plan.

The ICLEI water campaign is a voluntary capacity building program run by ICLEI for local governments. The program aims to assist local governments to manage their water resources by reducing use and improving quality.

To participate in the program, councils must adopt a resolution to ensure there is political commitment within the council. Council made this resolution at its meeting held 12th February 2008 (Minute item 026/08). There are then five performance milestones for council to complete.

The milestones are:

- Milestone 1: complete an inventory of water consumption and a water quality practices gap analysis;
- Milestone 2: set goals to improve water management;
- Milestone 3: develop a local action plan;
- Milestone 4: implement the local action plan;
- Milestone 5: complete a second inventory and report on progress.

These five milestones each have a set of requirements set by ICLEI Oceania to ensure that the work completed through them is to a certain standard and to allow ICLEI Oceania to aggregate the data on a state and national scale.

Within each milestone, there are three modules for councils to undertake.

The modules look at:

- what councils can control within their own operations
- what councils can influence in the community through land use planning, regulation and education
- how councils can work with other councils and stakeholders in the catchment to achieve long term improvements in water quality.

Some examples of activities participating councils are undertaking include:

- Retrofitting recreational centres with water efficient devices in toilets, showers and basins.
- The use of steam application on weeds to reduce herbicide use.
- The automated and moisture sensor use of irrigation systems to efficiently water public open space.

- Introduction of land use policies that promote water sensitive urban design.
- Introduction of policies that support rainwater tank installation in new and refurbished residences.
- Installation and maintenance of gross litter trap devices.
- Street cleaning practices that rely on suction of dry matter.
- Selection and planting of drought tolerant plant species for feature roundabouts.

Council has completed Milestone 1 and is committed to complete the remaining milestones. The achievement of the ICLEI water campaign milestones will be listed in the Action Plan in Section 3. The Local Action Plan as required in Milestone 3 will identify all the initiatives and opportunities that Council will want to achieve with regard to water use and may include some of the activities listed above.

2.4.4 Further Actions

The Council will continue to be vigilant in its support for the community and to engage all levels of government to try to ensure a sustainable future for the River Murray, Lower Lakes and Coorong.

Other further actions regarding water will be based on the achievements of the ICLEI water campaign and the completion of the CWMS wastewater reuse projects in Tailem Bend, Tintinara and Meningie.

2.5 Biodiversity Conservation

In accordance with Councils Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012:

Objective

Responsibly manage the natural and built environment to ensure its sustainability and diversity for the community.

Goal

- 1.3 To responsibly manage the natural environment to ensure its sustainability and to implement natural resource management principles.

Biodiversity is the variety of life forms or the different plants, animals and micro organisms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems they form.

The Coorong District Council has 191,575 ha (19%) of native vegetation remaining, much of which occurs in the large conservation parks of Messent, Ngarkat, Mt Boothby and Carcuma, as well as the Coorong National Park and privately owned scrub. The Coorong National Park is a nationally significant biodiversity asset.

Weed control and fire protection practices of Council may be identified to assist in management the biodiversity present in the Coorong District Council area.

Councils Roadside Vegetation Management Plan is one initiative that will assist in maintaining biodiversity in the district.

2.5.1 Roadside Vegetation Management Plan

The main role of the Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP) is to provide the Coorong District Council with a framework for addressing the variety of issues associated with management of road reserves with a focus on protecting native vegetation. To this end a series of policies and guidelines for various activities conducted within road reserves have been established. Compliance with the guidelines presented within this RVMP will lead to sustainable management of native roadside vegetation and the protection of the biodiversity values within the area, whilst enabling the council to comply with legal requirements for the protection of native vegetation.

The Coorong District Council is responsible for a road network comprising 1880km of open road reserves and a considerable distance of unused road reserves. These road reserves are 20, 40 or 60 meters wide and contain significant stands of native vegetation – predominantly mallee associations and eucalypt woodlands.

Road reserves have developed beyond providing for vehicle transport, to include provision of a variety of services including telecommunications, gas, electricity, water and effluent mains. Furthermore, road reserves often contain the only significant remnants of native vegetation in rural areas of South Australia. This is due to the broad-scale clearance of native vegetation within rural areas for agricultural usage of land.

Maintaining remnant vegetation within road reserves is important for many reasons. Roadside vegetation provides many functional benefits including the prevention of weed establishment, a reduction in fire risk compared with introduced vegetation, shelter for stock in adjacent land, help in defining road curves leading to a safer driving environment, and a reduction in soil erosion and hence road maintenance requirements. The presence of remnant vegetation in road reserves also provides many conservation benefits. Road reserves can support rare or threatened plant species or vegetation associations, they can provide important habitat for fauna, act as corridors between blocks of remnant vegetation, and they may provide an important source of seeds for local revegetation projects. Furthermore, road reserves containing native vegetation add to the visual amenity of areas where there has been broad-scale clearance.

Vegetation present in road reserves within the Coorong District Council varies from degraded vegetation with no conservation value through to vegetation associations of high biodiversity value.

Any significant disturbance to native vegetation within road reserves has the potential to cause long-term damage which will have long-term negative impacts. Those road reserves containing native vegetation need to be managed and preserved. Good roadside management practices are required to ensure remnant vegetation is preserved, and may eliminate future management problems.

In order to manage the vegetation within road reserves a series of roadside vegetation categories have been established. These categories consider aspects of the vegetation associations present within defined segments of roadside as determined through a Roadside Vegetation Survey. Categories are assigned to sections of roadside vegetation through a combination of the conservation priority rating for the vegetation association present and the current condition of the vegetation. The conservation priority rating is an indication of how well the particular vegetation association is conserved within the state, and the condition of the vegetation is an assessment of the extent to which weeds have replaced the native understorey. The categories of roadside vegetation within the council area are described below.

2.5.2 Weed Control (Environmental Weeds and Proclaimed Pest Plants)

Councils weed control program is concerned primarily with bushfire control and the protection of road and drainage infrastructure. It is important to recognise that the control of prescribed weeds within a road reserve is the responsibility of the adjoining landowner. In the interest of limiting the spread of proclaimed weeds, Council will continue to support initiatives of the NRM Boards to educate the community with respect to their responsibility for the management of prescribed weeds within road reserves.

2.5.3 Further Actions

Further actions regarding Biodiversity Conservation will include:

- Implementation of Councils Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP);
- Undertaking the Roadside Vegetation Surveys required as part of the implementation of the RVMP; and
- Investigating further revegetation projects on Council land where appropriate.

2.6 Resource Use

In accordance with Councils Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012:

Objectives

Responsibly manage the natural and built environment to ensure its sustainability and diversity for the community.

Provide leadership for the community and ensuring efficient and effective management of the community's resources.

Goals

- 1.4 To responsibly manage the natural environment to ensure its sustainability and to implement natural resource management principles.
- 2.5 To implement sustainable programs and policies for the management of waste in the Coorong District Council.

The use of resources by a Council may be directly through the consumption of goods, or indirectly through the outsourcing of services to consultants or contractors.

Each year Council purchases a number of goods in large quantities. Trends in consumption of these goods are a useful indicator of Councils performance in terms of reducing its ecological footprint.

The Council may undertake an audit to ascertain its ecological footprint or carbon footprint with an aim to reduce this over time. The following identifies initiatives Council may implement with regard to its resource use to improve its environmental performance and reduce its ecological footprint.

2.6.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A key part in the Council becoming more sustainable will be ensuring that greenhouse gas emissions associated with the provision of Council services are minimised. Initiatives that have been undertaken by other Councils to achieve this aim include:

- Green purchasing,
- Sustainable public lighting,
- Sustainable transport programs, and
- Local economic development programs, which have economic and greenhouse abatement benefits.

The Council will seek to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by investigating the use and feasibility of options to reduce petrol and electricity consumption. This may include the use of alternative fuels such as gas or bio fuels or having smaller vehicles or hybrid vehicles as part of its vehicle fleet.

2.6.2 Alternative Energy & Energy Conservation

Council has committed to the use of 20% of its energy requirements from renewable 'green power' sources from 2010. This power is being bought through a Local Government Corporate Services (LGCS) initiative to purchase green power on behalf of Councils. The commencement of the purchase of 20% green power will make a significant difference to the ecological footprint of the Council as will implementation

of measures to reduce consumption or to seek other alternative forms of fuel such as gas or bio diesel.

An initiative of the Council may be to take advantage of incentive schemes such as the Australian Governments Solar Homes and Communities Plan whereby Council can seek grants for up to 50% of the cost of installing solar energy electricity systems of up to 2kW. By installing solar energy systems the Council can play an active role in educating the local community and promoting the benefits of sustainable solutions by reducing impact on the environment and generating clean energy. The Council would need to commit to such a scheme through its budgetary process.

The Council may also participate in a Community Purchase of Renewable Energy Program, this will be further discussed in Section 2.8.

2.6.3 Paper Use

The recycling of paper in Councils offices occurs but is not undertaken by all staff or in an overall coordinated manner. Some offices recycle better than others. According to the CSIRO (www.csiro.au) every tonne of paper that is recycled (approximately 400 reams) saves:

- 31,780 litres of water;
- 4100 kilowatt/hours of electricity;
- 75 per cent of chlorinated bleach;
- 27 kilograms of air pollutants;
- 13 trees;
- 4 cubic metres of landfill; and
- 2.5 barrels of oil.

Furthermore, every 100 reams of recycled office paper that is printed double sided will save more than one tonne of greenhouse gases being released into the atmosphere. (www.deakin.edu.au.)

The Council can reduce paper use by initiating a campaign amongst staff to promote recycling of all paper in its office as well as promote the use of double sided printing.

The Council can also ensure it purchases recycled paper for its offices. There are a vast array of initiatives Council staff can implement to reduce paper use.

2.6.4 Further Actions

There are a wide range of simple actions Council can implement with regard to Resource use, these will be listed in the Action Plan. However in order to become Carbon Neutral to Council will need to calculate its carbon footprint and then implement actions to reduce resource use to achieve this aim.

2.7 Waste Management

In accordance with Councils Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012:

Objectives

Responsibly manage the natural and built environment to ensure its sustainability and diversity for the community.

Provide leadership for the community and ensuring efficient and effective management of the community's resources.

Goals

- 1.3 To responsibly manage the natural environment to ensure its sustainability and to implement natural resource management principles.
- 1.6 To implement sustainable programs and policies for the management of waste in the Coorong District Council.

The Coorong District Council manages a landfill at Tailem Bend and Waste Transfer Stations at Meningie, Tintinara, Coonalpyn, Jabuk and Yumali. Since 2007 Council has invested considerable funds undertaking landfill closures, creating new Waste Transfer Stations and ensuring the Tailem Bend landfill meets EPA requirements.

The Council has been a leader in ensuring as much waste as possible is diverted from landfill and into recycling. The Council was the first Council to apply for a reduction in the EPA Solid Waste Levy as a result of this levy being doubled in 2007. When this rate was doubled it caused great concern for Local Government, as a result the EPA responded by granting a reduction equal to the contribution rate per tonne for materials diverted from landfill by Waste Depot Operators where verifiable records could be provided. The reduction to the levy is equal to a contribution rate per tonne for materials diverted from landfill.

As the Coorong District Council was the first to apply for the reduction it was a test case for the EPA to assist it to determine its methodology for reductions. Reductions are made to the upcoming levy charge, for example; records of quantities diverted from landfill for 2008/09 provided to EPA in July 2009 are calculated and deducted from the 2009/10 levy.

The Council is committed to encouraging as much recycling as possible and ensuring its waste management practices reflect industry best practice.

Kerbside collection within the Councils townships consist of a weekly pickup of domestic rubbish and a monthly collection of recyclable materials. A 240 litre mobile garbage bin is used for recycling pickup and is supplied by Council. The waste collection bin is purchased by residents and is limited to one 120 litre bin per household.

The Coorong District Council offers its residents periodic Drum Muster collections at Meningie Waste Transfer Station, Jabuk Waste Depot, Coonalpyn Council Depot and Tintinara Waste Transfer Station. Drum Muster is the national program for the collection and recycling of empty, clean, non-returnable crop production and on-farm animal health containers and is the single largest environmental program ever undertaken jointly by farmers/chemical users, Local Government and the Crop Production and Animal Health Industries. Drum Muster believes that the responsible

use of chemicals and the implementation of waste management initiatives means a cleaner, greener environment for the community as a whole.

The Council has committed to spend \$370,000 on constructing a new landfill cell at its Taillem Bend landfill during the 2009-10 Financial year. The Council has obtained all the necessary approvals for this project. This investment in the Taillem Bend Landfill is extremely important to ensure the long term sustainable future of waste disposal for the Council.

2.7.1 Further Actions

There are several further actions identified in Councils Annual Business Plan for 2009-10 regarding Councils Waste Management services, these include:

- Investigating the feasibility of a Regional Landfill Strategy;
- Ongoing development and review of Councils recycling program;
- Review options regarding the provision of kerbside green waste collection services.

However the Council resolved at its meeting in October 2009 to:

- Undertake a review of the provision of Council's waste and recycling collection and disposal services for its ratepayers, residents and business operators across the entire Council area, prior to the formulation of the 2010/2011 budget.
- Prepare a policy in relation to the provision of waste and recycling services.
- Include as part of the review, but not be limited to:
 - Household waste (including recycling)
 - Green waste
 - Electronic waste
 - Hazardous waste
 - Kerb collection of large items (hard waste collection)
 - Existing voucher system
 - Communal collection points
 - Cost of service provision
 - Best practice service models in use across Australia
 - User pays principles for the service through the levying of a separate charge
 - Other implications for Council's rating policy
- Undertake community consultation in relation to the review across the entire Council area, in accordance with best practice principles contained within the Local Government Association's Community Engagement Handbook.

This comprehensive review will be reflected in the Action Plan and is indicative of Councils commitment to ensure its waste management services reflect best practice, meet community expectations and are provided in the most appropriate manner.

2.8 Community Participation

In accordance with Councils Strategic Management Plan 2008-2012:

Objective

Provide leadership for the community and ensuring efficient and effective management of the community's resources.

Goal

4.2 To facilitate open and transparent relationships with the community and key stakeholders.

The Council can look at strengthening the links between Council and the Community, in particular the indigenous community. There are several initiatives identified in Councils Strategic Management Plan that will assist with this aim. The Plan may identify further means that Council can engage in meaningful open two way communication with the community especially with regard to sustainability.

In recent years Council has placed more emphasis on public consultation and engagement. This has resulted Council holding regular community forums in its towns (generally following a Council meeting), having stalls at the Coonalpyn Show, Meningie Shows and Murraylands Career Expo and ensuring it regularly communicates with the community by means of the Council newsletter. The Council has also updated its website to make it much more user friendly, up to date and informative.

The Council will continue to engage its community and as part of this will commence to promote sustainability. This can be achieved by having information available at its offices on ways the community can be more sustainable. The Council will also create a section on its website that will have links to information about grants and/or initiatives that the community and individuals can participate in.

An effective way Council can promote sustainability and community participation is through subsidies and bulk buy arrangements. The Council may investigate the feasibility of entering this type of initiative whether it be for composting bins, worm farms or energy efficiency such as a Community Participation in Renewable Energy Program (C-PREP).

2.8.1 Community Participation in Renewable Energy Program (C-PREP)

The first ever C-PREP was implemented by Towong Shire Council in North East Victoria in 2007. Since that program some 33 Councils have also undertaken a C-PREP. In South Australia the City of Victor Harbor and Barossa Council are currently undertaking a C-PREP.

The Community Purchase of Renewable Energy Program (C-PREP) has been designed to:

- Reduce or negate ratepayer energy bills.
- Decrease the communities carbon footprint (by lessening reliance on traditional power)
- Promote job opportunities in renewable energy

- Enhance the areas attraction to prospective residents and business.

C-PREP is based on a large number of ratepayers taking an option to purchase a minimum solar panel system of approximately 1.2kWh. The estimated cost is between \$2,000 and \$3,000. These systems will be grid connected to attract feed in tariffs.

C-PREP can be an initial step by Council into ongoing engagement with renewable energy. Incremental solar panels and wind power with its ability to augment solar power could be the next phase.

The C-PREP Program procedure in Victor Harbor as an example is:

- Ratepayer fills out registration form and remits payment of \$75.00 to the City of Victor Harbor.
- Ratepayer advises if finance needed.
- The Council will notify supplier/installer of the registration and have them contact the resident.
- If finance is needed, the Council will advise the lender partner who will then contact the resident.

All finance agreements and contracts are then handled directly between the Resident and Bendigo Bank.

Some of the estimated benefits of the C-PREP in Victor Harbor include:

- 900 Fleurieu ratepayers have invested \$2.25 million in renewable energy
- \$8 million in Federal Government rebates attracted to the Fleurieu
- ZEN installs a \$20,000 local office
- Three (3) local jobs created to staff it
- 24 local electricians contracted for 9 month installation program
- \$35,000 in local newspaper advertising
- \$4,000 ZEN sponsors LGA Annual Conference
- Ratepayer per annum power savings estimated at \$250,000 annually
- \$130,000 raised via registration fees
- \$30,000 ZEN/Adelaide University/Victor Harbor partnership for renewable energy research “proof of concept” (solar/wind hybrid)
- ETSA gets \$500,000 for new meters
- 900 households save approximately 1,170 Tonnes of CO2 annually

These figures may have been more impressive had the Federal Government not closed the solar rebate program three weeks prior to it being scheduled to end on the 30 June 2009. The figures above include residents from across the Fleurieu Peninsula including Victor Harbor, Alexandrina, Yankalilla and Kangaroo Island Councils.

Council can facilitate the interaction with the supplier to ensure the timely installation, track the installation rate and measure and record carbon savings.

A C-PREP may be a great way for Council to initiate community participation and interest in sustainability and renewable energy.

2.8.2 Further Actions

Further actions regarding Community Participation will include:

- Continued community engagement and ensuring information for sustainability initiatives are available on Council website and in the Council offices;
- Investigation into participation in a Community Participation in Renewable Energy Program (C-PREP);
- Investigation into other bulk buy initiatives promoting sustainability and community participation.

3. ACTION PLAN

The following action plan identifies actions in accordance with the key areas of sustainability as identified in Section 2.

3.1 Governance and Legislation

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGETS	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.1.1 Triple Bottom Line Reporting	1. Implement triple bottom line reporting as part of Council Meeting agenda reports.	None	All	2009
	2. Investigate IT systems and software that will assist in implementing and monitoring triple bottom line reporting.	Unknown	Corporate	2012
3.1.2 Engagement and communication with the NRM Boards	1. Regular attendance at the MDB NRM Local Government Advisory Committee	None	DES	Ongoing
	2. Foster links with the SE NRM Board 3. Continued interaction and partnerships between Councils LAP Program and Staff and the NRM Boards. <i>Note: Refer to Action 3.2.4.</i>		DES DES	
	4. Attendance at NRM Board workshops and seminars		All	
3.1.3 Enhance Councils relationship with local Indigenous Community	Enter into an agreement and formulate a policy regarding construction works to ensure the protection and preservation of aboriginal heritage <i>Note: This is consistent with Strategic Management Plan (SMP) Action 3.1.5.3</i>	None	Governance/Asset	2010
3.1.4 Sustainability objectives in all relevant Council Policies	Sustainability objectives and principles are inserted in all relevant Council Policies. <i>Note: Council staff are currently undertaking a review of Councils Policy Manual. This will result in many policies being reviewed and updated. This process can be coupled with the insertion of sustainability objectives into Councils policies.</i>	None	Governance	2011
3.1.5 Sustainability Statement in Council staff Job and Person Specifications	All Job Descriptions to include Sustainability statements.	None	All	2010
3.1.6 Provide Laptops for all elected members	All elected members to utilise laptops eliminating need for facsimile machines, reducing paper use and improving communications. <i>Note: This action is linked to reducing paper use actions listed under 3.6.6.</i>	Unknown	Governance	2012

3.2 Natural Resource Management and Local Action Plan (LAP)

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.2.1 Continuing the LAP on ground works program in the Coorong District Council.	On ground works program funding is successfully obtained and the program implemented across the district.	Reliant on external funding	DES	Ongoing
3.2.2 Expanding the LAP on ground works program into the Tatiara District Council	On ground works program commences as part of Coorong District Council and Tatiara District Councils project funded through Caring for our Country funding. <i>Note: The Caring for our Country funding is from 2009/10 to 2012/13.</i>	Reliant on external funding	DES	2013
3.2.3 Review and updating the Coorong LAP document.	A new Coorong LAP document is adopted by Council and the LAP Committee. <i>Note: The new LAP document will need to reflect the new NRM regime and legislation, climate change initiatives and new carbon initiatives of the Federal Government. This is consistent with SMP Action 1.3.3.2.</i>	Unknown	DES	2011
3.2.4 Engagement and with the NRM Boards, other LAP groups and relevant stakeholders.	Continued interaction and partnerships between Councils LAP Program and Staff and the NRM Boards, other Lap groups and relevant stakeholders. <i>Note: Refer to Action 3.1.2.</i>	None	DES	Ongoing

3.3 Land Use, the Built Environment and Economic Development

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.3.1 Strategic Land Use Plans	Strategic Land Use plans completed. <i>Note: This is consistent with SMP Action 1.2.1.1.</i>	\$10k in 0910 budget	DES	2010
3.2.3 Better Development Plan Conversion	Better Development Plan Conversion completed. <i>Note: This is consistent with SMP Action 1.1.1.1.</i>	None	DES	2010
3.3.3 Section 30 Review	Section 30 review completed. <i>Note: This is consistent with SMP Action 1.1.1.2.</i>	\$10k in 0901 budget	DES	2010
3.3.4 Creation of a Renewable "Green" Energy Precinct	Policies and strategies are completed to promote Coorong District Council as a location for 'green' energy production. <i>Note: This may be reflected in the Section 30 Review</i>	None	DES	2010
3.3.5 Investigate further initiatives to encourage alternative energy, water conservation, water sensitive urban design.	Initiatives reflected in Councils policies & Development Plan.	None	DES	2011
3.3.6 Economic Development Policy	Completion of an Economic Development Policy to promote diversity of the local economy and sustainable job creation.	None	DES	2010

3.4 Water

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.4.1 Completion of Milestone 2 of the ICLEI Water Campaign project	Milestone 2 completed and endorsed by ICLEI	None	DES	2010
3.4.2 Completion of Milestone 3 of the ICLEI Water Campaign project	Milestone 3 completed and endorsed by ICLEI	None	DES	2011
3.4.3 Completion of Milestone 4 of the ICLEI Water Campaign project	Milestone 4 completed and endorsed by ICLEI	Unknown	DES	2012
3.4.4 CWMS Wastewater Reuse projects	The wastewater reuse facilities are constructed and operational in Taillem bend, Tintinara and Meningie. <i>Note: Consistent with SMP Actions 1.4.2.1 & 1.4.2.3.</i>	Refer 0910 budget	Asset	2010

3.5 Biodiversity Conservation

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.5.1 Roadside Vegetation Management Plan (RVMP)	Endorsement of RVMP by the Native Vegetation Council <i>Note: The RVMP was endorsed by Council at its meeting held in June 2009</i>	None	Asset	2009
3.5.2 Roadside Vegetation Surveys	Completion of Roadside Vegetation Surveys as required for the implementation of the RVMP.	\$45,000 in first year	Asset	2010-11
3.5.3 Investigate further revegetation projects on Council land	Appropriate revegetation projects completed	Unknown	Asset/DES	2012

3.6 Resource Use

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.6.1 Calculate Councils Carbon Footprint	Completion of a comprehensive audit of Councils resource use to calculate its Carbon footprint.	Approximately \$10,000	All	2010
3.6.2 Strategy to become Carbon Neutral	Completion of Strategy to become Carbon Neutral	Unknown	All	2010
3.6.3 Green Purchasing Policy	Adoption of a Green Purchasing Policy to ensure the procurement of all Council services and goods reflects sustainability principles. <i>Note: Linked to Action 3.1.4.</i>	None	All	2010
3.6.4 Investigate Councils Participation in the Solar Homes and Communities Program or similar	Participation and implementation by Council in a solar power program to have all appropriate Council buildings generating solar power.	Unknown	Governance	2011
3.6.5 Undertake an audit of all Council buildings to identify actions to reduce energy use	Audit completed. <i>Note: This audit will identify insulation needs, possible locations of sky lights, outside blinds and other additions such as verandahs etc that may reduce heat inside,</i>	To be determined	Assets	2011

The following actions will be implemented in order to reduce Councils resource use. These actions can be implemented prior to the calculation of Councils Carbon footprint and adoption of Strategy to become Carbon Neutral.

Paper Use

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.6.4 Printer Settings	All printer settings across the Council be set at double sided and black and white	None	All	2009
3.6.5 On line Purchase Order System	Implementation of an on line purchase order system	Unknown	All	2012
3.6.6 Provide Laptops for all elected members	All elected members to utilise laptops eliminating need for facsimile machines, reducing paper use and improving communications. <i>Note: This is linked to Action 3.1.6..</i>	Unknown	Governance	2012
3.6.7 Standard Recycling Practices across all offices	Procedures in place to ensure all paper is recycled, or reused in a sustainable manner.	None	All	2010
3.6.8 Investigate ways of reducing paper use in all Council buildings	All staff are aware of energy use and committed to implementing initiatives to reduce paper use.	None	All	2010

Energy Consumption

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.6.9 Standard Procedures for air conditioner settings	All air conditioners set at appropriate temperatures.	None	All	2010
3.6.10 Use of energy efficient light globes	Energy efficient globes used throughout Council buildings	None	All	2011
3.6.11 Investigate ways of reducing energy use in all Council buildings	All staff are aware of energy use and committed to implementing initiatives to reduce energy consumption	None	All	2010

Petrol Consumption

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.6.12 Car Pooling	All staff and elected members commit to car pooling whenever appropriate.	None	All	2010
3.6.13 Video Conferencing and on line meetings	Video Conferencing and online meetings are encouraged where appropriate to reduce travelling across Council.	Unknown	All	2012

3.7 Waste Management

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.7.1 Review of Councils Waste Management Practices and services	Review in accordance with Council minute 316/09 completed and reflected in Council 2010-11 budget.	Unknown	Asset	2010
3.7.2 Regional Landfill	Investigation completed regarding the feasibility of Taillem bend being a regional Landfill facility <i>Note: This is consistent with SMP Action 1.6.1.1.</i>	None	Asset	2010

3.8 Community Participation

ACTION	PERFORMANCE TARGET	BUDGET	DEPARTMENT	TIMEFRAME
3.8.1 Community Engagement, education and awareness of sustainability	Councils website including links and information on sustainability initiatives and grants. Information available at all Council Offices regarding sustainability initiatives and grants	None	Governance	2010
3.8.2 Investigation into a C-PREP for the Coorong District Council	Participation in C-PREP to facilitate community participation in renewable energy initiative.	Unknown	Governance	2010
3.8.3 Investigation into other bulk buy type programs to promote sustainability	Investigations completed and appropriate programs adopted by Council.	Unknown	Governance	2011

4. Conclusion

The Coorong District Council is committed to providing a sustainable future for its community. The *Sustainable Coorong – Action Plan 2009 – 2012* provides a policy framework and practical guide for Council to achieve sustainability through the protection of natural resource assets.

This plan will need to be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it continues to meet community expectations and Council operational needs. The Council will continue to seek opportunities fulfil its sustainability aims.

5. References

City of Onkaparinga, 2008, *Climate Change Strategy – A Community Plan 2028 Initiative – 2008-2013*.

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The Coorong District Council, 2009, *Annual Business Plan 2009-2010*.

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