



## **Vision:**

Baw Baw Shire is well known for its green panoramic vistas that are made up of rich productive rural landscapes, forests, rivers, mountains and unique biodiversity. The quality and beauty of our landscapes are fundamental to our community's quality of life, businesses income, the food we eat and recreation we enjoy.

Vision statement: *to be one of the most environmentally sustainable Shire's in Victoria*

## **Rationale:**

The Environmental Sustainability Policy and its supporting Environmental Sustainability Strategy will build on the previous Environment and Climate Change Strategy (2011). It seeks to provide clear direction for organising Council efforts that will enable the Baw Baw community to realise its vision to achieve social, environmental and economic outcomes, connecting the community and celebrating diversity. Our Environmental Sustainability Policy and its supporting Strategy will be key documents that guide and inform Council planning, decision-making, activities, strategies and policies across the whole organisation that impact on the environment.

The Environmental Sustainability Policy is based on a combination of:

- Community aspirations and priorities identified by Council's Environmental Voice Advisory Committee and other community consultations
- Learnings from the implementation of the previous Environment and Climate Change Strategy (2011)
- Updating Council's knowledge about key trends and issues affecting Council's role and ability to influence environmental outcomes
- Experience and practice from other local government areas.

## **Guiding Principles:**

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Council's commitment to working towards a more sustainable future. It provides a strategic approach to the protection of the Shire's environmental assets and to ensure that our resources are utilised in sustainable manner.

The Policy sets the guiding principles which will be established in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy and include:

- To ensure the future health and prosperity of our community, Council recognises the need to embrace environmental sustainability into all decision-making processes. We need to be resilient to the future impacts of climate change and contribute to the mitigation of its causes. We also need to be prepared for opportunities that may arise from the consequences of climate change that will benefit the community into the future.
- To ensure that Baw Baw Shire Council will be a leader in sustainability and environmental best practice. We will continue to engage with and inform our community on new and existing environmental initiatives and strategies.

- To ensure that all employees and stakeholders are encouraged to become actively involved in the ongoing environmental management of the Baw Baw Shire.

The key themes of this Policy that will be delivered through the Environmental Sustainability Strategy are:

- **Sustainability:** by adopting measures to conserve natural resources and energy, reducing impacts on our environment, maintaining our biodiversity, native vegetation and considering the ecological, social and economic implications of our actions.
- **Knowledge and Awareness:** by developing and maintaining a broad understanding of the impact of our services on the environment. Our employees, suppliers and contractors are made aware of and able to respond to their environmental responsibilities.
- **Continual Improvements:** by striving to continually improve our environmental performance through the setting and reviewing of measurable objectives and targets.
- **Community Involvement:** by developing and maintaining strong links with our local community and key stakeholders involved with Baw Baw Shire. Working in partnership with our community and government authorities to enhance the shire's environment, while respecting cultural, social and economic values.
- **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:** by implementing pro-active, feasible and effective actions to address climate change in line within the Australian and Victorian Government's Climate Change initiatives.
- **Compliance:** by complying with and where practical, exceeding the requirements of relevant legislation, policy and standards to continually improve our environmental performance.
- **Environmental Sustainable Development:** by integrating the principles of environmental sustainability into all Council's policies, programs and services.

## Related Documentation

Environment and Climate Change Strategy (2011)  
 Baw Baw Shire Council Weed Management Strategy (2011-2015)  
 Baw Baw Shire Roadside Conservation Management Plan (2014)  
 Baw Baw 2050 Community Vision  
 Baw Baw Shire Council Plan 2017-2021  
 Baw Baw Shire Council Waste Management Plan 2020

## Review and Monitoring:

Review and monitoring is a useful management tool to evaluate and review the effectiveness of policy provisions and plans. Given the dynamic nature of the environment, it will be prudent to undertake a review every three years to ensure that the policy and strategy remains current and relevant. Therefore this policy suggests that the next review date be 3 years from the date of adoption.

<b>Effective Date</b>	June 2017
<b>Next Review Date</b>	June 2020
<b>Responsible Position</b>	Environment Sustainability Coordinator