

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

ROCKHAMPTON REGIONAL COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY.

TOWARDS 2030



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

Rockhampton Regional Council would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians within our Region, the Darumbal People, the Gaangalu Nation People and the Barada Kabalbara Yetimarala People, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We also acknowledge the Torres Strait Islander people whose land is in the Torres Strait but who live and work on Aboriginal land.

Council also gratefully recognises the contributions of our staff, local residents, community groups, businesses, industries and other levels of government in the preparation of this Strategy and as part of our continuing sustainability journey.

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'Framing Toonooba' by Madelyn Holmes

CREATING A MORE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR OUR REGION.

At its heart, sustainability is about taking care of the environment, so that our environment can continue to take care of us.

As we move towards 2030, our rapidly changing world brings both challenges and opportunities for the Rockhampton Region. Sustaining the liveability and prosperity of our Region requires Council to work together with our local residents, communities, businesses, industries and other levels of government to create the future we want to see.

The Rockhampton Regional Council *Sustainability Strategy (Towards 2030)* seeks to deliver local initiatives that help us to align with the evolving policy landscape, whilst simultaneously strengthening our community, environmental and economic resilience. In doing so, the Strategy outlines key strategic priorities which will inform planning, guide decision-making and drive action and investment. Continuing the great work that we've already started, this Strategy delivers on our vision for a sustainable future through four interconnected pathways and a range of strategic actions that Council will lead over the life of the Strategy.

Together, we'll look for new ways to strengthen our capacity to live sustainably; create even more liveable and resilient communities; position our Region to thrive; and continually improve our environment and sustainability performance across Council's operations and services.

We look forward to working with you on the next chapter of the Rockhampton Region's sustainability journey.



Councillor Donna Kirkland
Water and Environmental Sustainability Portfolio



OUR REGION.

The Rockhampton Region is a major economic and lifestyle hub for Central Queensland. Our vast geographic area, and diverse natural environment, supports a variety of urban and rural communities, businesses, industries and livelihoods. Together, our community, our environment and our economy are key to our way of life.

OUR COMMUNITY



82,311
Rockhampton Region
2021 population



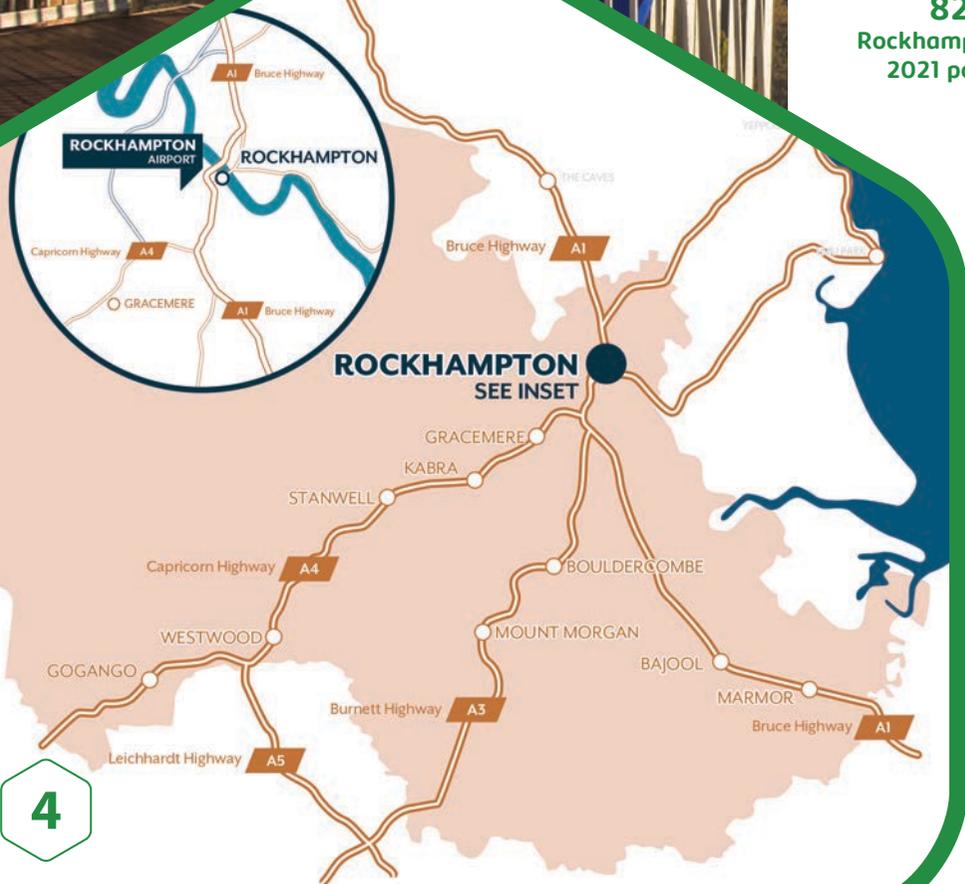
~35,000
private dwellings



113,096
Rockhampton Region
2036 population forecast



42
schools and one
University/TAFE within
the Rockhampton Region



OUR ECONOMY



\$5.56B
Gross Regional Product
2021



>5,000
Local businesses



**LOCAL
EMPLOYMENT**
15% Healthcare
and Social Assistance
11% Retail Trade
10% Education and Training
7% Accommodation
and Food Services
7% Construction
5% Mining



\$229M
added value of Tourism
and Hospitality into
Rockhampton Region in 2021



\$75M
total value of agricultural
outputs (mostly livestock)

OUR ENVIRONMENT



6,585km²
total area



418km²
wetland habitat
= 6% of our total area



30%
remnant vegetation
remaining



2nd LARGEST
seaward draining
catchment in Australia



LARGEST
river flowing to the
Great Barrier Reef



~5%
of Region protected as
National Parks, Conservation
Parks and Nature Refuges



610
species of
native wildlife



1207
species of
native plants



80
rare or
threatened species

“We want to ensure that the Rockhampton Region remains a great place to live, both now and in the future. We know that a healthy environment underpins a strong community and economy, so when we balance all three, we’re ensuring our Region is best placed to prosper.”

- Mayor Tony Williams

Source (page 4) - ID Informed Decisions (2022), accessed 17 June 2022 at <https://profile.id.com.au/rockhampton>

Source (page 5) - Department of Environment and Science, Queensland (2022), accessed 17 June 2022 at <https://wetlandinfo.des.qld.gov.au/wetlands/facts-maps/lga-rockhampton/>

OUR CHANGING CLIMATE.

The Rockhampton Region experiences a variety of weather cycles that are, and have always been, part of our natural environment. However, climate change is driving an increased frequency and severity of extreme weather and natural disasters. At a local level, our community has already experienced intense droughts as well as severe fires, floods and storms.

As the climate changes, so do the challenges facing our local community, environment and economy. The term 'climate risk' is used to capture the impacts on our human and natural systems from changing climate conditions - this includes a variety of physical, transition and liability risks.

PHYSICAL RISKS

Changing climate conditions and extreme weather events can cause direct damage to assets and property. Physical risks can be acute like flood or chronic like drought.



IMPACTS may include personal injury and loss of life, property damage and lower asset values, issues with insurance accessibility and affordability, supply chain disruption, water security and declining liveability.

TRANSITION RISKS

Policy changes, technological innovation and social adaptation can cause disruption as both operations and markets adjust to change and the new operating environment.



IMPACTS depend on the speed of transition but may include changes to pricing and demand, stranded assets, defaults on loans, technology disruption, policy uncertainty, investment hesitancy and skills shortages in key areas.

LIABILITY RISKS

Liability risks arise when an individual or organisation fails to appropriately consider or respond to the impacts of climate change.



IMPACTS may include stakeholder litigation, regulatory penalties, legal claims, business disruption, insurance issues and reputational damage.



OUR CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES.

As the world adapts to climate-related risks, every sector is undergoing transformational change. Keeping up with the pace of change requires proactive planning and action to ensure our communities, assets and services are best placed to benefit from, and prosper throughout, the transition process.

By embracing the challenges and opportunities that this presents, we can work together to:

- Maintain the continued liveability and prosperity of the Rockhampton Region.
- Respond to, and remain compliant with, rapidly evolving legislative requirements and community expectations.
- Leverage our abundant natural resources, affordable renewable energy and skilled workforce to support our growing communities, businesses and industries.
- Improve water security and water quality.
- Build the local jobs and industries of the future, whilst supporting the transition in an economically and socially responsible manner.
- Access new and emerging markets by expanding our local processing and manufacturing sectors and producing carbon-free goods and materials that are in high demand from the rest of Australia and the world.
- Support our agricultural sector to meet the increased global demand for safe, high quality food, whilst generating additional revenue streams and environmental benefits from carbon farming.
- Drive a circular economy that reduces waste to landfill whilst adding value within our supply chains.
- Benefit from zero emission vehicles that increase the efficiency of our transport network whilst reducing exposure to price fluctuations.
- Achieve cost savings from energy, water and waste efficiencies, whilst making wise use of our natural resources.

OUR LOCAL CONTEXT.

Council's Sustainability Strategy is influenced by a complex and rapidly evolving policy landscape. International agreements are driving national and state policies that flow through to the regional and local level.

To make the most of emerging opportunities for our Region, this Strategy seeks to align with national and state policies. The policy landscape addresses a wide range of matters including sustainable development, resilience, adaptation, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity and ecosystem restoration, waste management, and emissions reduction.

One of the major policy drivers is Australia's commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Paris Agreement), which establishes the global goal of net zero emissions. The Australian Government has committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 and to reduce emissions by 43% by 2030 (compared to 2005 levels).

- Climate Change Bill including national net zero by 2050 target and interim emissions reduction targets
- Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan
- Reef Blueprint for Resilience
- National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021 – 2025
- Australian Strategy for Nature 2019 – 2030
- National Waste Policy Action Plan
- National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

NATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

- UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals)
- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (Paris Agreement)
- UN Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework
- UN Convention on Biological Diversity
- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021 – 2030

STATE

- Qld Climate Action Plan
- Qld Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy
- Qld Zero Emission Vehicle Strategy
- Qld Organics Strategy and Action Plan
- Qld State Disaster Management Plan
- Qld Strategy for Disaster Resilience and Resilient Queensland Plan
- Qld Protected Area Strategy

- Central Queensland Sustainability Strategy 2030
- Fitzroy and Capricornia Regional Resilience Strategy
- Central Queensland Regional Plan
- Regional Waste Management and Infrastructure Plan
- Rockhampton Region Emergency Risk Management Assessment
- Communities in Transition Rockhampton Roadmap (Making Water Work project)

REGIONAL

- RRC Corporate Plan
- RRC Operational Plan
- RRC Environmental Sustainability Policy
- RRC Disaster Management Policy
- RRC Waste Strategy
- Disaster Management Strategies and Local Disaster Management Plan
- RRC Economic Development Strategy
- RRC Walking and Cycling Strategy
- RRC Biosecurity Plan

LOCAL

OUR ROLE.

As the level of government closest to the community, Council plays an important role in the protection of our local communities and in positioning the Region to thrive. At times, this may include acting as a:



PROVIDER

Deliver and maintain assets and services for the community



ADVOCATE

Promote the interests of the community to other decision makers and influencers



LEADER

Lead by example, ensuring that our actions help to guide the behaviour of others



PARTNER

Foster partnerships with other parties that support Council and the community



FACILITATOR

Bring individuals, groups and other interested parties together



EDUCATOR

Build awareness and skills to enhance local capacity and capability



SUPPORTER

Support other organisations to deliver services via funding and other support



REGULATOR

Regulate activities through local laws, policy and the planning scheme

OUR PRIORITIES & PATHWAYS TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

We know that the future isn't just somewhere we're going... it's something we're creating.

Council's Vision for the Rockhampton Region is:

One Great Region. Live. Visit. Invest.

Achieving this vision, both now and in the future, requires us to embed environment and sustainability considerations within everything we do.

Council is committed to putting sustainability into action through its corporate commitments and governance arrangements; its strategies, services and operations; and its community programs and partnerships. But we can't do it alone.

In pursuing this sustainability journey, Council recognises the need to work together with local residents, communities, businesses, industries and other levels of government. Council also recognises the need to embrace innovation, to welcome new opportunities to grow and diversify our economy, and to continually adapt our approach to meet the needs of our community.

As we move towards 2030, this Strategy will deliver on our vision for a sustainable future by progressing a range of strategic priorities through four interconnected pathways. Together, the pathways will help us to prioritise a healthy natural environment, transition towards net zero emissions, create a climate resilient region and build a low carbon, circular economy. Underpinning the pathways are a range of strategic actions that Council will lead over the life of this Strategy.



INDIVIDUALS & HOUSEHOLDS.

Let's work together to strengthen our capacity to live sustainably.



COMMUNITY & LOCAL GROUPS.

Let's work together to create a vibrant, liveable and resilient community.



One Great Region.
Live. Visit. Invest.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.

Prioritise a healthy natural environment.
Transition towards net zero emissions.
Create a climate resilient region.
Build a low carbon, circular economy.

BUSINESS, INDUSTRY & GOVERNMENT.

Let's work together to position the Rockhampton Region to thrive and grow sustainably.



COUNCIL OPERATIONS & SERVICES.

Let's work together to continually improve our environment and sustainability performance.





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.

As we move towards 2030, Council's Sustainability Strategy recognises the need to address four strategic priorities.

Together the priorities will help to focus attention on the actions necessary to strengthen our community, environmental and economic resilience and position us to make the most of emerging opportunities for our Region.

PRIORITISE A HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

by protecting, maintaining and enhancing our natural assets

TRANSITION TOWARDS NET ZERO EMISSIONS

by accelerating local climate action

CREATE A CLIMATE RESILIENT REGION

by preparing our Council, Region and community to adapt and prosper in a changing climate

BUILD A LOW CARBON, CIRCULAR ECONOMY

by working with business, industry, and government to ensure our Region thrives.

OUR PRIORITIES.

The Strategy's four key strategic priorities are designed to guide planning and decision-making, whilst driving action and investment.

- **Prioritise a healthy environment by protecting, maintaining and enhancing our natural assets.** Our natural environment provides a range of services and resources that sustain our industries, economy and lifestyles. Protecting the natural environment goes hand-in-hand with sustaining our own health, wellbeing and prosperity.
- **Transition towards net zero emissions by accelerating local climate action.** Human activities create greenhouse gas emissions that are changing the natural cycling of carbon through the environment. By doing our part to reduce emissions we are securing the future liveability of our Region and aligning with national and state policies.
- **Create a climate resilient region by preparing our Council, Region and community to adapt and prosper in a changing climate.** Our Region faces a variety of challenges and opportunities. To strengthen our community, environmental and economic resilience, we need to understand and prepare for the physical, transition and liability risks associated with a changing climate.
- **Build a low carbon, circular economy by working with business, industry and government to ensure our Region thrives.** Our world is changing as it begins to tackle climate-related risks, reduce emissions and adopt low carbon alternatives. Proactive planning will ensure our communities, assets and services are best placed to benefit from, and prosper, throughout the transition.



INDIVIDUALS & HOUSEHOLDS.

PATHWAY 1 OBJECTIVE.

Let's work together to strengthen our capacity to live sustainably.

Residents of the Rockhampton Region live in a variety of urban and rural settings, interacting with our communities and environment in a number of ways.

This pathway focuses on the role we each play as individuals and members of local households. It reminds us that our daily habits, the choices we make as consumers, and the decisions we make in our homes have impact.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 1.1** Support local residents to adopt sustainable behaviours that help them to save money and reduce household emissions.
- 1.2** Accelerate the transition towards zero waste by driving waste avoidance and waste diversion at the individual and household level.
- 1.3** Help residents build their household resilience to climate-related risks by connecting them with practical tools, workshops and resources.
- 1.4** Link individuals with sustainable transport and active recreation opportunities that connect with key local destinations and open spaces.
- 1.5** Provide residents with the opportunity to participate in a range of local sustainability programs, initiatives, activities and events.



KEY INITIATIVES.

- Deliver targeted community engagement activities such as the Get Ready Queensland and Living Sustainably programs
- Implement residential waste diversion initiatives including the establishment of a FOGO (food organics and garden organics) kerbside collection program
- Plan for walking and cycling infrastructure, along with improved end-of-trip facilities to support greater use and uptake of alternative transport options
- Support local events that foster sustainable behaviours and promote active and sustainable transport use
- Enhance digital and paperless communications, such as e-Notices
- Continue targeted incentives and rebates such as Council's residential water efficiency rebate
- Promote other regional, state and national initiatives that help residents to make wise use of their resources in their own homes and day-to-day lives

PATHWAY 2 OBJECTIVE.

**Let's work together to create
a vibrant, liveable and
resilient community.**

Our local not-for-profit groups, sporting clubs, special interest groups and broader community interactions contribute to the rich fabric of the Rockhampton Region.

This pathway focusses on the role our collective community can play in contributing to the strategic priorities and supporting the future of the Region.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 2.1** Grow the community's capacity and capability to understand, adapt and build resilience to climate-related risks.
- 2.2** Explore opportunities to work with, learn from and strengthen outcomes through partnerships with First Nations Peoples.
- 2.3** Enhance the liveability of our Region by supporting initiatives that protect local biodiversity, restore landscapes and increase urban canopy cover.
- 2.4** Foster community collaboration on key local environment and sustainability initiatives.
- 2.5** Encourage initiatives that help the community to adopt sustainable behaviours, avoid waste and reduce emissions.



KEY INITIATIVES.

- Work with Traditional Owners and First Nations Peoples to support connection to country
- Provide opportunities for our local community to get involved with the restoration of our natural environment
- Continue to support local natural resource management and pest management works
- Deliver community engagement programs that address climate-related risks and opportunities
- Support community partnerships, capacity building activities and community grants opportunities
- Implement targeted urban greening activities
- Deliver sustainable community infrastructure
- Encourage development of public charging infrastructure for zero emissions vehicles
- Encourage participation in citizen science activities to increase local knowledge and data collection
- Develop and deliver local education and awareness activities
- Support schools and community groups on their sustainability journey

PATHWAY 3 OBJECTIVE.

**Let's work together to position
the Rockhampton Region to
thrive and grow sustainably.**

A diverse range of business, industry and government interests shape and influence the Rockhampton Region.

This pathway focuses on all sectors of the regional economy, from small to large businesses, and also recognises the important role that the Australian and Queensland Governments can play in supporting the future of our Region.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 3.1** Advocate and partner to progress local climate mitigation, adaptation and transition priorities at the regional, state and national level.
- 3.2** Actively pursue opportunities associated with sustainable industries and infrastructure that deliver local social, environmental and economic benefits for the Region.
- 3.3** Progress workforce and economic planning that will ensure we prosper as the demand for low carbon products and services grows.
- 3.4** Grow local visitation and tourism opportunities that celebrate our natural assets and contribute to the liveability of the Region.
- 3.5** Work with business, industry and government to drive low carbon and circular economy initiatives, alongside other innovative and sustainable practices.



KEY INITIATIVES.

- Collaborate with local industry and other levels of Government to support sustainable development
- Contribute to key partnerships such as the Central Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, Reef Guardian Councils, the Queensland Climate Resilient Councils program, the Capricorn Pest Management Group, Economic Development Australia, Regional Development Australia, the Fitzroy Partnership for River Health, the Fitzroy Basin Working Group and the local Chamber of Commerce and other relevant groups
- Support the local implementation of regional plans and strategies
- Continue to activate nature-based tourism opportunities including recreational fishing, mountain-biking, walking, cycling and bird-watching
- Continue collaborative disaster management planning and action
- Advocate for regional water security and water quality improvements (reducing pollution, nutrients and sediments)
- Support local skills and training partnerships
- Implement regional waste management initiatives
- Encourage business water, waste and energy efficiency
- Progress the Making Water Work Program and the Circular Economy Pathway

PATHWAY 4 OBJECTIVE.

Let's work together to continually improve our environment and sustainability performance.

As an organisation, Council is responsible for providing a wide range of infrastructure and services across the Region.

This pathway focuses on the ways in which Council staff can contribute to the strategic priorities by embedding environment and sustainability considerations in their day-to-day work.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

- 4.1** Accelerate Council's transition towards net zero emissions by actively monitoring and reducing emissions within Council's operational control.
- 4.2** Embed climate-related risk considerations into Council's decision-making, planning scheme, local developments and operations.
- 4.3** Apply sustainable procurement, circular economy and lifecycle principles to the delivery of products, services, assets and projects.
- 4.4** Implement management policies, planning and practices that protect our natural environment and support the resilience of our biodiversity and natural assets.
- 4.5** Foster sustainable behaviour, and encourage the wise use of resources, by making sustainability second nature within Council's operations and services.



KEY INITIATIVES.

- Develop Council's Corporate Emissions Inventory
- Implement Council's Corporate Emissions Reduction Action Plan
- Facilitate implementation of the Climate Risk Management Framework for Queensland Local Government
- Set minimum energy efficiency standards for Council-owned buildings and assets
- Install behind the meter solar PV on suitable Council infrastructure
- Continue Council's fleet transition planning to support the move towards zero emission vehicles and equipment
- Harness Council's purchasing power to reduce emissions and waste through Council's procurement practices
- Achieve water quality improvements, through improved management of discharges from the region's wastewater treatment plants, urban stormwater network and local agricultural activities
- Develop integrated management systems for high risk operations
- Deliver internal engagement program to build staff knowledge and skills to implement sustainable behaviours in the workplace

'Still' by Michael Cave

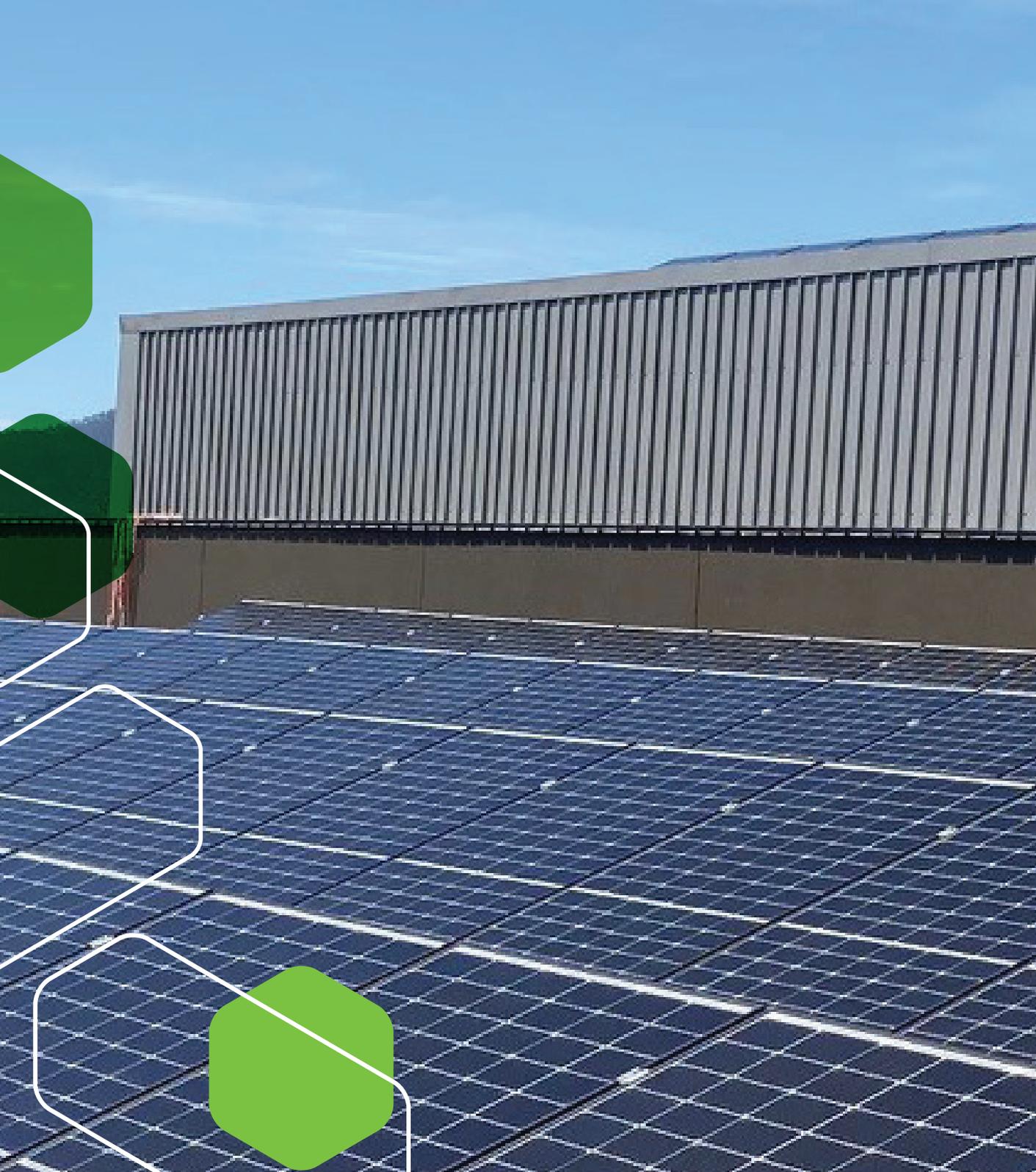
IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY.

This Strategy pursues a coordinated approach that integrates sustainability considerations across Council's many and diverse functions.

In implementing this Strategy, Council will:

- Lead our Region by example, supported by a clear sustainability governance framework which extends through our corporate plans, policies and decision-making processes.
- Work with community, business, industry and other levels of government to communicate and support the vision and strategic priorities.
- Communicate and collaborate to ensure we make the best use of finite resources and avoid duplication of effort or missed opportunities.
- Continue to monitor the evolving policy landscape and best practice standards for environment and sustainability.
- Maintain an internal action plan that identifies and keeps track of each initiative, allowing actions to be reviewed or accelerated if stronger and more meaningful opportunities arise.
- Provide funding to support the action plan, subject to Council's budgetary process and other funding sources such as government grants.
- Maintain a supporting engagement plan that ensures stakeholders are engaged and informed during the life of the Strategy.
- Coordinate an internal Sustainability Strategy Executive Group to oversee implementation of the Strategy, with representatives from each Section of Council, meeting quarterly. The Group will be accountable to Council's Leadership Team and Councillors.
- Monitor implementation of the Strategy against the action plan as well as progress towards emissions reduction targets.
- Be accountable and report progress back to the community through a range of tools including Operational Plan reporting and the annual Sustainability Strategy Year in Review.





TOWARDS 2030.

As we move towards 2030, we look forward to continuing the great work that we've started, whilst looking for new ways to:

- prioritise a healthy natural environment by protecting, maintaining and enhancing our natural assets;
- transition towards net zero emissions by accelerating local climate action;
- create a climate resilient region by preparing our Council, Region and the community to adapt and prosper in a changing climate; and
- build a low carbon, circular economy by working with business, industry and government to ensure our region thrives.

We're excited about the opportunity to positively influence the continuing liveability and prosperity of this wonderful place we call home. By working together with our local residents, communities, businesses, industries and other levels of government we are taking proactive steps to create the future we want to see.

We welcome you to be part of the next chapter in the Rockhampton Region's sustainability journey.

Let's continue to work together to create One Great Region. Live. Visit. Invest.

'Last light' by Russell Prothero



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