

Media Release

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Council tackles climate change at local level

Gladstone Regional Council has been included in a new report showcasing the proactive initiatives local councils are taking to reduce climate change impacts within the Great Barrier Reef region.

The *Reef Guardian Councils Climate change snapshot* highlights council-led actions such as developing policies and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, changing street lighting to LED, installing bike paths to encourage active transport and using landfill gas for energy production.

Many of these climate change initiatives deliver a triple bottom line benefit to communities – social, environmental, and financial.

Gladstone Region Councillor Natalia Muszkat said Gladstone Regional Council has been an active Reef Guardian Council, delivering initiatives focused on developing policies to support climate change action including adopting an Environment Policy and an Urban Forest and Trees Corporate Standard, and continuing council's focus on green power generation.

"Council adopted an Urban Forest and Tree Management Corporate Standard in 2021 recognising that trees are necessary for a healthy environment and that urban forests serve critical functions in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation," Councillor Muszkat said.

"Another initiative took place earlier this year when Gladstone City Library took charge of its first fully electric SUV vehicle that is used to travel between all six libraries located throughout the region.

"The great thing about this vehicle is that it's charged via solar panels on top of the library and data gained from this will be used to guide future operational decisions as we moved towards a greener fleet."

Other initiatives include Council's Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy (2019) that set targets for 2050 including a 25 per cent reduction of household waste, 90 per cent of resource recovery rates and 75 per cent recycling rates across all waste types.

"Council has also been working on a regional transition plan in partnership with The Next Economy to secure a diversified low carbon economy for the region to become a green energy hub," Cr Muszkat added.

Gladstone Regional Council is one of 19 councils in the Reef Guardian Councils program, a collaborative stewardship arrangement between local governments in the Great Barrier Reef catchment and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

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Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority CEO Josh Thomas said climate change is the greatest threat to the Great Barrier Reef and coral reefs worldwide.

“The Reef Authority’s climate change position statement emphasises that only the strongest and fastest possible actions to decrease global greenhouse gas emissions will reduce the risks and limit the impacts of climate change on the Reef,” Mr Thomas said.

“Climate change is a global issue, requiring a global response, however, local and regional approaches are central to protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef, and we applaud the efforts our Reef Guardian Council partners are taking to accelerate actions to decrease emissions.”

Visit <https://www2.gbrmpa.gov.au/our-work/programs-and-projects/reef-guardian-councils> to view the *Reef Guardian Councils Climate change snapshot*.

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