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SUBMISSION ON THE WHITSUNDAY REGIONAL COUNCIL DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2021-2026

On behalf of the Whitsunday Conservation Council (WCC), please accept this submission regarding the Whitsunday Regional Council Draft Corporate Plan 2021-2026

The WCC is a non-profit, Whitsunday based umbrella organisation associated with and supporting a large number of Whitsunday based conservation groups. Our primary focus on the draft corporate plan is the importance of the natural environment in building a sustainable, climate safe community.

We believe that the Council has a critical role to play in protecting our natural environment and thus creating a sustainable, climate safe community. These roles are not adequately reflected in the draft corporate plan.

Our comments follow, starting with...

7. Key Focus Areas

In a region such as the Whitsundays, **Environment should be considered a Key Focus Area**. After all, it is a key pillar to our region. We all understand the strong link between the environment and the economy. They are interdependent; a healthy, natural environment drives economic opportunity and supports a healthy community.

Unfortunately, both our terrestrial and marine environments are under pressure, primarily from the impacts of climate change. We must confront the environmental challenges that we face today to ensure that future generations can benefit from and enjoy our community in the future. The Council has a key role in helping build resilience in our natural environment through environmental impact mitigation, adaptation, education programs and by demonstrating best practice in Council's own environmental management.

8. Delivery of the Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan needs to incorporate the environmental challenges that may influence and impact on the strategic themes and actions taken by the Council. The number one challenge is climate change. Other key factors include but are not limited to; water quality, biodiversity, waste, pollution and land clearing.

These factors need to be reflected in the Corporate Plan.

Our comments follow in the form of new objectives or amended existing objectives.

Office of the Mayor and Chief Executive:

New Objective – *Advocate for a carbon neutral community.*

New Objective – *Ensure that WRC acts as a leading environmental steward, supporting sustainability throughout our community.*

Infrastructure Services:

New Objective – *Prepare the community for increasing climate change impacts.*

New Objective – *Develop open space principles and guidelines to ensure that landscapes and public spaces are developed and maintained with appropriate reference to the natural environment that underpins the liveability and beauty of our region.*

Corporate Services:

New Objective – *Manage Council’s property and building assets and fleet to ensure minimal carbon footprint.*

Community Services:

Amended Objective 1. *Facilitate, foster and encourage region wide **sustainable** activities and programs that engage our community.*

Amended Objective 2. *Provide high quality recreational facilities that **protect our natural resources** and are well utilised by the local community and visitors alike.*

New Objective – *In matters of significant importance regarding the environment, we will endeavour to engage, consult and share information with the traditional custodians*

New Objective – *Undertake and support actions to achieve a carbon neutral community.*

New Objective – *Facilitate, foster and encourage region wide waste recycling and plastic reduction programs that engage our community.*

Development Services:

Amended Objective 3. *Strengthen and grow our business and community to attract **sustainable** investment that aligns to WRC endorsed plans and strategies.*

Amended Objective 5. *Monitor development and land use to ensure **environmental sustainability** and compliance with statutory requirements and development conditions.*

New Objective – *Support business units across Council achieve carbon neutrality through enabling access to grants and funding.*

10. Performance Measurement

Environment (one of the four pillars)

Draft Corporate Plan states:

“We will consider as part of our planning, decision making and activities any matter that may cause immediate or long-term environmental impacts. In addition, we also progressively look for opportunities to improve and deliver environmental benefits in the way we operate.”

The intent of this statement is unclear.

It should be made clear that the Council recognise their leading role as environmental stewards.

Suggested statement:

“In all planning and decision making, the Council will ensure that no immediate or long-term detrimental environmental impacts will occur. In all planning and decision making, Council will progressively work to improve and deliver environmental benefits in the way they operate.”

Acknowledgement of Country:

The Corporate Plan should provide a vision that highlights the need to protect what we have while acknowledging our past. In honouring our past, Council values the contributions all groups have made and recognises our Traditional Owners as the original Custodians of the land.

We also need to acknowledge the wrongs done in the past and seek to reconcile for the future. We believe that only through understanding and honouring our past can we move forward to protect and enjoy all that we have today for all people.

We believe that an Acknowledgement of Country, provided by our region’s Traditional Custodians, should be included in the Forward section of the Corporate Plan.

Sincerely,



Faye Chapman
Secretary



WHITSUNDAY
CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

Caring for the future is in our nature

