Environment and Sustainability Policy

Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) In line with The University of Queensland's (UQ) mission, vision and values, this Policy expresses UQ's commitment to:

a. adopt economic, social, and environment responsible, and sustainable practices in all areas of its operations to ensure UQ's long-term sustainability; and
b. protect and, where feasible, enhance the natural environment.

(2) This Policy applies to UQ and its controlled entities, and to members of the UQ Community who work or conduct activities on UQ campuses or use UQ resources and facilities.

Context

(3) As a corporate body and landowner, UQ must comply with environmental regulatory requirements primarily under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and the Queensland Environmental Protection Act 1994, their subordinate legislation and local government laws where relevant (the Section 6 Appendix lists all major legislation).

(4) UQ is a signatory to the Talloires Declaration, the University Campus Sustainability Declaration and the University Commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which affirms its commitment to fostering an institutional culture for sustainability.

Section 2 - Principles and Key Requirements

(5) To demonstrate its commitment to adopt economic, social and environment responsible, and sustainable practices, UQ will:

a. Manage its legal and regulatory environmental obligations in accordance with the requirements of the Enterprise Compliance Management Framework.
b. Transition UQ towards becoming a 'beyond carbon neutral university' and 'single use plastic free' university.
c. Increase awareness among staff, students, visitors, volunteers and contractors of environmentally sustainable practices at UQ.
d. Set and communicate annual environmental and sustainability measures and targets.
e. Integrate environmental sustainability into the investment, corporate planning, management and decision-making processes at UQ.
f. Engage with UQ students, divisions, faculties and institutes to facilitate, support and embed sustainability into campus life and across teaching, learning and research activities.
g. Strive for continuous improvement of UQ's environment and sustainability standards through:
    i. the ongoing identification and management of environmental risks;
    ii. the development and implementation of programs to assist UQ Organisational Units to maximise the efficient use of resources;

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iii. annual reporting of UQ's progress against its environmental management and sustainability commitments and measures; and
iv. pursue and promote the use of sustainable practices across all areas of teaching and learning, research, and operations.

Section 3 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

UQ Senior Management

(6) UQ senior management is responsible for ensuring that UQ and its controlled entities comply with its environmental regulatory obligations. Senior management is also responsible for championing the adoption of sustainable practices across all areas of teaching and learning, research, and operations.

Property and Facilities Division

(7) The Property and Facilities Division is responsible for:

a. developing and driving systems, programs and initiatives that support the environmental management and sustainability principles of this Policy;
b. advising and informing Organisational Units of their environmental management regulatory obligations at UQ, including their general environmental duties and duty to notify of environmental harm;
c. establishing and implementing programs and systems to assist Organisational Units manage their environmental responsibilities and sustainability practices, and meet their regulatory obligations; and
d. monitoring UQ's environmental regulatory obligations and advising the senior management on matters of non-compliance or concern with recommendations to remedy the irregularities.

Managers and Staff

(8) UQ managers and staff are responsible for:

a. complying with applicable laws and UQ policies regarding environmental management regulatory obligations at UQ, including general environmental duties and duty to notify of environmental harm; and
b. participating in applicable UQ programs and systems to manage environmental responsibilities, regulatory obligations and sustainability practices at UQ.

Section 4 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(9) The Property and Facilities Division will monitor, review and provide assurance on the effectiveness of this Policy and the operational measures in place to implement its principles through:

a. the establishment, implementation and ongoing evaluation of UQ's Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025;
b. ongoing monitoring of UQ's resource use and environmental inventories (e.g. energy, water, waste, transport); and
c. ensuring environmental regulatory obligations applicable to UQ are identified and appropriately communicated across the organisation and that suitable controls are in place to achieve compliance.

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Section 5 - Recording and Reporting

(10) The Property and Facilities Division will develop and maintain systems and databases, and work with other divisions, faculties and institutes to facilitate the recording, tracking and reporting on performance in relation to UQ's:

a. environmental regulatory obligations and associated controls;
b. sustainability commitments and measures across all areas of teaching and learning, research and operations; and
c. resource use and environmental inventories.

(11) Property and Facilities Division will prepare an annual Sustainability Report that highlights UQ's sustainability and environmental management achievements and performance against this Policy.

Section 6 - Appendix

Relevant Legislation

(12) Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (C'th)

(13) National Greenhouse Energy Reporting Act 2007 (C'th)

(14) Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld)

(15) Environmental Protection Regulation 2019 (Qld)

(16) Environmental Protection (Air) Policy 2019 (Qld)

(17) Environmental Protection (Noise) Policy 2019 (Qld)

(18) Environmental Protection (Water and Wetland Biodiversity) Policy 2019 (Qld)

(19) Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld)

(20) Biosecurity Act 2014 (Qld)

(21) Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 (Qld)

(22) Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 (Qld)

(23) Natural Assets Local Law 2003 (Brisbane City Council)

Definitions

Term	Definition
Natural environment	refers to all living and non-living things occurring naturally such as trees, land, wildlife and waterways, and protection of natural environment from invasive weeds, pests and human impacts.
Single use plastic free	in this Policy, refers to coffee cups/lids, takeaway containers, food ware (plastic cutlery, cups, plates), plastic straws, plastic bags, single use water bottles, and balloons.
Sustainability	refers to the ability to maintain healthy environmental, social and economic systems in balance, indefinitely, on a global and local scale.
UQ Community	current UQ students, staff (whether or not those staff are covered by the Enterprise Agreement), volunteers, affiliates and anyone else contractually bound to comply with this Policy.

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