Environment in all policies

KESAC Discussion Paper

An action contained in the Managing Impacts section of the Local Environment Strategy 2019-2029 states 'KEAC to provide council with a discussion paper regarding the application of "environment in all policies" approach to policy development'. The Mayor (Cr Margaret Thomas) clarified that it would be suitable for KEAC "*to review all Council policies (currently adopted and published on the web site) and discuss which specific policies could be improved through better consideration of the environment in the application of the policy.*"

A review of the current policies/strategies available on the Council website was undertaken to assess how much the natural environment was discussed and the results are attached.

One issue that kept recurring was the use of the word 'environment'. It was not always clear, particularly if a person is only perusing a document or looking in a specific section, what definition of the environment was being discussed. It is therefore recommended that the term 'natural environment', 'built environment' and 'general environment' be used more often than they are in the current documents.

Specifically defined:
- natural environment - ("encompasses all living and non-living things occurring naturally, meaning in this case not artificial" - Source: Wikipedia)
- built environment - ("the human-made space in which people live, work and recreate on a day-to-day basis" - Source: *Roof, K; Oleru N. (2008). "Public Health: Seattle and King County's Push for the Built Environment")*
- general environment - ("the circumstances, objects, or conditions by which one is surrounded" - Source: Merriam-Webster dictionary)

For the purpose of this topic, Public Open Space which has turf, vegetation etc. could be classified as 'natural' because turf, vegetation etc are natural and not manufactured (like seats, basketball court, toddler playground etc).

Not all strategies will require involvement with the natural environment, like the Customer Service Strategy (2017-2021), but others will to varying degrees. Some of the existing strategies could be improved upon with more focus on the natural environment.

For example, the CCTV Strategy (April 2019) may not appear not to to have involvement with the natural environment, (there is no mention of it in the current version,) however it could have direct and indirect involvement. Direct involvement would be best determined by the relevant people but an example could be the assessment of the location of a camera so that vegetation (street trees etc) is not required to be pruned, or at least be kept to a minimum with selective placement. Indirect involvement would be via the purchasing process, both the electricity to run them and the cameras themselves. An example of a strategy could be that the electricity used to run the cameras could be purchased as renewable energy.

The selection of cameras can be that they are more eco-friendly in terms of materials by having some recycled plastic as part of the manufacturing process, not contain materials harmful to the natural environment or have lower energy consumption and be more compact in design which in turn requires less packaging. Manufacturers who undertake 'green' or environmentally friendly manufacturing will promote that on websites and literature. In a practical sense any contract suppliers could be required to state and provide such claims in their supply tender documents and be included as one of the criteria for tender assessment.

(Another option might be for Council to have a Supply of Goods and Services Strategy to cover that issue for all of Council's procurement. Non-procurement parts of a strategy or a strategy without any procurement involved could discuss the environmental benefits.)

Not all strategies and actions involving the natural environment lie within Council's Asset Services Department. So who should 'own' the responsibility for including the natural environment in council documents?

The obvious answer is that everyone should 'own' this but development of, or updating of strategies is not undertaken regularly and are done so by different stakeholders. An effective approach to help ensure that the natural environment is always considered may be to have a single 'champion' providing guidance to people undertaking development and revision work.

List of environmental aspects to consider when drafting or revising council policies/strategies.
1. What might be the direct and indirect involvements with the natural environment be?
2. What part of the asset or service obtained by council could that be applied to? Such areas may be acquisition, installation and operational with subsets of maintenance plus consumables, or similar.
3. Purchase "green" or environmentally friendly assets or services and have this as one of the criteria for tender assessment.
4. Does this policy involve people being in the natural environment and if yes, what benefits (probably health) would that provide? For example, the Public Open Space Strategy (2018) lists the values of having POS and it reads a bit 'technical/clinical' all bunched up in a few paragraphs.
5. Asset specific strategic plans (Bicycle, CCTV, Non-Potable Water) could have more text in relation to how the natural environment could benefit from strategy outcomes (just in a general sense, not for each specific item,) and possibly how people would benefit from an improved environment.

Having discussion of the natural environment in policies keeps reinforcing the topic and even if there is not too much benefit for the natural environment from a strategy then at least the message is being reinforced in peoples minds and it indicates that the stakeholders who developed the strategy have considered the natural environment while drafting or revising the strategy.

Mark Schilling (KESAC committee member)
11 March 2022

Doc. No.	Title	Is the document topic specifically environmentally orientated?	Is the natural environment considered in the context of the document subject?	How is the natural environment been mentioned within the document?
1	**Activity Centres Strategy (March 2021)**	No	No	Nothing specifically about the natural environment
2	**Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan (2017)** (Refer Note 1)	No	No	Neither the 'Workshop Themes' section nor the (public consultation) survey section identified the natural environment as an element to be improved or managed. POS issues were rubbish, more seating and maintenance.
3	**Arts Strategy (2019)**	No	Partially	In the 'Vision' it shows (diagrammatically) a link to the environment in general amongst other links including tourism and states the City recognises there are strong links (by the Arts Strategy) to tourism and the environment. (Does not specifically state built environment or natural or natural environment but it reads like natural is the one in mind.)

Has a list of City strategies that includes the Local Environment Strategy |
| 4 | **Bicycle Plan (Summary) (2017)** | No | No | In the lists of benefits of cycling it states environmental benefits of cleaner air and reduced green house gasses due to less car trips. |
| 5 | **CCTV Strategy (April 2019)** | No | No | No mention of the natural environment. |
| 6 | **Community Engagement Strategy (2017)** | No | Partially | Text in the Forward states that the City " … have maintained strong ties with our environmental community, ..." (amongst others)

In the 'Risk' section the (natural) environment is listed as an impact in the assessment of detriment to people when assessing a proposal to undertake community engagement.

Engagement with environmental groups (Friends etc.) is listed and the 'LES' is used as 'topic specific' and consultative workshop examples. |

				KEAC is mentioned as a Collaborative Strategy advisory/management approach.
7	**Community Health and Wellbeing Plan (2018-2022)**	No	Partial	Some mentions of the (natural) environment but mainly related to the 'environment' in general where the meaning can be taken as both natural and built.
8	**Community Safety and Crime Prevention (2020-2025)**	No	No	No mention.
9	**Customer Service Strategy (2017-2021)**	No	No	No mention.
10	**Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (2017-2022)** (Refer Note 1)	No	No	Section 1.7 Progress and Achievements - Lists a partnership with Kalamunda Education Support Centre (Senior and Primary) re an environmental volunteering project
11	**Economic Development Strategy (2018)**	No	No	No mention.
12	**Environmental Land Use Planning Strategy (July 2019)**	Yes	Yes	**"Goal** To compile a comprehensive report on the status of current natural environmental factors and influences in the City, and develop strategies to enhance and improve biodiversity and promote sustainable planning practises which are sensitive and complementary to the existing natural ecosystem." " The Environmental Land Use Planning Strategy will set out the objectives for future planning and development with particular emphasis on the environment."
13	**Events Strategy (2014-2018)**	No	Partially	An objective was to incorporate environmental factors unique to the city into events programes.
14	**Industrial Development Strategy (Dec 2018)**	No	Yes	The document does discusses acknowledge environmental values and the need to protect them throughout the document. There is a specific strategy (3.7) to protect environmental values and another one for sustainable water use.

15	**Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan – Nov2019-Nov2021)**	No	No	Stated in general reference to other strategies and as an example of an area where there was an employment opportunity to be explored for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander people.
16	**Kalamunda Accountable, Long Term Financial Plan to 2023 (2013)**	No	Partially	States that 2.5% on net profits from any City property sales to go towards on ground environmental projects. Stated that asset management requires a balance of environmental values with development. Acknowledges that protection, management and promotion of natural environment is required to ensure a lasting legacy for future generations.
17	**Kalamunda Achieving, Corporate Business Plan (2020-2024)**	No	No	"The purpose of Kalamunda Achieving is to outline the major projects, including capital works and operational recurrent services and link these projects and services to the key informing plans including Asset Plans, Long Term Financial Plan and the Workforce Plan."
18	**Kalamunda Advancing, Strategic Community Plan (2031)**	No	Yes	Mentions LES & ELUPS Makes the distinction of 'natural environment' many times Priority 2 – Kalamunda Clean & Green has 4 objectives (out of 12 objectives from 4 Priorities in total)
19	**Kalamunda Advocates (2019-2021)**	No	Yes	Environment is included 'as an equal' with other issues to be addressed.
20	**Kalamunda Clean and Green, Local Environment Strategy (2019-2029)**	Yes	Yes	Entire document is about natural environment
21	**Local Biodiversity Strategy (2020 DRAFT)** (Refer Note 2)	Yes	Yes	Entire document is about natural environment
22	**Local COVID 19**	No	No	Nil

	Preparedness Plan (March 2020)			
23	**Local Emergency Management Arrangements (2020)**	No	Yes	Section 1.5 Aim of Recovery The aim of recovery is the coordinated process of supporting emergency affected communities in the reconstruction and restoration of physical infrastructure, the environment and community, psycho social and economic wellbeing (Emergency Management Act 2005) Environment is included 'as an equal' with other issues to be addressed.
24	**Local Housing Strategy (July 2021)**	No	Yes	Built and natural environments are distinguished several times. Despite only having a specific two paragraph section the environment is included 'as an equal' with other issues to be addressed throughout the document.
25	**Local Planning Strategy (2010)**	No	Yes	The Executive Summary states "The main thrust of the Local Planning Strategy is …… The protection of the natural environment and biodiversity …." Environment is included 'as an equal' with other issues to be addressed.
26	**Non-Potable Water Action Plan (June 2020)** (Refer Note 3)	No	Minimal	Only in the context of the 'hills environment" and the benefits of an MAR providing environmental benefits.
27	**Public Open Space Strategy (2018)**	No	Yes	Environment is included 'as an equal', if not more so, with other issues to be addressed.
28	**Tourism Development Strategy (June 2019-2025)**	No	Yes	Environment is included 'as an equal' with other issues to be addressed.
29	**Urban Forest Strategy (2020 DRAFT)** (Refer Note 2)	Yes	Yes	Entire document is about natural environment
30	**Waste Strategy (2013-2022)**	No	Partially	Mentioned mainly in the context of 'environmental pressure' to minimise waste but some comments re environmental impacts.
31	**Water Action Plan (Sept 2009)**	No	Yes	Environment is included 'as an equal' with other issues to be addressed.

32	**Youth Plan (2017-2022)**	No	Minimal	Environment/wildlife is listed as one of the fourth most popular item out of 11 that young people are interested in based on community consultation. (Sport at the top followed by The Arts.)

Notes
1. The Age Friendly Strategy & Action Plan and the Disability Accessand Inclusion Plan are proposed to be combined in a new 'Inclusinve Kalamunda, Social Inclusion Plan' (2021-2025) (OCM 28 Sept 2021)
2. Yet to be adopted by Council therefore reveiwed in draft form.
3. Reveiwed in draft form as a Council agenda item document. Now up on the Council website.