



Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Sustainability Policy

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Prepared by the
Environmental Health & Protection Team
in conjunction with the
Triple Bottom Line Working Group





TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE (TBL) SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Objectives

Council has a strong history of leading its community by example to progress sustainability. To this end Council developed Hornsby earthwise, Council's program for corporate and community sustainability initiatives. Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is one of these initiatives.

This Policy has been developed to integrate TBL into the decision making processes across Council to ensure consideration is given to social, environmental, and economic factors equally.

Overall the objectives of the Policy are to:

- Provide a framework for the effective and efficient roll out of TBL throughout all of Council's planning, operational and reporting processes.
- Improve decision making within Council and the quality of life within the Shire by ensuring sustainability principles are considered as part of Council's processes.

Definitions

The following are to be used by Council as consensual definitions of "sustainability" and "TBL":

Sustainability - is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

TBL - is a framework for measuring and reporting corporate performance against economic, social, and environmental parameters.

Application

The requirements of the Policy apply to the following planning, operational and reporting processes within Council:

- Business Papers being presented to Council.
- Measuring and reporting corporate sustainability performance within the Management Plan and the State of the Environment Report.

Although this Policy only requires the formal consideration of TBL principles in the above areas it is recommended that consideration be given where it will add value to any proposal or process within Council.

Business Papers

The Business Papers Subject to TBL Assessment document (Attachment 1) is to be used to determine whether the Business Paper that is being prepared requires a sustainability assessment using the TBL Checklist (Attachment 2). It is recommended that the TBL assessment is completed as early as possible in the process, i.e. if a Business Paper is presented to Council several times, complete the assessment at the beginning and, if appropriate, update the assessment to reflect new information. TBL Explanatory Notes are also available to assist report writers in understanding the TBL Checklist to complete the TBL Summary required in Council Business Papers.

Background

Acting as a guide towards sustainable business practices, TBL is a means of making operational the goals and values of an organisation. Local Government can use TBL to set its agenda for a continual improvement in the quality of life. It provides a means of consolidating existing ad-hoc approaches to comprehensively address the core functions and outcomes of Local Government and demonstrate to the community a council's commitment to achieving sustainability.

TBL is a planning and reporting mechanism, and decision-making framework used to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Acceleration of the sustainability imperative, changing community expectations and devolution of responsibility from Federal and State governments to Local Government has resulted in considerable changes to the role of local authorities over the last decade. Therefore, integrated management is essential to effectively deliver increasing responsibilities and results in benefits both internally and to the wider community. The primary functions of Local Government are dictated by the needs and expectations of the community, and these are well documented as changing. Increasing demand for resources and development has intensified pressure on Local Government and its management of natural, social and built capital.

Local expectations are compounded by the demands of the global community. International standards (there are no standards created specifically for Local Government to date), such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) stipulate that reporting should include fuller information. By its very nature, the range and type of information indicating a council's performance is usually far more varied than that for a corporation. The transparent reporting on diverse and meaningful indicators will help to express community values, provide wider criteria to evaluate council's performance and further develop trust in public institutions. They will enable councils to measure progress and apply transparent accountability.

The goal of sustainability is implicit in legislation governing municipalities throughout Australia. For example the Council Charter in NSW is to have regard to the long term and cumulative effects of its decision. TBL can provide a transparent, complimentary and coherent structure to meet legislative requirements.

To address TBL at the Local Government level the City of Melbourne and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability developed a TBL Toolkit. This Toolkit forms the basis of this Council's TBL framework in formally responding to sustainability considerations.

TBL Principles

The following is a list of TBL sustainability principles identified by ICLEI that should be considered throughout all of Council's planning, operational and reporting processes:

- Fairness and equity between and within generations.
- Long-term planning for future generations.
- Efficiency – more with less, less waste.
- Interdependence – economy, society, environment.
- Caution – avoid risk of serious or irreversible damage.
- Maintenance of assets, natural and built.
- Value – recognition of value of the common goods.
- Net benefit – genuine progress, not just financial gain.
- Vision – hope for the future.

In order to provide consistency across Council's corporate documents and to continue Council's efforts towards "creating a living environment..." these TBL principles should be considered in context to with the following Strategic Themes within Council's Management Plan:

- Working with our community.
- Conserving our natural environment.
- Contributing to community development through sustainable facilities and services.
- Fulfilling our community's vision in planning for the future of the Shire.
- Supporting our diverse economy.
- Maintaining sound corporate and financial management.

In addition to the Management Plan, when addressing these TBL principles it is important that you also consider any proposal in line with the intent of the following major corporate documents:

- Social Plan.
- State of the Environment Report.
- Local Environmental Plan.
- Strategic Financial Plan.

Benefits of a TBL Approach

The benefits of a TBL framework are as follows:

- Aligns visions, values and action.
- Improves governance.
- Improves stakeholder relations and dialogue.
- Facilitates monitoring, measuring and management of risk, as well as opportunities.
- Enables innovations and leadership.
- Attracts and retains high calibre employees.
- Systematises and institutionalises best practice.
- Provides the ability to benchmark both within and across sectors.
- Improves access to capital.
- Improves internal communications.

Framework for Measuring & Reporting Corporate Sustainability Performance

A TBL sustainability framework has been incorporated within Council's Management Plan whereby a social, environmental and economic bottom line explanation is outlined for each of the six Strategic Themes. This is highlighted by the use of sustainability symbols (Figure 1) throughout the Plan that are complimented with sustainability indicators to measure progress towards achieving the TBL principles.

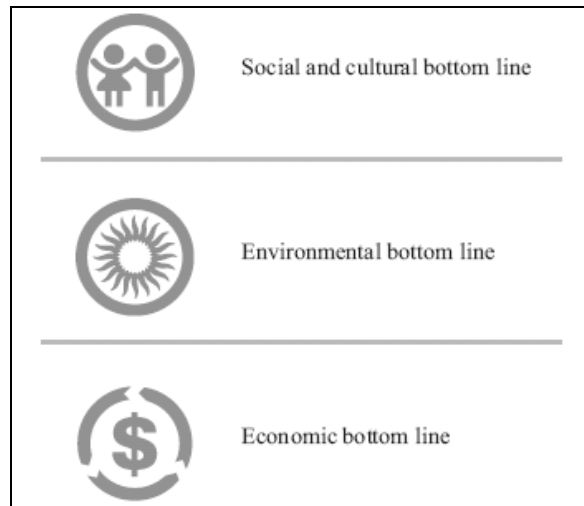


Figure 1: Management Plan sustainability symbols.

Council will also align the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) with any future TBL reporting. The GRI is an independent non-profit organisation that has developed globally applicable sustainability reporting guidelines and indicators for voluntary use by organisations. These GRI guidelines and indicators will assist Council in TBL reporting and improving operational practices for sustainability.

Ongoing Management

The implementation of TBL is being facilitated by the TBL Working Group made up of representatives across all of Council's Divisions. This Group is also responsible for the ongoing management, evaluation and reporting to ensure that TBL principles are met and maintained across Council.

Attachments

1. Business Papers Subject to TBL Assessment.
2. TBL Checklist.

All documentation pertaining to TBL and this Policy are located on Council's Intranet site.
Information adapted from the TBL Toolkit – Copyright City of Melbourne & ICLEI 2002.



BUSINESS PAPERS SUBJECT TO TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE (TBL) ASSESSMENT

Use the following table to determine whether the Business Paper you are preparing requires a sustainability assessment using the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Checklist. It is recommended that you complete the TBL assessment as early as possible in the process i.e. if a Business Paper is presented to Council several times, complete the assessment at the beginning and, if appropriate, update the assessment to reflect new information.

TYPES OF BUSINESS PAPER	TYPES OF DECISION	TBL CHECKLIST REQUIRED?
Management Plan & Budget	Adopt	Yes
	Note report	No
Corporate Plans (eg Social Plan & State of the Environment)	Adopt	Yes
Legal matters	Prepare proposal	Possible
Council procedures (eg business rules)	Note report	No
Council community committees	Appoint representative	No
	Establish new committee	Yes
	Adopt charter	Yes
Expenditure	Approve expenditure	Yes
Income	Approve amendments	Possible
Tenders	Accept tender	Yes
	Not accept	No
Council services & programs	Modify existing	Yes
	Adopt new	Yes
	Progress reports	No
Events	Approve events	Yes
Council developments and capital works	Determination of development / works	Yes
External developments (including tree removal)	Development determination	No
Purchase/sale/lease of Council assets (eg land & equipment)	Sell/purchase/lease of asset	Yes
Studies (eg environmental)	Note report	No
	Adopt study	Yes
Strategies / actions plans / plans of management	Adopt strategy	Yes
	Note report	Possible
Planning instruments	Adopt plan	Yes
Policies & codes	Adopt policy / code	Yes

Note: If the Business Paper does not require an assessment using the TBL Checklist you should still complete one if you consider that it will add value to the proposal.

Attachment 2



TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE (TBL) CHECKLIST

Council Meeting Date:	
Item Number:	
Business Paper Name:	
Project File Number:	
Responsible Officer:	
Extn:	
Save this checklist to TRIM file number F2006/00060, as well as the project file.	

This Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Checklist is a tool to address sustainability issues associated with proposals that are being reported upon within Council's Business Paper system. In order to provide consistency across Council's corporate documents and to continue Council's efforts towards "creating a living environment..." the questions within this TBL Checklist have been aligned to the strategic themes within Council's Management Plan that cover social, environmental and economic factors. In addition, when addressing these questions it is important that you also consider any proposal in line with the intent of the following major corporate documents:

- Management Plan.
- Social Plan.
- State of the Environment Report.
- Local Environmental Plan.
- Strategic Financial Plan.

The strategic themes and their corresponding sustainability questions are as follows:

1. Working with our community.	Comments
a. Is information on this proposal readily accessible and understandable to all sectors of the community?	
b. Does this proposal promote social equity?	
2. Conserving our natural environment.	Comments
a. Does this proposal incorporate initiatives to reduce / minimise the quantity of energy consumed and the level of greenhouse gas emissions generated?	
b. Will this proposal facilitate the recovery, reuse and / or recycling of waste materials?	
c. Will this proposal reduce water consumption and improve water quality?	
d. Will this proposal have a positive effect on bushland and biodiversity?	
e. Will this proposal protect environmentally sensitive areas?	

3. Contributing to community development through sustainable facilities and services.	Comments
a. Will this proposal enhance the amenity and / or use of public space?	
b. Will this proposal have a positive effect on the safety of the public environment?	
c. Will this proposal have a positive effect on the development of a healthy, equitable, active and involved community?	
d. Will this proposal have a positive effect on the provision of Council services to the community?	
e. Will all the community be able to physically access this proposal?	

4. Fulfilling our community's vision in planning for the future of the Shire.	Comments
a. Will this proposal be consistent with, and or enhance the existing built / natural environment?	
b. Will this proposal be sympathetic to identified heritage values of the natural and built environment?	
c. Will this proposal assist in reducing the demand on the existing transport network, both public and private?	
d. Will this proposal promote the well-being of the area's current and future population?	

5. Supporting our diverse economy.	Comments
a. Will this proposal have a positive effect on economic development?	
b. Will this proposal have a positive effect on the local economy (i.e. rural, industrial, commercial, business and town centre economies)?	
c. Will this proposal have a positive effect on local employment?	

6. Maintaining sound corporate and financial management.	Comments
a. Are there benefits associated with the ongoing life-cycle costs associated with this proposal?	
b. Will this proposal provide cost recovery / reduction opportunities for the Council?	
c. Will this proposal protect and enhance the value of Council's assets?	
d. Is this proposal financially sustainable?	

7. Other Sustainability Considerations	Comments
a. Are all the potential negative impacts of this proposal known?	
b. Are any negative impacts arising from this proposal able to be mitigated? (NB or should the precautionary principle apply?)	

Summary

Please provide a summary of the overall assessment concentrating on negative impacts from all of the sustainability questions and addressing whether they can be mitigated (This summary will form the TBL summary to be provided in the body of the Business Paper that is being preparing).

1. Working with our community.

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2. Conserving our natural environment.

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3. Contributing to community development through sustainable facilities and services.

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4. Fulfilling our community's vision in planning for the future of the Shire.

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5. Supporting our diverse economy.

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6. Maintaining sound corporate and financial management.

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7. Other Sustainability Considerations.

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