

Policy



STRATEGIC

Environment and Pest Management Levy

Head of Power

Local Government Act 2009

Local Government Regulation 2012

Key Supporting Council Document

Lockyer Valley Regional Council Corporate Plan (2022-2027) – Lockyer Nature:

- Lockyer Valley's natural assets are managed, maintained and protected.
- Advocate and deliver funding to support environmental projects.

Definitions

Community Environment Grant	Funding available to community groups, schools or organisations under Council's Community Grants and Assistance Program to undertake environmental projects involving the management, conservation and education about our natural environment.
Council	Lockyer Valley Regional Council
Environment and Pest Management Levy	A separate charge adopted by Council each year in its annual revenue statement and levied on all rateable properties within Council's local government area to fund expenditure on the implementation of environmental and pest management initiatives throughout the Lockyer Valley region.
Land for Wildlife	A voluntary conservation initiative that supports private landholders in managing, protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat on their property.
Natural Areas	Council-owned or managed land that is retained for its ecological, cultural or nature-based recreational value. These areas include bushland, wetlands and other natural habitats that support biodiversity. This includes State-owned land for which Council is trustee.

Policy Objective

The objective of this Policy is to establish a framework to allocate revenue generated through the Environment and Pest Management Levy to support the delivery of Council's environmental initiatives.

Policy Statement

The Environment and Pest Management Levy is collected and used by Council to fund programs, projects, and activities that align with Council's environmental objectives and strategic priorities to support the protection, enhancement, and sustainable management of environmental values across the region.

Use of Revenue Raised through the Environment and Pest Management Levy

The Environment and Pest Management Levy is a separate charge levied equally across all properties in the region in accordance with section 94(1)(b)(iii) of the *Local Government Act 2009* and section 103 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

The amount of the Environment and Pest Management Levy, along with any remissions or concessions, will be determined annually by Council as part of its annual revenue statement.

All revenue collected through the Environment and Pest Management Levy is to be accounted for separately from Council's general revenue. Any unspent funds at the end of each financial year are to be accounted for and allocated to be spent on future environmental projects, programs and initiatives.

Environment and Pest Management Levy revenue must not be used as general revenue at any time.

Environment and Pest Management Levy revenue will not fund costs associated with any development under the *Planning Act 2016* undertaken by Council unless required to restore natural areas consistent with nominated programs and initiatives.

Environment and Pest Management Levy revenue will be allocated to deliver projects, programs and initiatives across the funding themes detailed below. Environment and Pest Management Levy revenue and expenditure will be included in Council's annual report. Further information highlighting key environmental achievements, initiatives and services delivered will be reported to Council as actions against the deliverables of the Environment Action Plan.

Allocation of Funds

Environment and Pest Management Levy funds will be allocated to programs, projects and initiatives which deliver strategic outcomes that protect and enhance the natural environment and benefit the Lockyer Valley community. Revenue is allocated and managed across the following funding themes:

1. Natural Areas and Conservation Management

The Environment and Pest Management Levy will support long-term conservation outcomes across the region's natural areas enhancing scenic amenity, community use, habitat conservation and invasive species management through activities such as:

- Natural areas management and protection through vegetation management, corridor restoration, bushfire mitigation, waterway management, erosion, track and access improvements, signage and monitoring;
- Invasive species control in natural areas and reserves;
- Threatened species conservation initiatives, research and monitoring including support for regional collaborations;
- Climate resilience and sustainability programs (e.g. South-East Queensland Climate Resilience Alliance);
- Council's payment to the Department of Primary Industries' Land Protection Fund (which contributes funding of DPI's on-ground and research work, and the Darling Downs–Moreton Rabbit Board), and Healthy Land and Water;
- Regional environmental planning;
- First Nations land management collaborations and initiatives.

Revenue from the Environment and Pest Management Levy will not be used to fund costs associated with fire trail maintenance. Council charges a separate rural fire levy on all rateable land which contributes funding to deliver fire trail maintenance in the region.

2. Community Engagement and Other Partnerships

The Environment and Pest Management Levy supports partnerships, grants, landholder assistance and engagement initiatives that build community capacity and strengthen stakeholder relationships, including:

- Conservation incentives (e.g. Land for Wildlife);
- Community Environmental Grants;
- Environmental subsidy programs (e.g. Council's Herbicide Subsidy Program);
- Provision of hire equipment for treatment of pest plants and animals;
- Events, activities, workshops, education materials and signage;
- Research collaboration.

Environmental grants and subsidies are distributed in accordance with the Community Grants and Assistance Policy and Procedure and associated endorsed guidelines.

3. Environmental Operations

The Environment and Pest Management Levy will fund operational expenditure related to employee costs, materials and services, on-costs and overheads associated with the delivery of environmental management activities.

Resilient Rivers Initiative

Resilient Rivers South-East Queensland (RRSEQ) is a partnership between the Council of Mayors (SEQ), South-East Queensland Councils, the Australian Government, the Queensland Government, water utilities, key regional waterways and catchment organisations, and the community. The Resilient Rivers Initiative delivers coordinated catchment management to improve the health and resilience of South-East Queensland's catchments and waterways.

Council charges a separate Resilient Rivers Initiative levy on all rateable land to fund Council's contribution to the Resilient Rivers Initiative.

Revenue from the Environment and Pest Management Levy will not be used to fund costs associated with the Resilient Rivers Initiative.

Human Rights Consideration

Council is committed to respecting, protecting, and promoting human rights. Council has an obligation under the *Human Rights Act 2019* to give proper consideration to human rights when making a decision, and to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights. To the extent that an act or decision made by the council may engage human rights, Council will have regard to the *Human Rights Act 2019* in undertaking the act or making the decision.

Related Documents

Biosecurity Plan 2021-2026

Community Grants and Assistance Policy

Community Grants and Assistance Procedure

Environment Action Plan

Environment Strategy 2021-2026

Lockyer Valley - Natural Resource Management Strategy 2020-2030