NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

Environmental Sustainability Policy

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Contents

1.   Purpose

1.1.   The National Library of Australia (the Library) is committed to embedding sustainable practices across all aspects of its operations, services, and activities. This policy sets out the principles and responsibilities that will guide the Library in reducing its environmental impact, supporting national emissions reduction targets, and ensuring that our stewardship of collections, buildings, and resources aligns with long-term sustainability.

2.   Scope

2.1.   The principles in this policy apply to all Library strategic planning, operations and activities including facilities management, building works, collection development, procurement, exhibitions, events, and digital services. It applies to all staff, contractors, and volunteers working at, or for, the Library.

2.2.   This policy aligns with Commonwealth and Territory environmental legislation, regulations and policy including the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth), Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy, and the Commonwealth Climate Disclosure Policy.

2.3.   This policy is consistent with the Library's Emissions Reduction Plan and Environmental Action Plan, which provide the primary implementation pathway for the Library to reduce carbon emissions and environmental impact.

2.4.   This policy is consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that relate to environmental sustainability.

3.   Definitions

Term	Definition
Environmental Sustainability	Sustainability is the principle of meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It recognises the interdependence of environmental, social, cultural, and economic wellbeing, and involves the responsible management of resources. In the context of this policy, it is limited to environmental issues.
UN Sustainable Development Goals	The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals adopted by all UN Member States in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Each goal includes specific targets and indicators to measure progress across economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainability.
Emissions Reduction Plan and Environmental Action Plan	The National Library's Emissions Reduction Plan maps a pathway and actions to enable the Library to reduce operational emissions and voluntarily contribute towards the APS Net Zero 2030 target, under the Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy.

Term	Definition
Circular Economy	Unlike the traditional linear 'take – make - dispose' model, the circular economy is a closed-loop system where materials are continuously circulated, recovered, and regenerated to reduce the demand for new resources. Key principles include eliminating waste and pollution, circulating products and materials at their highest value, and regenerating nature. This can be achieved through design, reuse, repair, repurposing, recycling.
The Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy	The approach for implementing the Australian Government's commitment to achieve net zero government operations by 2030. This strategy supports the APS Net Zero by 2030 target of the Australian Government.
Greenhouse gas emissions	Gases released into the atmosphere, primarily from human activities like burning fossil fuels, which trap heat and warm the planet, causing climate change.
Climate Change	Long-term shifts in the Earth's temperature and weather patterns driven by human activities, primarily the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

4. Policy statement

4.1. The Library is committed to being a leader in sustainability within the cultural and public sectors. The Library recognises its role as a custodian of Australia's cultural heritage and acknowledges its responsibility to contribute to a sustainable future for generations to come. The Library will integrate environmental sustainability into decision-making, planning, and delivery of services to:

a. Minimise environmental impact through energy efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable resource use, and also support the Australian Government's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2030 across the Australian Public Service (APS).

b. Preserve collections using climate-conscious methods and promote sustainable access through digitisation. Conserve and enhance the Library's significant heritage values.

c. Engage with First Nations on issues of sustainability.

d. Pursue transparency and accountability by monitoring, reporting, and continuously improving sustainability performance.

e. Collaborate with government, sector partners, and the public to advance shared sustainability goals. Promote awareness of sustainability issues among staff, visitors, and the wider community.

5. Sustainability Principles

5.1. The Library's approach to sustainability will be guided by the following principles:

a. Climate Action and Emissions Reduction

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with APS Net Zero 2030 targets.
- Prioritise renewable energy, energy efficiency, and low-emission technologies.

b. Circular Economy and Resource Stewardship

- Use materials and natural resources efficiently, design out waste and pollution, and extend product and material life. Minimise waste and resource consumption through reuse, repair, recycling, and responsible design.

- Eliminate unnecessary single-use items and prevent pollution across all operations.

c. Sustainable Procurement and Partnerships

- Embed sustainability and ethical standards into procurement and supplier relationships.
- Work with partners who demonstrate environmental responsibility and innovation.

d. Sustainability by Design

- Incorporate environmental and life-cycle considerations into the planning, design, and delivery of infrastructure, exhibitions, programs, and services.
- Manage buildings, collections, and facilities to balance heritage values, conservation, and environmental performance.

e. Resilience and Adaptation

- Identify and manage climate risks to ensure the Library's buildings, collections, and services remain safe, resilient, and sustainable into the future.

f. Sustainable Infrastructure and Heritage Stewardship

- Operate the Library's buildings efficiently and sustainably while preserving their heritage values. Integrate sustainability and climate resilience into asset management, maintenance, and capital works.

g. People and Culture

- Equip, engage, and empower staff to contribute to sustainability outcomes.
- Foster a culture of environmental awareness, innovation, and shared responsibility.

h. Equity and Cultural Responsibility

- Ensure sustainability practices uphold inclusion and accessibility.
- Respect the custodianship of Country and incorporate First Nations knowledge where appropriate.

i. Transparency and Continuous Improvement

- Measure, monitor, and publicly report on environmental performance.
- Seek continuous improvement through review, innovation, and collaboration across the APS and cultural sector to align with evolving best practice.

6. Key roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Director-General and Executive	Endorse the policy and monitor progress. Provide leadership, allocate resources, and ensure implementation of sustainability initiatives.
Sustainability Officer, Governance Section	Oversees delivery of the Library's sustainability strategies and monitors compliance with this policy.
Managers and Supervisors	Embed sustainability practices into daily operations and projects within their areas of responsibility.
All Employees, Contractors, and Volunteers	Follow sustainability procedures, participate in training, and contribute to workplace initiatives.

7. Implementation

7.1.   This policy outlines the Library's overarching environmental sustainability principles, under which strategies and implementation plans are developed. It is intended to embed sustainability as a fundamental element of the Library's operations and everyday practices. While sustainability encompasses environmental, social, financial, and governance dimensions, this policy focuses specifically on environmental sustainability.

7.2.   The Library's *Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP)* and *Environmental Action Plan (EAP)* are the primary implementation strategies supporting this policy. They guide the Library's environmental actions and enable voluntary alignment with the Commonwealth Government's *Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy* and the Library's broader environmental sustainability objectives. The ERP sets the high-level pathway for emissions reduction, while the EAP details the specific tasks and actions across all Library operations.

7.3.   As a major purchaser of goods and services, the Australian Government has significant influence in advancing sustainability through procurement. The Library's procurement and contract management policy and guidelines require sustainability to be considered across the procurement lifecycle. This is in line with the Government's *Environmentally Sustainable Procurement (ESP) Policy* introduced in 2024, which the Library has voluntarily adopted as best practice. The ESP Policy makes sustainability a mandatory consideration for eligible contracts meeting spend thresholds in key sectors (construction, ICT goods, textiles, and furniture, fittings and equipment) for non-corporate Commonwealth entities. The ESP Policy and supporting guidelines provide practical tools for implementing sustainable procurement, including templates and suggested wording for requests for quotes, tenders, and contracts. Key practices include considering the total lifecycle costs, prioritising durability and repair, and encouraging suppliers to offer sustainable solutions. High level guidance on sustainable procurement can be found on the Library's Sustainable Procurement intranet page.

8. Review

8.1.   This policy will be reviewed every five years, or earlier if required by legislative, policy or organisational changes.

9. Related policy documents and guidance

9.1.   National Library of Australia Emissions Reduction Plan and Environmental Action Plan

9.2.   National Library of Australia Heritage Management Plan

9.3.   National Library of Australia Investment of Funds Policy

9.4.   National Library of Australia Investment of Philanthropic Policy

9.5.   National Library of Australia Sustainable Procurement Guidelines on the Library intranet

10. Commonwealth resources and legislation

10.1. APS Net Zero by 2030/ Net Zero in Government Operations Strategy

10.2. *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003*

10.3. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*

10.4. Commonwealth Climate Disclosure Policy

10.5. Commonwealth Procurement Rules (CPRs)

10.6. Commonwealth Property Management Framework

10.7. *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

10.8. Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy

10.9. National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (2021–25)

10.10. *National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (NGER Act)*

10.11. *Water Act 2007*

10.12. Paris Agreement (UNFCCC)

10.13. UN Sustainable Development Goals