



IPSWICH OUTDOOR/NATURE-BASED RECREATION POLICY

**DOCUMENT NO:
A4985493**

1.1 Objectives:

The Ipswich Outdoor/Nature-Based Recreation Policy sets the strategic framework for the provision, planning, development, management, maintenance and activation of sustainable outdoor/nature-based recreation in Ipswich.

1.2 Regulatory Authority:

- Ipswich City Council – Advance Ipswich 2015
- Ipswich City Council – Corporate Plan 2017 - 2022
- Ipswich City Council – Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2014
- Ipswich City Council – Nature Conservation Strategy 2015
- Ipswich City Council – Draft Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015
- Ipswich City Council – Conservation Estates and Reserves Management Policy
- Ipswich City Council – Ipswich Enviroplan Policy

1.3 Outdoor/Nature-Based Recreation in Ipswich

The City of Ipswich provides numerous opportunities for participation in outdoor/nature-based recreation. With increasing participation in outdoor/nature-based recreation activities comes an increased management requirement to ensure the continued protection and conservation of the natural environment within Ipswich.

1.4 Underpinning Principles

The following principles underpin the Ipswich Outdoor/Nature-Based Recreation Policy:

- Provision of a range of diverse settings for outdoor/nature-based recreation activities.
- Determination of future needs for outdoor/nature-based recreation facility provision.
- Council's *Natural Area Estate Land Management Zones* classification and hierarchy are to be used to determine appropriate level of activity within a site:
 - Low impact nature-based recreation for citywide and district natural areas.
 - Use of citywide and district natural areas for sustainable nature-based recreation is secondary to ecological values and to be determined on a site-by-site basis.
 - High impact outdoor recreation is suitable for local level natural areas.
- Recreation in the Natural Area Estate is sustainable, affordable, accessible and does not degrade the natural, ecological, cultural and social resources on which it depends.
- Access to a range of outdoor/nature-based recreation opportunities that do not negatively impact on the Natural Area Estate are promoted.
- Encourage provision of nature-based recreation opportunities by the private sector.
- Recreational user groups have a responsibility to contribute to the management of the natural resources upon which their activities depend.

1.5 Policy Statement:

Council is committed to the future provision, planning, development, management, maintenance and activation of high quality sustainable outdoor/nature-based recreation opportunities in the City of Ipswich. Where appropriate, Council will:

Planning

- Assess the need for the provision of outdoor/nature-based recreation activities based on demand and the identification of suitable sites to ensure a sustainable fit between ecological values and outdoor/nature-based recreation activities.
- Locate outdoor/nature-based recreation activities and settings in accordance with Council's *Natural Area Estate Land Management Zones* classification to ensure the protection of ecological values:
 - *Amenity Zone*: Low value conservation → High impact recreation
 - *Buffer Zone*: Medium value conservation → Medium impact recreation
 - *Conservation Zone*: High value conservation → Low impact recreation
 - *Biodiversity Zone*: Very High value conservation → Nil or Very Low impact recreation
- Use the following core *Performance Criteria for Site Selection* to identify appropriate sites for identified outdoor/nature-based recreation activities, settings and facilities:
 - *Demand* – Is there an adequate level of demand for the activity? Is the activity already accommodated at another location within reasonable proximity?
 - *Open Space Network Classification* – Does the activity align with the intent of site?
 - *Site Zoning* – Is the activity consistent with land management zoning?
 - *Outdoor Recreation Activity Categories* – Is the activity authorised?
 - *Carrying Capacity* – Does the site have capacity to accommodate the activity?
- Use the *Suitability Checklist for Outdoor Recreation Activities at a Determined Site Tool* to ensure any activity is both environmentally sustainable and fit-for-purpose.
- Where possible, ensure outdoor/nature-based recreation projects deliver positive conservation outcomes.

Development

- Provide forward planning and site based design for the development of facilities and settings to support a variety of outdoor/nature-based recreation activities.
- Develop outdoor/nature-based recreation activity settings and facilities in accordance with accepted outdoor/nature-based recreation activity standards.
- Provide outdoor/nature-based recreation facilities that are safe, optimise community usage and encourage increased participation in outdoor/nature-based recreation.
- Provide facilities and settings that are complementary to and protect the natural environmental conservation values of the settings within which they are positioned.

Management and Maintenance

- Manage and maintain outdoor/nature-based recreation activities, facilities and settings in accordance with accepted activity standards.
- Allocate and manage the use of outdoor/nature-based recreation facilities and settings for a variety of outdoor/nature-based recreation activities and user groups.
- Encourage and promote the development of Trail Care Groups at identified locations to assist in the development, management and maintenance of recreation trails.

- Implement a *Risk Management Framework* for specific activities or facilities to provide a safe, healthy visitor experience and protect the natural environment:
 1. *Identify the risks* – Identify all risks associated with an area or activity.
 2. *Assessment of risks* – assess the level of each risk:
 - The level of inherent risk of the activity.
 - The likely impact on the environment/setting as a result of the activity.
 - The level of difficulty of the setting for the activity.
 - The level of experience/ability of the participant.
 3. *Manage the risks* – decide on and use appropriate control measures.
 4. *Monitor and review* – monitor residual risks and review.
- Implement a *Monitoring and Evaluation Program* to monitor participation in, and demand for various activities and the impacts of these activities on the environment.

Activation

- Develop and deliver programs to activate the use of outdoor/nature-based recreation settings aimed at increasing participation in outdoor/nature-based recreation.
- Encourage outdoor/nature-based recreation clubs and Trail Care Groups to assist in the development, management and maintenance of activities, programs and services including conservation measures to ensure the sustainability of the activity.
- Increase outdoor/nature-based recreation participants' awareness and understanding of environmental processes and understanding of the importance of conserving nature through appropriate education campaigns.
- Manage access to sensitive natural areas through the facilitation of nature-based recreation activities and programs that result in no-net-loss of ecological values.
- Allow participants to partake in outdoor/nature-based recreation activities through the provision of supporting facilities and services within identified natural areas.
- Develop a set of guidelines to ensure the activation of natural areas for outdoor/nature-based recreation activities is appropriate and sustainable.
- Ensure residents of all abilities have opportunity for involvement and access to outdoor/nature-based recreation participation opportunities where feasible.
- Seek out, establish and support strong working partnerships with key organisations aimed at the development and provision of quality facilities, programs and services.
- Actively promote new and existing outdoor/nature-based recreation activity opportunities within the City including private facilities.
- Actively identify and advise those outdoor/nature-based recreation activities that are either '*authorised*', '*authorised with a permit*' or '*unauthorised*' within Ipswich's Natural Area Estate through appropriate procedures and notifications.
- Categorise and monitor authorised and unauthorised outdoor/nature-based recreation activities from a demand, impact, setting and risk management perspective to be considered for future authorisation on a site by site basis.

1.5 Scope:

The Outdoor/Nature-Based Recreation Policy applies to all outdoor/nature-based recreation undertakings conducted by Council including the development of sustainable high quality planning, policy, programs, facilities, partnerships, activities and services aimed at increasing participation in outdoor/nature-based recreation activity in Ipswich.

1.6 Roles and responsibilities:

This Outdoor/Nature-Based Recreation Policy is to be implemented by all Council staff and partners involved in and responsible for the planning, development, delivery, management, maintenance and activation of sustainable outdoor/nature-based recreation partnerships, settings, facilities, activities, programs and services in Ipswich.

1.7 Definitions:

- **Nature-based Recreation** – Activities that are dependent on the natural environment; have an appreciation of nature as a motivational factor; do not require substantial modification to the natural environment; and are environmentally sustainable.
- **Outdoor Recreation** – Recreation or sport activities undertaken in natural, rural and urban open space without significantly changing those places.
- **Recreation Facility** – A constructed facility that allows for participation in a particular outdoor/nature-based recreation activity within a particular recreation setting.
- **Recreation Opportunity** – Particular combinations of activities in particular settings. Each combination of activity and setting constitutes a different recreation opportunity
- **Recreation Setting** – A recreation setting is defined through the particular biophysical, social, cultural and managerial attributes of a place in which recreation takes place.

1.8 Policy Author:

The Sport, Recreation and Natural Resources Manager will be responsible for the maintenance of the Ipswich Outdoor/Nature-Based Recreation Policy.

Date of Review: 26 July 2018

Date of Council Resolution: 28 June 2016

Committee Reference and Date: Policy and Administration Board No. 2016(02) of 7 June 2016 – City Management, Finance and Community Engagement Committee No. 2016(03) of 21 June 2016

No. of Resolution: 1

Date to be Reviewed: 26 July 2020