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1. Statement

Ipswich City Council (council) recognises that in certain circumstances, off-site stormwater quality improvement can provide superior environmental outcomes compared to developer delivered on-site stormwater quality treatment.

As enabled by the State Planning Policy 2017, council has established an Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Program (the Program) whereby eligible developers can volunteer for their stormwater quality improvement responsibilities to be delivered wholly or partially at a nearby off-site location. Eligible developers pay an in-lieu fee to council, and council must use these funds to deliver an off-site solution that achieves an equal or better water quality improvement. Developer eligibility and approval for off-site stormwater quality improvement is at the sole and absolute discretion of council.

Council is committed to ensuring the Program is delivered in a manner whereby superior environmental outcomes are achieved compared to developer delivered on-site stormwater quality treatment.

2. Purpose and Principles

This Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Policy (the Policy) guides council's decision-making in relation to off-site stormwater quality improvement. The Policy is guided by the following purposes and principles:

- Off-site solutions will result in equal or better water quality (Total Suspended Solids, Total Nitrogen, Total Phosphorus, and Gross Pollutants) within Ipswich's waterways compared to developer delivered on-site stormwater quality treatment.
- Off-site solutions will provide multiple additional environmental and community co-benefits such as habitat creation, increased biodiversity, flood risk reduction, and urban greening.
- Off-site solutions will lead to a reduction in the number of poorly designed and constructed stormwater quality assets being transferred to council ownership.
- Off-site solutions will reduce ratepayer costs resulting from the need to rectify poorly designed and constructed stormwater quality assets once they are transferred to council ownership.
- Off-site solutions will be planned, delivered, and managed so the required water quality improvements are achieved in perpetuity.

3. Strategic Plan Links

This Policy aligns with the following iFuture 2021-2026 Corporate Plan themes:

- Vibrant and Growing
- Natural and Sustainable
- A Trusted and Leading Organisation

4. Regulatory Authority

- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Local Government Act 2009*
- State Planning Policy 2017
- Ipswich Planning Scheme

5. Human Rights Commitment

Ipswich City Council (Council) has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) when adopting and/or amending this policy. When applying this policy, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

6. Scope

This Policy applies to all council staff, contractors, and others that act on council’s behalf to ensure they work in accordance with its purposes and principles and relevant regulations.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities for the operation of the Program and implementation of this Policy are distributed and sometimes shared across several council departments and branches. Responsibilities for key roles within those departments and branches are:

Role	Responsibility
General Manager (Environment and Sustainability) and General Manager (Planning and Regulatory Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure business processes and decision making in relation to off-site stormwater quality improvement are guided by this Policy. • Ensure staff are aware of and follow this Policy.
Manager, Natural Environment Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own, author, and review documentation supporting the implementation of this Policy including, but not limited to, the Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Guidelines (the Guidelines) and the Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Procedure (the Procedure).
Manager, City Design Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own, author, and review planning policies relating to off-site stormwater quality improvement. • Ensure alignment and integration of planning policies with this Policy.
General Manager (Asset and Infrastructure Services) and General Manager (Corporate Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure staff are aware of and follow this Policy.

8. Key Stakeholders

Relevant stakeholders within the following council departments and branches will be consulted during the review process:

- Planning and Regulatory Services Department
 - City Design Branch
 - Development Planning Branch
 - Engineering, Health and Environment Branch
- Asset and Infrastructure Services Department
 - Infrastructure Strategy Branch
 - Works and Field Services Branch
- Corporate Services Department
 - Legal and Governance Branch
 - Finance Branch including Financial Accounting and Finance Partnering
- Environment and Sustainability Department
 - Natural Environment Branch

9. Developer Eligibility

- Developer participation in the Program is completely voluntary. Council cannot require a developer to participate.
- Developer eligibility and participation in the Program is at the sole and absolute discretion of council.
- Payment of an in-lieu fee will only be considered where the development meets requirements identified within the Guidelines. Eligibility must ensure sensitive receiving areas are protected and that council can demonstrate available off-site solutions leading to equivalent or better water quality outcomes.
- Developer delivered off-site solutions will not be considered by council.
- Requests to pay an in-lieu fee for development within priority development areas, including but not limited to the Ripley Valley Priority Development Area, will not be considered by council.
- Requests to pay an in-lieu fee for Material Change of Use (MCU) development will not be considered by council.
- Developers may be eligible for all, or a portion, of their on-site stormwater quality improvement responsibilities to be met at an off-site location.

10. Governance, Transparency, and Responsibility

- The Program will be delivered in a fair, efficient, transparent, and accountable manner that results in a net improvement to the water quality and health of Ipswich's waterways.
- The Program will conform to the State Planning Policy 2017 and associated guidelines for off-site stormwater quality improvement.
- Off-site solutions cannot be credited for other types of offset projects (e.g., Natural Environment Offsetting). Such practice is otherwise known as double dipping and is not supported by this Policy.
- Information regarding the Program will be easily accessible to developers and the public via a dedicated council webpage and other appropriate resources.
- Council will ensure it can achieve required off-site water quality improvements before accepting in-lieu fees from developers through the preparation and review of an Off-site

Stormwater Quality Improvement Delivery Plan (the Delivery Plan). Participation in the Program can only occur where council can demonstrate, through the Delivery Plan, that it can achieve the required water quality improvements in perpetuity.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

The success and effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored and evaluated through the development and publication of a publicly available Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Annual Report (the Annual Report). The Annual Report will illustrate how Council is meeting its off-site water quality improvement responsibilities. The Annual Report will include a summary of revenue and expenditure for the previous financial year and an assessment of water quality improvements achieved in relation to the Delivery Plan.

This Policy will be reviewed in accordance with council's four (4) year review cycle or sooner if required.

12. Definitions

- **Co-benefits:** Any additional environmental, social, or economic benefits an off-site solution brings beyond the required water quality improvement.
- **Ipswich Planning Scheme:** Ipswich Plan 2024 or otherwise amended from time to time.
- **On-site stormwater quality improvement:** The achievement of required post construction phase stormwater quality improvement responsibilities on development sites.
- **Off-site stormwater quality improvement:** The achievement of required post construction phase stormwater quality improvement responsibilities outside of development sites at other (off-site) locations.
- **Off-site solution:** a project undertaken outside of a development site (off-site) that results in equal or better water quality within Ipswich's waterways compared to developer delivered on-site stormwater quality treatment.
- **Sensitive receiving area:** Areas including, but not limited to:
 - A natural drainage feature corridor (stream orders 1 to 8 inclusive), the Bremer River and Brisbane River corridors
 - The catchment of a naturally occurring wetland
 - Areas where discharge is to an unlined gully or stream that contain in-situ soil conditions which are determined to be of a high dispersion classification
 - Areas that have a high sensitivity to producing adverse outcomes in terms of water quality or water quantity management with small or incremental changes from development activity
 - Waterways and natural drainage features that support species (flora and fauna) that are sensitive to changes in water quality and flow hydrology
 - Receiving environments that may have significant human uses or human values (including cultural values).

13. Related Documents

- Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Procedure
- Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Guidelines
- Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Delivery Plan
- Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Register
- Off-site Stormwater Quality Improvement Annual Report

See Attachment 1 for a diagram illustrating the relationships between the above documents that establish the governance framework of the Program.

14. Policy Owner

The General Manager (Environment and Sustainability Department) is the Policy owner, and the Manager (Natural Environment Branch) is responsible for authoring and reviewing this Policy.

Attachment 1: Governance Framework

