

Policy Title: Climate Change Adaption

Classification: NRM & Climate

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13 July 2016

Council Minute Number

2016/07/13.14

Effective Date

13 July 2016

Review Date

13 July 2017

Responsible Officer

Manager of Natural Resource Management and Climate

Responsible Department

Community & Environment

Revokes:

Not applicable

INTERNAL USE ONLY

Policy Number: 67 Version: 1

1. BACKGROUND AND PRINCIPLES

The Whitsunday Region is known to be exposed to a number of natural hazards, all of which are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. These direct hazards include tropical cyclones, extreme storms, landslides, riverine flooding, coastal erosion, heatwaves and bushfires.

Council seeks to be a recognised leader in Climate Change response.

The WRC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy is designed to guide Council's response to the effects of climate change and help support the way in which Council discharges its responsibilities in-line with Council's Corporate Plan 2014-2019. The strategy will also guide Council to implement its responsibilities under the Local Government Act (1993).

The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy will support informed decision-making by mapping out priorities for action, clarifying roles and responsibilities, identifying triggers for action, guiding the acquisition and use of relevant information and generally improving climate change adaptation governance.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Council activities and staff.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Climate Change Adaptation Policy is to:

- I. Support long term financial planning, asset management, strategic planning, emergency management and other key Council processes with consistent, timely and scientifically sound information related to climate change.
- II. Ensure that climate change adaptation is a core component of planning for a more resilient Whitsunday Region and is therefore mainstreamed into council's functions and activities.
- III. Ensure that Whitsunday Regional Council is well placed to benefit from economic development opportunities that may eventuate due to its proactive climate change adaptation and community resilience commitment

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 Council will aim to address the core elements articulated within the Whitsunday Regional Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

4.2 Council will implement programs and initiatives that strive to improve the Whitsunday Regional Council community's resilience and understanding of the potential impacts of climate change and maximise opportunities to communicate and consult on critical issues and changes.

- 4.3 Council will strive to develop integrated representative case studies in climate change adaptation and community resilience for existing sites and greenfield development, for example using Bowen as a case study for quantifying assets and attributes exposed to climate change.
- 4.4 Council's approach to climate change adaptation recognises that a diverse range of roles and responsibilities exist across all levels of Australian governments with regard to climate change adaptation. As such, the policy guidelines will be created to help determine Council's most relevant responses. The guidelines will contain specific actions and procedures to guide staff and Councillors.
- 4.5 Council recognises the importance and validity of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and will review Council's actions upon the publication of new IPCC assessment reports within six months of publication. Council also recognises that global greenhouse gas emissions are at the high-end (worst case) of global projections and as such, Council will use where practical, the top two global Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs) during decision-making (these currently being RCP6 and RCP8.5). These are derived from the top two global greenhouse gas (GHG) projections for warming (2.0 °C – 5.8 °C global average warming above pre-industrial levels by 2100). Where reliably available, Council will seek to utilise results for the WRC region.
- Until further studies are undertaken by the Queensland Government, WRC will use 80cm in 2100 as the sea level rise number to align with Queensland Hazard Mapping (The Queensland Government has determined that these are broadly similar to the IPCC 5th Assessment). Rainfall perturbations for flood modelling and other decision-making will be based on the Australian Rainfall and Runoff section on Climate Change Considerations (Chapter 6). Council decisions will also consider the climate change projections described in the **WRC Technical Climate Change Guidelines**.
- 4.6 As well as the above Council's response to climate change will be guided by the following principles:
- I. Focus on informed decision-making and undertake an adaptive management approach (continuing to review actions in the light of new information);
 - II. Maintain the focus on total community wellbeing, noting that this may result in adverse consequences to more directly impacted individuals;
 - III. Encourage private adaptation by making information publicly available;
 - IV. Consider climate change as part of an overall risk reduction and resilience program for Whitsunday Regional Council;
 - V. Identify vulnerable areas and implement an ongoing program that reviews their vulnerability

as more information becomes available

- VI. Review the provisions of the planning scheme to ensure that development is appropriately regulated to consider climate change risk;
- VII. Where appropriate, goals should be measurable and evaluated on a regular basis;
- VIII. Perform a range of roles (regulatory, information provider, advocate, facilitator, service provider, funding body) that are necessary to reduce future climate change impacts; and
- IX. Work cooperatively with other Councils and State Government and ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities are appropriate and duplication is avoided

5. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Local Government Act (1993)

Sustainable Planning Act (2009)

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2016 - 2020

7. DATE REVIEWED

Not applicable

8. NEXT REVIEW

One (1) year