

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is 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.

### Scope

This policy is applicable to all Council activities and staff.

### Policy Statement

1. Council will aim to address the core elements articulated within the Whitsunday Regional Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.
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.
3. Council will strive to develop integrated representative case studies in climate change adaptation and community and greenfield development, for example using Bowen as a case study for quantifying assets and attributes exposed to climate change.
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.
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.
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. council's and State Government and ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities are appropriate, and duplication is avoided.

## Applicable Legislation

Local Government Act 2009

Whitsunday Regional Council Planning Scheme 2017

Sustainable Planning Act 2009

Coastal Protection and Management Act 1994

Disaster Management Act 2003

Environmental Protection Act 1994

## Definitions

**CEO** refers to the Chief Executive Officer of the Whitsunday Regional Council appointed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*.

**Council** refers to the Whitsunday Regional Council

**Employee** refers to any employee, contractor, volunteer etc. of the Council

## Related Documents

Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2016 - 2020

## Human Rights Compatibility Statement

This Policy has been assessed as compatible with the Human Rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

# Climate Change Adaption Policy

Community Services - Natural Resource Management  
& Climate

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COUNCIL POLICY			
<b>Date Adopted by Council</b>	23 April 2019	<b>Council Resolution</b>	
<b>Effective Date</b>	23 April 2019	<b>Next Review Date</b>	23 April 2022
<b>Responsible Officer(s)</b>	Climate and Innovation Hub Coordinator	<b>Revokes</b>	067.01
<b>Public Consultation: Yes / No</b>			