



Council Policy CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSE

Corporate Plan Reference:	<i>The Noosa Environment: Noosa Shire is better prepared for Climate Change</i>
Endorsed by Council:	21 December 2017
Policy Author:	Program Coordinator, Climate Change Adaptation

BACKGROUND

South East Queensland has been identified as one of several high-vulnerability climate change hot spots in Australia. Accordingly, a number of climate-driven natural hazards which Noosa Shire is currently exposed to are likely to be more problematic in the future. The frequency and severity of natural hazards including major storm events, droughts, heatwaves, flooding, storm surge and coastal erosion across the region is expected to increase. However, some of these, such as sea level rise and its influence on the extent and severity of coastal hazards risks, are not projected to be felt for some time.

Our climate has already begun to change. As it continues to do so, the risks faced by private and public property, infrastructure, natural systems, human health, agriculture, and the economy are also expected to alter.

It is critical that Council adopts a long-term proactive approach regarding these risks to help improve and build the adaptive capacity of our Shire. Proactive planning for climate-related risks includes ensuring appropriate development requirements, adequate infrastructure planning, effective disaster management, good asset management and appropriate governance systems are established and implemented.

Council acknowledges that climate change poses a serious challenge to Noosa Shire – and ultimately to the planet. Council believes that the responsibility for responding to the causes and risks associated with climate change is shared by many stakeholders and thus requires a collaborative approach. Council acknowledges its responsibility to understand and consider local risks, and to work with the community, government agencies and other partners to improve its knowledge and capability to respond appropriately. That response will involve not only adaptive and pragmatic planning, but also localised emissions reductions.

PURPOSE

This policy outlines Noosa Council's commitment to improve its knowledge and capability to appropriately respond to climate change through meaningful actions that drive carbon emissions reductions and pragmatic adaptation planning, as part of the pursuit of its overarching Sustainability Principles.

PRINCIPLES

Council will:

- Maintain a precautionary approach to climate change adaptation and emissions reduction, developing and implementing short and long term actions that seek to achieve resilience and carbon reduction while also delivering other social, economic and environmental benefits.
- Commit to being innovative, flexible and adaptive in our approach to climate change.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of Council in implementing this policy are to:

- Support long-term financial planning, asset management, infrastructure delivery, land use planning, disaster management and other key Council processes with consistent, timely and scientifically-sound information related to climate change.
- Ensure that climate change adaptation is a core component of planning for a more resilient Noosa Shire and is also embedded across Council's functions and activities.
- Comply with applicable legal requirements and implement any relevant State and Federal government policies, guidelines and/or directives.
- Provide timely, up-to-date, coordinated and balanced information to Council and the community on climate change in order to create a more holistic response and to build community resilience.
- Develop and implement appropriate adaptation and mitigation actions in response to climate change

IMPLEMENTATION

To meet the challenges of climate change and satisfy the above, Council will:

- Take an adaptive management approach and periodically undertake a climate change risk assessment for Council and the Local Government Area, consistent with ISO 31000:2009;
- Develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Noosa Shire;
- Continue to implement a Zero Emissions Organisational Strategy for Council;
- Regularly review its policies, strategies, plans and other relevant systems, where their content may be affected by climate change, to ensure they remain current as the science of climate change develops;
- Ensure that Council's actions, decisions and policy response to climate change remains current and reflects Council's financial and operational capacity;
- Ensure availability of appropriate financial resources for climate change related initiatives, including pursuit of grant and other external funding opportunities;
- Review the provisions of the planning scheme to ensure that future development is designed and located in a way that appropriately considers climate change risk;
- Work cooperatively with other councils and the State Government to seek synergies and ensure that respective roles and responsibilities are appropriate and duplication is avoided; and
- Build the adaptive capacity and also the resilience of Council and its community through active engagement, communication and learning opportunities regarding climate-related risks and emissions reduction measures.

Council recognises the important role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Council will commence a review of relevant Council actions and programs in relation to new IPCC assessment reports within 12 months of their publication. Council will use, as a minimum, the top global Representative Concentration Pathway (currently RCP8.5) during decision making. Where reliably available, Council will also seek to utilise climate change projections specific to the Noosa region.

Where possible, Council will use climate change projections that are consistent with those used or referenced by the Queensland Government for use in Council's hazard or risk determinations. In the absence of these, Council will seek to apply factors contained in projections provided by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Rainfall variations for flood modelling and other decision-making will be based on the latest Australian Rainfall and Runoff Guidelines' section on Climate Change Considerations.

COMMUNICATION

Council commits to ensuring that the community, Councillors and staff are updated whenever material changes to this policy occur, in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.

Council will provide clear, consistent and transparent climate change information which demonstrates best practice scientific knowledge. Council officers will address climate change considerations (whether mitigation or adaptation), where applicable, in reports to Council.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Director Environment and Sustainable Development is responsible for leading the implementation and review of this policy and ensuring it remains current and fit-for-purpose.

SUPPORTING NOOSA COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Asset Management Policy 2016
Business Continuity Management Policy 2015
Community Engagement Policy 2017
Corporate Plan 2017-2037
Emission Reduction Policy 2016
Environmental Management Policy 2016
Financial Sustainability Policy 2017
Health & Safety Policy Statement 2016
Risk Management Policy 2014
Tree Management on Public Land Policy 2015
The Noosa Plan 2006 – 2021
Zero Emissions Organisational Strategy 2016 - 2026

DEFINITIONS

Adaptation: Regarding climate change, adaptation is the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. It seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate: Relates to the average weather over various timescales, including over a period of months up to millions of years.

Climate Change: refers to a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g. using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period.

Hazard: the potential occurrence of a natural or human-induced event, trend or impact that may cause damage, including loss to property, infrastructure, livelihoods, service provision, and ecosystems.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change: Established by the United Nations, the IPCC is the leading international body for the assessment of climate change, with representatives from 195 countries.

Mitigation: A human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.

Resilience: The capacity of social, economic, and environmental systems to cope with a hazardous event, trend, or disturbance, responding or reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity, and structure, while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning, and transformation.

Risk: is the potential for consequences where something of value is at stake and where the outcome is uncertain, recognising the diversity of values. Risk is often represented as probability of occurrence of hazardous events (likelihood) or trends multiplied by the impacts (or consequences) if these events or trends occur.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Local Government Act (2009)
Planning Act (2017)

Version control:

Version	Reason/ Trigger	Change (Y/N)	Endorsed/ Reviewed by	Date
1.0	Create new policy		Council	21/12/2017

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