

Climate Change Resilience Policy

Policy Type	Governance Policy	Version:	1.0
Responsible Officer	Manager Development and Governance	Date Approved:	20/01/2021
Review Officer:	Senior Environmental Advisor	Review Due:	19/12/2024
Author:	Senior Environmental Advisor	Commencement:	20/01/2021

1. PURPOSE

Managing Climate Change risks to council services, infrastructure and operations, and supporting the community, are critical responsibilities of local government.

In accordance with the Enterprise Risk Management Framework, Policy and Process, Enterprise Risk assessments have been undertaken with senior management. It was determined that climate change poses a significant risk which as has the potential to be damaging to the organisation, or presents opportunities which require action to be taken.

Climate change crosses a number of enterprise risk categories including strategic, financial, operational, human resources and macro risks. Climate change presents potential for business discontinuity, increased insurance risk, infrastructure failure, greater workplace and safety risk to workers in prolonged heat conditions and increased local disaster management due to increased acts of nature. A lack of climate change response may also present reputational risk.

While Enterprise Risk tends to focus on disbenefits, it is also considered in terms of opportunities and benefits. Across the organisation, risk assessments in terms of climate change also present a number of unique opportunities that may have positive implications for Council and the environment.

Mareeba Shire spans the wet tropics and monsoonal north natural resource regions. It is recognised that climate change in these regions has been scientifically projected to result in an increase in average temperatures in all seasons, more hot days and warm spells, changing rainfall, increased intensity of extreme rainfall events and fewer but more intense cyclone events. It is noted that the natural variability in the climate system on an annual or decadal basis will mask the observation of the climate change trend.

The key documented areas of risk for Councils (in a non coastal zone) are:

- *stormwater runoff and flooding*: impacts are likely to be short term and episodic;
- *infrastructure instability*: this may include damage to infrastructure that is not built to withstand the impacts of increased flooding, winds and temperature;
- *structural damage to buildings* resulting from extreme weather events and falling trees;
- *demand for energy and water*: this is linked to the availability and quality of water;
- *fire risk and air quality*: this is linked to managing bushfire hazards; and
- *impacts on public open spaces*: including esplanades, drains, roads, footpaths and facilities.

Human Rights Compatibility Statement

The *Human Rights Act 2019* (HR Act) (Qld) came into effect on 1 January 2020 and will mean fairer laws, policies and practices by public entities when dealing with the community on a day-to-day basis. This policy has been drafted in alignment with obligations under s 58 of the HR Act.

This policy outlines Mareeba Shire Council's response for a *growing, confident and sustainable Shire*, in terms of climate change.

2. SCOPE

This policy is applicable to all of Council and its employees in all decisions and activities.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

Mareeba Shire Council will undertake the following to minimise the impact of climate change and to realise potential opportunities:

- Continue as a member of the Queensland Climate Resilient Council network administered by the Local Government Association of Queensland.
- Participate in the Reef Guardian program which is a collaborative stewardship program that collectively advocates in response to threats such as climate change.
- Partner with Natural Resource Management (NRM) groups, industry bodies and community groups to, where possible develop climate change resilience within the shire.
- Continue to review and improve efficiency in electricity usage.
- Maintain reliability of Council's drinking water schemes through its high priority water allocation from Sunwater and an ongoing renewal program for water infrastructure resilience.
- Undertake high level strategic planning for water security including advocacy for regional water supply.
- Plan and undertake fire prevention activities on land managed by Council.
- Develop the Council Planning Scheme having regard to climate resilience matters such as climate smart design, avoidance of development in hazard and flood prone areas, and ensuring adequate water provision.
- Proactively implement practicable planning and building measures as climate change adaptive measures are developed.
- Work with Queensland Reconstruction Authority towards resilience building for infrastructure and community preparation, response and recovery from disasters.

4. REPORTING

No additional reporting is required.

5. DEFINITIONS

Adaptation / Resilience

The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. Adaptation can be autonomous or planned.

Climate

The average weather experienced at a site or region over a period of many years, ranging from months to many thousands of years. The relevant measured quantities are most often surface variables such as temperature, rainfall and wind.

Climate Change

A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (*e.g.* by statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period of time, typically decades or longer.

Climate Projection

A climate projection is the simulated response of the climate system to a scenario of future emission or concentration of greenhouse gases and aerosols, generally derived using climate models. Climate projections are distinguished from climate predictions by their dependence on the emission/concentration/radiative forcing scenario used, which in turn is based on assumptions concerning, for example, future socioeconomic and technological developments that may or may not be realised.

Monsoon

A monsoon is a tropical and subtropical seasonal reversal in both the surface winds and associated rainfall, caused by differential heating between a continental-scale land mass and the adjacent ocean. Monsoon rains occur mainly over land in summer.

Enterprise Risk

A risk to the business is any action or event that has the potential to impact on the achievement of business objectives. Risk also arises as much from the possibility that opportunities will not be realised as it does from the possibility that threats will materialise or that errors will be made.

Enterprise Risk Management Process

The systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the activities of communicating, consulting, establishing the context, and identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating, monitoring and reviewing risk.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

Baker & McKenzie, 2011 Local Government Risk of Liability in the Face of Climate Change - Resolving Uncertainties, A Report for the Australian Local Government Association.

Climate Planning, 2018 Queensland Climate Resilient Councils, Climate Change Adaptation Governance Assessment, Detailed Governance Assessment Report for Mareeba Shire Council.

CSIRO, 2016 climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au

Enterprise Risk Management Policy (MSC).

Enterprise Risk Management Process (MSC).

Environmental Protection and Sustainability Policy (MSC).

Local Government Association of Queensland, 2020 Queensland Climate Resilient Councils, <https://qcrc.lgaq.asn.au/>

Use of Council land for Agriculture Purposes Policy (MSC).

7. REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Manager Development and Governance to monitor the adequacy of this policy and implement and approve appropriate changes. This policy will be formally reviewed every four (4) years or as required by Council.