

	COUNCIL POLICY	
	Climate Change Adaptation Policy	
	POLICY NO	089
	DEPARTMENT	Development Services
	PROGRAM	Parks, Environment & Sustainability
ENDORSED BY COUNCIL	14 November 2018, Folio 59949	

1.0 Scope

This policy applies to all Mackay Regional Council (MRC) activities and staff. MRC recognises that climate change represents a material risk to MRC operations as well as economic, social and environmental sustainability in the Mackay region.

Therefore, MRC is committed to:

- taking a leadership approach in managing the risks associated with climate change for our community;
- adopting a structured and strategic response to the potential impacts and opportunities that may eventuate from climate change; and
- facilitating greater awareness of the causes and effects of climate change.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Climate Change Adaptation Policy is to:

- I. Demonstrate that MRC is a leader in identifying and responding to climate change risk, resulting in climate change action and community resilience planning.
- II. Support long term financial planning, asset management, strategic planning, emergency management and other key MRC processes with consistent, timely and scientifically sound information and local climate projections related to climate change.
- III. Ensure that climate change adaptation is a core component of planning for a more resilient organisation and regional community and is therefore mainstreamed into MRC's functions and activities.

Ensure that the Mackay region is well placed to benefit from economic development opportunities that may eventuate due to a proactive climate change adaptation and community resilience commitment.

3.0 References

National Legislation

- *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*

State Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Environmental Protection Act 1994*
- *Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995*
- *Disaster Management Act 2003*
- *Planning Act 2016*

National Strategies

- *National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2015*
- *Reef 2050 Long-term Sustainability Plan 2018*

State and Regional Strategies

- *Queensland Climate Transition Strategy - Pathways to a clean growth economy*
- *Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy (Q-CAS) 2017–2030 - Pathways to a climate resilient Queensland*
- *Climate Sustainability Plan 2016-2020 (Mackay, Whitsunday, Isaac)*

Internal Documents

- *Mackay Region Community Plan 2011-2031*
- *Strategic Risk Register*
- *Corporate Plan 2016-2021*
- *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022*
- *Economic Development Strategy 2015-2020*
- *Mackay Region Planning Scheme 2017*
- *Community Development Strategy (Draft)*
- *Corporate Environmental Sustainability Policy 2018*
- *Disaster Management Plan 2018*

Other

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fifth Assessment Report (AR5)

4.0 Definitions

To assist in interpretation the following definitions shall apply:

Climate Change: *The observed century-scale rise in the average temperature of the Earth's climate system and its related effects.*

Climate Change Adaptation: *Proactively managing risks associated with climate change through a planned approach that takes into consideration the best available science and local climate projections.*

Climate Change Mitigation: *Activities to reduce the extent of human induced climate change, primarily through eliminating or reducing carbon emissions entering the atmosphere.*

Council shall mean the Mayor and Councillors of Mackay Regional Council.

IPCC shall mean Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

MRC shall mean Mackay Regional Council.

Q-CAS shall mean Queensland Climate Adaptation Strategy

Q-CRC shall mean Queensland Climate Resilient Councils

Resilience: *The capacity of individuals, communities and environmental systems to survive, adapt, and grow despite experiencing chronic stresses and acute shocks. Resilient communities turn vulnerabilities into opportunities.*

Sustainability: *Ensuring the way that we live today doesn't reduce the quality of life of future generations or degrade the quality of the environment they will live in. Sustainability for local government can be defined as an ongoing commitment to integrating economic, community and environmental sustainability principles and processes into Council operations as opposed to achieving a specific end point or goal.*

5.0 Background

The need for a climate change adaptation policy was initially identified through MRC's participation in the Local Government Association of Queensland's Coastal MRC's Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT). This policy now outlines MRC's commitment to effectively managing climate risk as a member of the Queensland Climate Resilient Council program.

MRC acknowledges that climate change presents both challenges and opportunities for the future of our region. It has the potential to impact private and public property, infrastructure, natural systems, human health, agriculture, and the economy. MRC has a responsibility to manage risks to public assets (including the environment), delivering community services and supporting private resilience and action within the community. Modelling shows that over time, the Mackay region will be exposed to:

- increases in average, maximum and minimum temperatures;
- more hot days and increase in the frequency and duration of extreme temperatures;
- increased intensity of extreme rainfall events;
- mean sea level rise and increases in the height of extreme sea level events;
- fewer but more intense tropical cyclones;
- more extreme fire behaviour;
- increases in evapotranspiration in all seasons;
- warmer and more acidic oceans.

6.0 Policy Statement

Climate change adaptation for MRC can be defined as an ongoing commitment to effectively managing climate risk and enhancing the resilience of MRC and the capacity of our communities, infrastructure and natural areas to recover from stresses while maintaining function and identity.

Effective climate change adaptation can be achieved by integrating the following principles across our organisation and into our way of thinking and acting as opposed to achieving a specific end point or goal.

6.1 Principles for Effective Climate Change Adaptation

Climate Change Adaptation Outcome	Principle
Climate change risks are managed effectively	<p>MRC will use the best available science and sub-regional climate projections to identify, understand and respond to both short and long-term climate change risks.</p> <p>Climate change risks will be incorporated into the MRC Strategic Risk Register and managed through relevant corporate strategies, plans and programs.</p>
Legislative compliance	MRC will comply with applicable legal requirements and implement any relevant State and Federal government policies, guidelines and directives relating to climate change adaptation.
Resilient community	<p>MRC will implement programs and initiatives that strive to increase community resilience and overall community wellbeing.</p> <p>MRC will commit to advancing case studies in climate change adaptation and community resilience for existing sites and greenfield developments.</p>
Collaboration and shared learning	MRC will encourage synergies with other MRCs as well as State and Federal Governments to work collaboratively on projects and policies that meet the on-the-ground needs of the community. Collaboration will ensure that the respective roles and responsibilities are appropriate, and duplication is avoided.
Productive partnerships	MRC builds industrial and community partnerships to strengthen our influence at state and national levels, contributing to innovation, design and research, including pursuit of grants and other external funding opportunities.
Enhanced ecosystem services	MRC sets targets to improve regional biodiversity values and ecosystem services over time.
Low carbon operations	MRC maintains a corporate greenhouse gas emissions inventory and sets relevant targets to ensure operations become increasingly low carbon over time.
Low carbon region	MRC maintains a community greenhouse gas emissions profile and set targets to assist the transition to a low carbon economy within the Mackay region over time.
Community leadership and education	MRC seeks broad public involvement on climate change adaptation issues that affect the community. Engaging individuals, communities, stakeholders and businesses and adopting more open deliberations will build greater awareness of the causes and effects of climate change and promote collective responsibility and private adaptation.

6.2 Information Sources

MRC is committed to a science-based policy approach to climate change adaptation. MRC's primary source of climate change adaptation information

will be the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report.

MRC will utilise regional and sub-regional climate projections for the MRC region if available from reliable sources such as the CSIRO. MRC recognises that effective responses to climate change are context-specific, and often addressed best at the local and regional levels.

6.3 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections

MRC will use, as a minimum, the top global Representative Concentration Pathway (currently RCP8.5) during decision making. It is an emissions scenario that describes the 'business as usual' trajectory where there is no effort to reduce emissions. MRC will take a precautionary approach with respect to long-term planning and risk assessments. As such the Planning Scheme 2017 considers the permanent inundation of land due to a sea-level rise of 0.8 metres by 2100 (relative to 1990).

6.4 Strategic Alignment with State Government Policy

MRC's approach to climate change adaptation recognises the diverse range of roles and responsibilities across all levels of government and the private sector. MRC will use the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022 as the primary document to deliver specific climate change initiatives that align with state and federal climate change adaptation and mitigation goals.

6.5 Climate Change Adaptation Governance

MRC will maintain strong and effective governance arrangements that ensure cross program integration of climate change adaptation principles. MRC decisions should consider linkages between economic, environmental and community dimensions, and take account of both short and long-term impacts.

Climate change adaptation performance indicators will be established and monitored at the executive level to ensure continuous improvement regardless of leadership changes or short-term political influence. Where appropriate, indicators should be measurable and evaluated on a regular basis.

6.6 Communication

MRC commits to ensuring that the community, Councillors and staff are updated regularly regarding this policy, related programs and initiatives.

Council commits to providing clear, consistent and transparent climate change information and data which demonstrates best practice scientific knowledge. The MRC website will communicate key projects and links to reliable information and projections.

MRC will make all climate change studies undertaken by or on behalf of MRC publicly available at an appropriate time.

7.0 Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed when any of the following occur:

1. The related documents are amended or replaced.
2. Other circumstances as determined from time to time by a resolution of Council

Notwithstanding the above, this policy is to be reviewed at intervals of no more than three (3) years.

Version Control:

Version	Reason / Trigger	Change	Endorsed / Reviewed	Date
1	New Policy		Council	25.11.15
2	Review of Policy	Amendments	Council	14.11.18