

**FILE NO:** PSC2022-02276

**TITLE:** CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

**OWNER:** STRATEGY AND ENVIRONMENT SECTION MANAGER

## **1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 Port Stephens Council recognises that the climate in Australia is continuing to change and that ongoing action is needed to ensure a sustainable future for Port Stephens. Working in partnership with other Councils, the community and all levels of government, Port Stephens Council is committed to responding to the challenges of climate change.

## **2. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1 Climate change is a significant global challenge that according to adopted NSW policy, directly impacts on community wellbeing, community assets, and the natural environment. Climate change contributes to increased sea level rise, storm intensity and frequency, and changes in rainfall patterns and bushfire behaviour.
- 2.2 Climate change presents challenges for Council to deliver quality outcomes for the local community. The consequences of climate change risk damage to Council assets, disruption to the delivery of Council services, increased costs, damage to important industries such as tourism and aquaculture, and impacts on the community's wellbeing.
- 2.3 To ensure Council's response to climate change risks are prioritised and maintained, it is important that they are embedded in Council's Enterprise Risk Management Framework and strategic planning processes.

## **3. SCOPE:**

- 3.1 Port Stephens Council's approach to managing the risks of climate change will be guided by:
- a) Advice from the federal government and its departments and agencies, including the CSIRO and Bureau of Meteorology; state government departments and agencies; and local government representative bodies, including the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils
  - b) Information from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
  - c) Best practice case studies exhibited at all levels of government in Australia
  - d) Evidence from credible and reliable sources of climate change data

- e) Feedback, advice and ideas submitted by local residents and businesses
- f) Risk assessments undertaken by Port Stephens Council.

## 4. DEFINITIONS:

4.1 An outline of the key definitions of terms included in the policy.

Climate Change	Long-term shifts in temperature and weather patterns, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity such as burning fossil fuels.
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	The United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.
Risk	The chance of something happening that will have an impact on objectives. Risk is measured in terms of a combination of the consequences of an event and their likelihoods.
Carbon Neutral	No net release of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere.

## 5. STATEMENT:

5.1 Port Stephens Council commits to:

- a) Consulting widely with local residents and businesses to raise awareness of climate change risks and strategies for effective climate change management, mitigation, and adaptation.
- b) Seeking feedback and ideas from the community on how to better manage, mitigate and build community resilience to climate change risks.
- c) Preparing and implementing a sustainability strategy and action plan to clearly communicate our sustainability actions, targets and performance indicators, including:
  - i. Preparing and implementing a Carbon Neutrality Strategy and Action Plan to clearly communicate our actions, targets and performance indicators to becoming and maintaining carbon neutral status
  - ii. Reviewing and maintaining a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan.
- d) Reducing our contribution to climate change by implementing a range of sustainability projects.
- e) Preparing and implementing a Coastal Management Program to clearly communicate our actions, targets and performance in managing the coastal environment.
- f) Regularly publishing our progress and achievements in managing climate change risks in alignment with the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

- g) Investigating and sourcing funding opportunities to support our climate change mitigation and adaptation projects.

## 6. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 6.1 Strategy and Environment Section is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and providing advice on the policy.
- 6.2 Implementation of and compliance with this policy is the responsibility of all staff, with the Senior Leadership Team responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented throughout the organisation.

## 7. RELATED DOCUMENTS:

- 7.1 Local Government Act 1993 No 30
- 7.2 Port Stephens Council Community Strategic Plan
- 7.3 Asset Management Policy
- 7.4 Enterprise Risk Management Policy
- 7.5 Environment Policy
- 7.6 Coastal Management Act 2016 No 20
- 7.7 State Environment Planning Policy (Resilience and Hazards) 2021
- 7.8 Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 No 63
- 7.9 Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan
- 7.10 Carbon Neutral Action Plan.

## CONTROLLED DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

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<b>EDRMS container No.</b>	PSC2022-02276	<b>EDRMS record No.</b>	TBC
<b>Audience</b>	Councillors, staff and community		
<b>Process owner</b>	Strategy and Environment Section Manager		
<b>Author</b>	Environmental Officer		
<b>Review timeframe</b>	3 years	<b>Next review date</b>	TBC
<b>Adoption date</b>	8 September 2020		

## VERSION HISTORY:

Version	Date	Author	Details	Minute No.
1.	23 June 2020	Environmental Officer	New policy – first version. Endorsed for public exhibition.	114
2.	8 September 2020	Environmental Officer	Revised policy in response to public submissions. 2.1 – Removed references to ‘potential risks’. Added community assets to list of impacted targets and re-arranged the order of targets. 2.2 – Added impacts to tourism and aquaculture industries 3.1 – Expanded the list of guiding organisations to include federal and state governments and their departments and agencies, and the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils. Included commitment that Council approach would be based on credible and reliable evidence and data. 5.1 – (a)(b)(g) Included mitigation and adaptation.	172
3.	TBC	Environmental Officer	The policy has been updated in the new policy template and updates version control. Minor grammatical errors corrected. Policy Review including: 4.1 – Updated Climate Change definition in line with United Nations. Updated definitions to include Carbon Neutral and Coastal Management Program. 5.1 – Expanded Port Stephens Council commitments to include the preparation and implementation of a Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and	TBC

# Policy

Version	Date	Author	Details	Minute No.
			Strategy and a Coastal Management Program. 7. (7.1)(7.6)(7.7)(7.8)(7.10) – Amended to reflect changes in legislation names.	