

# Climate Change Policy

## 1 Purpose

Council acknowledges the reality of climate change and that climate change will impact on both the current and future way of life of the whole Coffs Harbour local government area community and our natural and built environment. Council commits to:

- Reducing Council's contribution to climate change and supporting the community to reduce their contribution to climate change.
- Adapting Council's activities and services to become more resilient to climate change and realise the opportunities it provides.
- Working with the community to help build the resilience of our residents and local ecosystems to adapt to the effects of climate change.

This position is informed by, and reflects, our peak local government representative bodies, including the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA), Local Government Professionals Australia and Local Government NSW (LGNSW).

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) recognises the importance of climate change, the impact of human activity on the composition of the global atmosphere and the urgent need to mitigate the production of greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change that cannot be avoided. ALGA also recognises the importance of evidence based policy making and that Local Government throughout Australia is an instrumental level of government in implementation and mitigation activities at the local and community level.

This policy has been developed to articulate Coffs Harbour City Council's position and response to climate change.

## 2 Policy

### 2.1 Council acknowledges

1. The reality of climate change and its predicted impact on the Coffs Harbour region.
2. That climate change will impact on both the current and future way of life of the whole Coffs Harbour community and our natural and built environment.
3. That climate change will likely impact on a wide range of Council services and operations, including:
  - a) Planning policy and development assessment
  - b) Infrastructure
  - c) Economic Development and Tourism
  - d) Social and community planning
  - e) Provision of and use of recreational facilities
  - f) Health services; Community/workplace health
  - g) Emergency/bushfire management
  - h) Agriculture/ biosecurity
  - i) Natural resource management/ coastal management
  - j) Weed/ pest management
  - k) Biodiversity protection
  - l) Water supply and sewerage services
  - m) Stormwater drainage and flood management
  - n) Wastewater

(ALGA, 2009, Towards a national planning framework for climate change mitigation and adaptation, unpublished)

4. That the rainforests of Coffs Harbour will provide a nationally significant refuge for plant and animal species migrating from other latitudes and altitudes as the impacts of climate change intensify.
5. That the adopted sea level rise benchmark for the Coffs Harbour local government area is a 91cm increase by 2100 (above 1990 mean sea levels). – Resolution EN53, Council Meeting 4/12/2008
6. That Council has a key role to play in providing leadership and education to assist citizens and business to understand and accept responsibilities to address climate change.
7. That Council will need to work with other Councils and government agencies on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

**2.2 Council will implement this policy by:**

1. Reducing our greenhouse gas emissions through adopted targets and the implementation of the Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan.
2. Adapting our existing activities and practices to become more resilient to the impacts of climate change.
3. Adapting our existing activities and practices to realise the opportunities climate change provides.
4. Leading, encouraging and working with our community to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.
5. Helping our community to adapt and build their resilience to respond to the impacts of climate change.
6. Working with other land managers to build the resilience of our local ecosystems to respond to the effects of climate change.
7. Using the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development (Local Government Act 1993) to guide our response to climate change.

**3 Definitions**

**Climate Change:** A change in the average pattern of weather over a long period of time. Greenhouse gases play an important role in determining climate and causing climate change.

**Mitigation:** Actions that can be taken to reduce the degree of climate change that may occur.

**Adaptation:** Actions that can be taken to prepare for the already unavoidable impacts of climate change.

**Emissions:** The release of greenhouse gases and/or their precursors into the atmosphere over a specified area and period of time.

**Greenhouse Gases:** Those gaseous constituents of the atmosphere, both natural and those caused by humans, that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation.

**4 Key Responsibilities**

Position	Directorate	Responsibility
Mayor	Council	To lead Councillors and the community in their understanding of the impacts of climate change and the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change
General Manager	Executive	To lead staff (either directly or through delegated authority) in their understanding of the impacts of climate change and to ensure appropriate organisational strategies and decision-making frameworks are in place to respond to climate change



Position	Directorate	Responsibility
Directors	All Directorates	To communicate the policy and to ensure that staff have the frameworks and strategies necessary to implement and comply with this policy
Council Leaders	All Directorates	To ensure that climate change is integrated into planning and decision-making and that staff adhere to the policy
All Council officials	Council	To have an understanding and comply with this policy

## 5 References (laws, standards and other Council documents)

### Related Legislation, Division of Local Government Circulars or Guideline:

- Clean Energy Act 2011
- Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
- National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007
- Coastal Protection Act 1979 & regulations
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and regulations
- Local Government Act 1993
- Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 and regulations
- Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995 and regulations
- Coffs Harbour City Local Environmental Plan (2000)
- Coffs Harbour City Centre Local Environmental Plan (2011)
- Coffs Harbour Local Environmental Plan (2013)
- NSW Climate Change Policy Framework (2016)

### Other Related Council Policy or Procedure:

- Coffs Harbour Adopted Sea Level Rise Figure (Council meeting 4 December 2008)
- Coffs Harbour Biodiversity Action Strategy (2012)
- Coffs Harbour Coastal Zone Management Plan (2013)
- Coffs Harbour Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan (2016)
- Floodplain Development and Management Policy (2017)

## 6 Details of Approval and revision

- **Approval date: 14/09/2017**
- **Responsible Section: Community Planning & Performance**
- **Superseded policies/procedures:**
- **Next review date: 14/09/2021**

### Table of amendments

Amendment	Authoriser	Approval ref	Date