

FILE NO: PSC2022-02276

TITLE: CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

OWNER: STRATEGY AND ENVIRONMENT SECTION MANAGER

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 Port Stephens Council recognises and is concerned that the climate in Australia is rapidly changing in response to human-induced factors, 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 and built environment. Human-induced climate change raises average global temperatures and 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, impacts on the community's wellbeing, and adverse environmental impacts on marine and terrestrial ecosystems including degradation of waterways and bushland, and loss of species diversity.
- 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) Educating the Port Stephens community, including local residents, businesses and visitors, to raise awareness of climate change risks and causes, and potential strategies for effective climate change management, mitigation, and adaptation.
- b) Collaborating with the community on how to better manage, mitigate and build community resilience to climate change risks.
- c) Preparing and implementing an Environmental Sustainability Strategy to clearly communicate our sustainability actions, targets and performance indicators for Council and Community, including:
 - i. Preparing and implementing a Carbon Neutrality Action Plan to clearly communicate our actions, targets and performance indicators to achieving and maintaining carbon neutrality.
 - ii. Reviewing and implementing the 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 current

and future coastal challenges, including climate change.

- 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.
- h) Reviewing and maintaining Council's Floodplain Risk Management Policy.

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.
- 7.11 Floodplain Risk Management Policy
- 7.12 Development Control Plan

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

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EDRMS container No.	PSC2022-02276	EDRMS record No.	23/75914
Audience	Councillors, staff and community		
Process owner	Strategy and Environment Section Manager		
Author	Environmental Officer		
Review timeframe	3 years	Next review date	14 March 2026
Adoption date	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.	14 March 2023	Environmental Officer	The policy has been updated in the new policy template and updates version control. Minor grammatical errors corrected. Policy Review including: 1.1 – Addition “and is concerned” and “rapidly changing in response to human-induced factors”. Deleted “continuing to change”. 2.1 – Addition “and built”, “Human-induced” and “raises average global temperatures and” 2.2 – Addition “, and adverse environmental impacts on marine and terrestrial ecosystems including degradation of waterways and bushland, and loss of species diversity.” 4.1 – Updated Climate Change definition in line with United Nations. Updated definitions to include Carbon Neutral. 5.1 – Expanded Port Stephens Council commitments to include the preparation and implementation of a Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and Strategy and a Coastal Management Program. a. Replaced “Consulting widely with local residents and businesses” with “Educating the Port Stephens community, including local residents, businesses and visitors”. Addition “and causes” and “potential”. b. Replaced “Seeking feedback and ideas from” with “Collaborating with”. c. Addition “Environmental Sustainability Strategy” and “Council and Community”. Deleted “and action plan”.	051
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			i. Removed “Strategy and”. ii. Replaced “maintaining a” with “implementing the”. h. Addition “Reviewing and maintaining Council’s Floodplain Risk Management Policy”. 7 - (7.1) (7.6) (7.7) (7.8) (7.10) – Amended to reflect changes in legislation names. Addition “Floodplain Risk Management Policy” and “Development Control Plan”.	
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