

Climate Response & Resilience Policy

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I Introduction

- 1.1 The Climate Response & Resilience Policy enables best practice behaviours through a proactive climate change and emissions reduction strategy, via the delivery of the Climate Action Plan in conjunction with Central Government legislation, LGNZ, and Waikato District Council's existing commitments.
- 1.2 Waikato District Council is committed to addressing climate change impacts locally now and for the future, by aligning operational decisions and policy positions that address greenhouse gas emissions reductions and risk management through appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- 1.3 Climate change incorporates a series of legal, indemnity, budgetary, asset management, infrastructure, planning, and environmental implications and obligations, which collectively require embedding in plans, policies, decision making, frameworks and deliverables to ensure climate change issues are adequately addressed.

2 Background

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) 6th report asserts that major climate changes are now inevitable and likely irreversible and will require a broad range of responses, including mitigation, behaviour change programmes and adaptation strategies. These approaches are inherently dependent on each other to address the long-term impacts, costs, and severity of climate change, in addition to aligning and delivering on Central Government's commitments and obligations to achieving carbon net zero by 2050 via international agreements.

Climate change impacts in the region such as sea level rise, erosion, land use, biodiversity loss, tourism, drought, storms etc will require proactive leadership and adequate tools and resources to assess and adapt, and to mitigate. Councils also have a leadership role to play in their communities.

Surveys by IAG (2021) report that 79% of New Zealanders agree that climate change is an important issue to them personally and 80% believe climate change will result in more extreme weather.

3 Purpose

This policy provides guidance on Council’s responsibilities regarding climate change, including how the organisation undertakes actions that minimise the effects of Climate Change through:

- the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- target setting, reporting and benchmarking of greenhouse gas emissions
- the development of adaptation and mitigation measures
- the application of a climate lens across programmes, policies, plans and decision making

4 Definitions

Climate Adaptation	A response to climate change that seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.
Council	The Waikato District Council as an organisation including Elected Members.
Climate Action Plan	A plan detailing steps (including specific projects, policies or planning processes) the organisation will develop and implement to achieve the climate action Strategy.
Climate Action Strategy	The overarching document outlining why and how best to achieve business objectives responding to climate change.
Climate Change	Climate change refers to a significant and extended change to the global climate, becoming increasingly severe over time and resulting in problems for life on earth. It includes global warming, changes to weather patterns, sea level rise, pollution, and extreme weather events.
Carbon Sequestration	The long-term storage of carbon dioxide or other forms of carbon to either mitigate or defer climate change.
Emissions	The production and discharge of substances that cause or exacerbate climate change, for example greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.
Climate Hazard	A physical process or event that can harm human health, livelihoods, or natural resources including (but not limited to); tropical cyclones, thunderstorms, tornadoes, drought, rain, hail, snow, lightning, fog, wind, temperature extremes, air pollution, and climatic change.
Climate Mitigation	Efforts to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases e.g. using new technologies and renewable energies, making older equipment more energy efficient, or changing management practices, consumers, business or community behaviours.

<p>Resilience</p> <p><i>NB: in terms of Waikato District Council climate change policy</i></p>	<p>An ability by the climate, community, built and natural environments to recover from setbacks; an ability which is enhanced by actions and strategies that change processes, practices and structures to prevent, reduce, and/or mitigate climate change severity and effects; and that increase preparedness for any unavoidable impacts.</p> <p>Examples of activities that show resilience include actions to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions, planning and preparing for reducing the impacts of climate change, action and advocacy to reduce waste and pollution and creating globally sustainable resource use, supporting business and land use activities that reduce impacts on climate change, as well as implementing processes and advocating to meet climate change mitigation requirements. New Zealand has agreed to such as the Kyoto Protocol, Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).</p>
<p>Risk</p>	<p>An uncertain event or condition that, if it occurs, has a positive or negative effect. Risks can occur from various sources (such as financial, reputation/image, environmental, etc.) and be relevant at either project, operational or strategic levels within the organisation. A risk is quantified in terms of likelihood (probability of occurrence) and consequence (impact).</p>
<p>Risk Assessment</p>	<p>Refers to the overall process of identifying, analysing and evaluating risks. It includes qualitative and, in some cases, quantitative assessment.</p>
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>The culture, processes, coordinated activities and structures that are directed towards managing adverse effects. The risk management process involves communicating, consulting, establishing context, identifying, assessing and evaluating, treating, monitoring and reviewing risks.</p>
<p>Waikato District Council or WDC</p>	<p>The Waikato District Council as an organisation.</p>

5 Application

- 5.1 This policy applies to all elected members of Council, the Chief Executive Officer, and all employees. It is their responsibility to ensure that the policy is applied to inform decision making and planning when working with external parties including contractors, sub-contractors, agents, and intermediaries.
- 5.2 Effective policy implementation is achieved through Council's commitment to:
- a) Undertake necessary work to develop and maintain a robust understanding of Council's Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) and those of our district, as well as potential climate related risks that require adaptation or mitigation
 - b) Implement initiatives to reduce Council's GHG emissions and to increase resilience through adaptation to climate related risks for Council and the district
 - c) Implement a Climate Action Plan that includes staged targets, goals, objectives, actions, and indicators for Council to improve performance
 - d) Develop and deliver internal and external engagement and behaviour change programmes to deliver on the policy and plan to assist to reach our targets

- e) Prioritise climate change and emissions reduction initiatives and actions by implementing organisational measures and specific targets through the LTP and annual planning processes
- f) Provide appropriate dedicated resources and funding for planning and delivering climate resilience (mitigation and adaptation) initiatives and actions

6 Relevant Council documents

<u>Conservation Strategy 2004</u>	<u>Leasing of Reserve Land Policy</u>
<u>Activity Management Policy</u>	<u>Procurement Entitlement & Disposal of Council Vehicles Policy</u>
	<u>Procurement Policy</u>
<u>District Tree Policy</u>	<u>Strategic Land Acquisition & Disposal Policy</u>
Notable Tree Policy	Reserves – Committees of Management Policy
Roadside Weed Spraying – No Spray Zones Policy	Trade Waste Bylaw Charging Policy
Waste Minimisation Plan 2018-2024	District Plan (Sustainable housing/consenting) and all stage 2 natural hazards and climate change
Natural Reserves Management Plan	Grass Verge Policy
Grazing Policy	Refuse Collection and Disposal
Lead Developer Fund (Water/ Wastewater) Policy	Street Lighting and Other Security/Amenity Lighting Policy
Pathway to a low-emissions future in New Zealand (External)	Reserve Contributions & Conservation Covenants

7 Central Government/International Agreements

Climate Change Response Act 2019 <https://environment.govt.nz/acts-and-regulations/acts/climate-change-response-amendment-act-2019/>

Paris Agreement <https://environment.govt.nz/what-government-is-doing/international-action/about-the-paris-agreement/>

Cop26 <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nz-joins-global-initiative-tackle-methane>

UN Sustainable Development Goals <https://www.mfat.govt.nz/en/peace-rights-and-security/our-work-with-the-un/sustainable-development-goals/>

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8 Significance

- 8.1 As this Policy is an internal Council document, its review will not trigger external consultation under the Council's Significance and Engagement Policy, but internal consultation will be required.

9 Policy statements

The Local Government Position Statement on Climate Change (Appendix A) describes the approach to Climate Change in the local government area. Waikato District Council has aligned its policy statements to reflect that position statement within the context of our district. Therefore, we will:

- 9.1 Collaborate with other agencies, organisations, and the community to achieve a consistent understanding of environmental, social, cultural and economic opportunities and consequences of climate change in our communities including but not limited to those related to:
- a) Infrastructure (vertical and horizontal)
 - b) Waste Management
 - c) Public Transport
 - d) Regulatory function
 - e) Land Use
- 9.2 Collaborate with neighbouring Territorial Authorities, including Hamilton City Council, Waipa District Council, Waikato Regional Council, Auckland Council, Central Government, and other agencies to gather information, carry out research, develop strategies and processes, collaborate, and to clarify each agency's functions and responsibilities
- 9.3 Ensure that low emission, climate-resilient development is adopted as a key tenet into development and land-use decisions, in addition to associated end use impacts where practicable, including our district plans, annual plans, long term plans, urban design and development, building control, energy use, transport planning and waste management
- 9.4 Set emission reduction targets in line with Central Government and partner Council's commitments e.g. the Paris Agreement, UNSDGs, Glasgow Agreements, Waikato Regional Council
- 9.5 Incorporate emissions reduction targets into investment decisions that it makes on transport, fleet, procurement, waste management, buildings, water and energy use
- 9.6 Plan for and provide infrastructure which recognises and reduces the risk of hazards, such as floods, storms, and sea level rise including:
- a) Particular consideration to geographically vulnerable communities

- b) Renewal and relocation of coastal infrastructure (including future planning during insurance valuation)
- 9.7 Include the effects of climate change (adaptation) as part of all hazards assessments, and consider the emissions impact (mitigation), in decision making, including through sections in Council report templates
- 9.8 Plan for the impacts of climate change on Council's three waters infrastructure and services including:
- a) Factoring climate change projections into all freshwater investments and adapting management practices accordingly
 - b) Identifying change requirements in infrastructure investment including land use and green infrastructure, e.g. wetlands, rain gardens and swales
 - c) Considering future requirements for increased water storage solutions
 - d) Modifying building standards with consideration to water storage and increased efficiency of use
- 9.9 Promote and encourage the conservation and enhancement of natural environments to aid in emissions reduction (mitigation) and climate change effects (adaptation)
- 9.10 Strive for best practice in response to Climate Change - including but not limited to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and, where possible, encourage avoidance of risk rather than remedial measures
- 9.11 Provide information, education and deliver initiatives to support behaviour change
- 9.12 Accept that the dissemination of information regarding climate change can be emotive and communicate with communities and stakeholders in an empowering and considerate work manner

10 Policy review

- 10.1 This policy shall be reviewed annually from the date of adoption for the first two years, after which it will be reviewed at two yearly intervals or as otherwise required by the Chief Executive or Communications and Engagement Manager (Project Sponsor).