



NAMBUCCA SHIRE COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

Function: Development and Environment

Adopted:
Last reviewed:

1.0 Policy Principles

Council acknowledges:

- a the reality of climate change and its predicted impact on the Nambucca Shire,
- b that it should respond in a timely and strategic way to the current and predicted impacts of climate change on the Nambucca Shire,
- c that climate change benchmarks that measure or estimate its future effects are not static but will change over time,
- d that it needs to be both aware of these benchmarks and be applying them wherever relevant,
- e the efforts made by the human community to reduce its contribution to climate change and the need to promote these efforts,
- f that climate change mitigation and management of impacts are a mutual and shared obligation of all levels of government,
- g that local government has a key role to play in climate change mitigation and the management of climate change impacts, particularly through its statutory responsibilities and regulatory powers relating to land use planning, environmental planning, environmental protection and natural resource management. Council also has a vital role to play in supporting community climate action through leading by example, education and encouraging behaviour change,
- h that consideration of climate change and its potential impacts be incorporated into Council's operations, whilst appropriate mitigation and adaptation actions must be integrated into all strategic and operational management activities,
- i that Council will need to work with other Councils and government agencies on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and
- j that the long-term objectives of the NSW State Government are to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 in NSW and to make NSW more resilient to a changing climate (*Climate Change Policy Framework for NSW, 2016, State of NSW and Office of Environment and Heritage*).

2.0 Policy objectives

Council is committed to:

- a leading the response to climate change challenges in the Nambucca Shire,
- b introducing strategies that mitigate and reduce Council's contribution to climate change,
- c introducing strategies that mitigate and reduce the community's contribution to climate change,
- d introducing strategies to adapt Council activities and responsibilities to unavoidable impacts of climate change,
- e developing resilience to the effects of climate change within both Council and the community,

- f assisting the Nambucca Shire community to adapt to the effects and impacts of climate change, and
- g planning for sustainability in response to climate change,

3.0 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.

4.0 Policy statement

In meeting the challenges of climate change, Council will:

- a implement the actions relating to the Nambucca Shire contained within the “Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Nambucca, Bellingen and Kempsey” (*Climate Risk Pty Ltd*),
- b adopt greenhouse gas emission reduction and renewable energy targets by December 2018, or as soon as possible after that time,
- c ensure decisions are consistent with any applicable benchmarks, whether from the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) or otherwise, as adopted by Council or State or Federal Governments from time to time,
- d encourage all sectors of the Nambucca Shire community to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to develop local solutions to climate change,
- e regularly review its climate change plans, strategies and benchmarks to ensure they remain current as the science of climate change develops,
- f where appropriate, take into account the effects of climate change when assessing private or public activities or works, and
- g resource climate change initiatives and seek external assistance where available,

With regard to flood planning and assessment, Council has adopted sea level rise benchmarks for 2050 and 2100, of 40cm (increase above 1990 mean sea levels) and 90cm (increase above 1990 mean sea levels), respectively.

5.0 History and Governance

In 2010 Council adopted a Climate Change Risk Assessment (Climate Risk Pty Ltd) and ‘Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Nambucca Bellingen and Kempsey’ (Climate Risk Pty Ltd). To accompany these reports Council resolved to prepare a Climate Change Policy.

One of the key findings of the above reporting was that in order to maintain Council’s indemnity against climate change related litigation, Council must incorporate relevant government benchmarks into decision making.

For this reason this policy has been prepared to ensure that advice and planning decisions made by Council take into consideration any current or future benchmarks adopted by the NSW or Federal Governments.