

# Corporate Climate Change Adaptation Planning for Councils

## Module I Getting Started



### I. MODULE OVERVIEW

This module outlines the *getting started* phase of corporate climate change adaptation planning for your council. The primary aim is to give council senior management a better understanding of the projected risks and impacts of climate change for the municipality, and the potential liability issues, and also to highlight the benefits of incorporating adaptation planning into routine planning and management activity.

#### MODULE CONTENTS

<b>1. Module overview</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Objectives .....	2
Activities .....	2
Outputs .....	2
<b>2. Engaging senior management</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Before the meeting .....	3
During the meeting .....	4
After the meeting .....	5
<b>3. Convening the Adaptation Working Group</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Before the meeting .....	6
During the meeting .....	7
After the meeting .....	8
<b>4. Module checklist</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>5. Resources</b> .....	<b>9</b>



## OBJECTIVES

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- Gain the support of senior management to undertake adaptation planning.
- Establish an Adaptation Working Group comprising a cross-section of council staff to make decisions about the council's adaptation approach for the municipal area and for the region as a whole.



## ACTIVITIES

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- Hold a meeting with the senior management within your council to provide an overview of relevant climate projections and impacts for your municipal area, and to obtain their support for undertaking adaptation planning through an Adaptation Working Group.
- Convene a meeting/workshop with the new Adaptation Working Group to discuss climate projections for your municipality and to commence a risk assessment process (the focus of the next module).



## OUTPUTS

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The output will be:

- A brief report from the Adaptation Working Group that outlines the approach for the project and the group.

## 2. ENGAGING SENIOR MANAGEMENT

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This section of the module will step you through what you should do before, during and after the meeting with senior management.

The purpose of the meeting will be:

- to gain their general support for undertaking adaptation planning
- to gain their approval to form a Adaptation Working Group comprising a cross-section of relevant council staff to progress the planning.

In the meeting you will present the rationale for undertaking community-based coastal adaptation planning for your council, providing an overview of the projected climate change risks and coastal hazards for the area, the impacts for your municipality, and highlight the need for incorporating adaptation planning into the broader planning and management activities. You will also give an overview of the project's approach, including an emphasis on the requirement for transparency when providing the community with risk information.



## BEFORE THE MEETING

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- Undertake discussions with one or more senior managers within your council to determine if there is appetite to undertake corporate adaptation planning. Getting one member of the senior management team to champion the project will strengthen your proposal to undertake this work.
- Determine a convenient time and invite relevant senior management to the meeting.
- Identify key staff for potential inclusion in the Adaptation Working Group. Consider the mix of people and positions that would make the most positive impact on corporate adaptation planning in your council.
- Read relevant council documentation such as the emergency management plan and risk register, and think about how they relate to the adaptation planning process.
- Become familiar with council's current climate change planning and activity.
- Develop an understanding of projected climate change impacts for your municipality by looking at its climate profile on the *Tasmanian Climate Change Office (TCCO)* website. [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate\\_futures/local\\_government\\_area\\_climate\\_profiles](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate_futures/local_government_area_climate_profiles)
- Become familiar with the *Climate Futures for Tasmania* reports, also on the TCCO website. [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate\\_futures/climate\\_futures\\_for\\_tasmania\\_reports](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate_futures/climate_futures_for_tasmania_reports)
- Become familiar with the historical climate impacts on your municipality, such as coastal inundation, bushfire, erosion and flooding events.

- Understand the liability issues that climate change presents for your council.
- Prepare an overview of the project to present at the meeting – the **'Senior Management meeting presentation template'** will provide a starting point. [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/local\\_government/corporate\\_adaptation\\_planning/getting\\_started/](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/local_government/corporate_adaptation_planning/getting_started/)
- Prepare a project briefing paper to hand out as an accompaniment to the presentation – the **'project briefing paper template'** will provide a starting point. [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/local\\_government/corporate\\_adaptation\\_planning/getting\\_started/](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/local_government/corporate_adaptation_planning/getting_started/)



## DURING THE MEETING

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The aims of the meeting with your senior management team are to build awareness of the climate change risks facing your council and your municipal area, and to establish an ongoing commitment to climate change adaptation planning. Following is a suggested meeting narrative.

### Introduction

- Outline the benefits of implementing an effective climate change adaptation plan, which include:
  - improved capacity to respond to climate change
  - increased staff engagement in and awareness of climate change issues
  - demonstrated leadership to the community
  - a more holistic set of council assets, services, plans and policies
  - exposure to a greater range of funding opportunities
  - reduced potential liability for climate change impacts.
- Outline your council's current climate change mitigation and adaptation plans (if any).
- Secure senior management endorsement to approach participants for the Adaptation Working Group.

- Outline trends for the projected changes in climate (such as temperature and rainfall) for Tasmania and your municipal area, based on the Local Government Area reports.
- Outline the legal considerations surrounding climate change for councils.
- Emphasise that the magnitude and timeframe of climate change depends upon the ongoing greenhouse gas emissions trajectory, and this is why a range of possible scenarios have been posed by climate scientists.

### Your recommendations for climate change adaptation

- Assemble an Adaptation Working Group (including suggested membership and their involvement in the project).
- Identify climate change risks, opportunities and planning options (topics covered in detail in Modules 2, 3 and 4).
- Incorporate adaptation planning into broader risk management approaches of council.

### To finish

- Invite feedback from participants on the perceived climate change risks for your municipal area. This is a good way to build understanding.
- Invite discussion on the formation of the Adaptation Working Group.



### AFTER THE MEETING

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- Seek endorsement from senior management on the process for climate change risk assessment and adaptation planning, including timeframes for next steps.
- Seek endorsement on the most appropriate structure for adaptation workshops. This will be influenced by the size of the council; for example, a large council may require several workshop groups aligned to business areas, while a council-wide workshop may be sufficient for a smaller council.
- Engage the proposed participants of the Adaptation Working Group.

### 3. CONVENING THE ADAPTATION WORKING GROUP

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This first workshop covers a wide range of subject matter. It would be wise to allow up to three hours for the session.



#### BEFORE THE MEETING

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- Arrange for someone within the senior management group to open the workshop and provide an overview of the project.
- Using the overview of the project prepared for the meeting with senior management as a basis; prepare a presentation for the group that provides the project background and methodology, and an introduction to the climate change risks relevant to your council.
- Using the project briefing paper produced for the meeting with senior management, prepare for a discussion on the potential scenarios based on climate change projections, including the most likely scenario based on the current trajectory.
- Visit the website: ***Climate Change in Australia***, and read 'Observed Changes' and 'Australia's Future Climate'.  
[www.climatechangeinaustralia.com.au](http://www.climatechangeinaustralia.com.au)
- Prepare printed handouts on the likely climate change impacts for your municipality using the profiles on the ***Tasmanian Climate Change Office*** website. [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate\\_futures/local\\_government\\_area\\_climate\\_profiles](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate_futures/local_government_area_climate_profiles)
- Prepare maps of your area in A3 or A1 sizing, showing river systems, coastlines, flood plains, dune systems, bushland, public infrastructure (e.g. dams and roads) and urban infrastructure (e.g. homes and businesses).
- Where relevant, prepare printed handouts of the latest coastal climate change impacts, drawing on information from the ***Climate Futures for Tasmania Extreme Events Technical Report***.  
[www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate\\_futures/climate\\_futures\\_for\\_tasmania\\_reports](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate_futures/climate_futures_for_tasmania_reports)
- Provide visual information on projected coastal hazards using mapping produced by the Tasmanian Government, available on the ***LIST***. [www.thelist.tas.gov.au/app/content/home](http://www.thelist.tas.gov.au/app/content/home)



## DURING THE MEETING

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The aim of the meeting is to build awareness of climate change risks for your council and the project's approach towards assessing the risks and developing adaptation options. You will also need to seek the commitment of the participants to continue as part of the Adaptation Working Group. If a member of senior management is opening the workshop, the project coordinator should introduce him or her and ask them to provide an overview of the program.

The project briefing paper should be made available to all meeting attendees to have as a reference during the presentation. You should also provide information on climate change projections, including current impacts, trends and potential scenarios. There should also be a way to capture decisions and points raised – appoint someone to take notes and supply butchers paper for breakout group exercises.

### Introduction

- What is climate change adaptation?
- Legal considerations
- An overview of the project's approach, outputs and outcomes

### Discussion points: Local climate profile

- There are a range of scenarios for future climate projections. Key scenarios are outlined in the Climate Futures for Tasmania modelling, along with fine-scale data on the local impacts of climate change under these scenarios.
- There is some uncertainty about which emissions trajectory the world will continue on, however all scenarios require an adaptation response in order to avoid a larger burden on council in the absence of any action.
- In the unlikely scenario of a future emissions plateau, an adaptation response will still be required due to greenhouse gases remaining in the atmosphere.
- Uncertainties lie in feedback loops that may greatly exacerbate climate change beyond what is currently predicted.

- In any case, councils should take precautions and not use a lack of certainty as a reason to delay climate change adaptation planning.
- Climate uncertainty can be managed by regularly reviewing climate change projections and action plans.
- Risk assessment and adaptation planning should be based on projected trends rather than on absolute values.
- Climate change projections are all based on IPCC greenhouse gas emissions modeling.

### *Understanding the impacts of projected climate change*

It can be extremely useful to draw projected impacts on large maps. Ideally the participants will indicate first- and second-order impacts on different areas of the map, given a specific point in the future (e.g. 2020, 2050). For example, participants may indicate that dam levels may decrease due to reduced rainfall and reduced inflows on the major dam (first-order impact). They then may indicate that there is potential for the disruption of water services to residential areas due to an increase in demand and a reduction in supply of potable water (second-order impact).

This kind of exercise works well if the participants break out into smaller groups. Allow time at the end of the session for the separate groups to report what they found. The note-taker's role would be to generate a summary of findings, key issues and next steps based on the discussions.



### **AFTER THE MEETING**

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Generate a brief report of key findings, areas of concern and potential greatest impact, and a plan for future activity for the group. Disseminate the report to those involved and seek endorsement from senior management on the approach. This project plan will be used in the next module on risk assessment.





## 4. MODULE CHECKLIST

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- Researched projected climate change impacts for your municipality
- Developed presentation material
- Conducted meeting with senior management
- Established Adaptation Working Group
- Disseminated report on key findings



## 5. RESOURCES

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Climate Futures for Tasmania Reports – Tasmanian Climate Office, Department of Premier and Cabinet: [www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate\\_futures](http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/adapting/climate_futures)

CSIRO and Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, 2012 State of the Climate 2012, [www.csiro.au/Outcomes/Climate/Understanding/State-of-the-Climate-2012.aspx](http://www.csiro.au/Outcomes/Climate/Understanding/State-of-the-Climate-2012.aspx)

CSIRO and Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology, Climate Change in Australia, [www.climatechangeinaustralia.com.au/](http://www.climatechangeinaustralia.com.au/)



Australian Government



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