

## Climate Change Policy NB-P-39

### Purpose

This policy guides Northern Beaches Council's approach to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Proactively managing Council's assets, functions and services helps to strengthen community and environmental resilience to climate change impacts, including extreme weather events.

Australia's climate has already warmed, and further warming will occur due to past and present greenhouse gas emissions. Council needs to adapt and plan for the climate changes that have already occurred and will continue to occur in the future.

The NSW State Disaster Mitigation Plan makes clear that the Northern Beaches Local Government Area is exposed to a range of climate change risks that are expected to increase over time. These risks include increasingly severe and complex impacts associated with coastal hazards and flooding, and more frequent extreme weather, bush fires, high winds, heatwaves and drought. Such impacts will have significant ramifications in terms of property damage, increased clean-up, repair and insurance costs, environmental change, as well as causing stress, fatigue and uncertainty for the community.

Council is committed to reducing emissions in its operations and in the community, as well as reducing the risks and impacts associated with climate change in the present and future. Council will lead by example and support the community on climate action through its climate emergency declaration, relevant strategies and action plans.

### Policy Principles

The following principles will be applied across Council's assets, functions and services to guide mitigative and adaptive action in response to climate change:

1. Ensure that Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework incorporates suitable measures to reduce the contribution to, and the impacts of climate change across its assets, functions, services and reporting.
2. Adopt a proactive and adaptive approach to managing the impact of climate change, informed by the best available science and guidance, and adjusted regularly for changes in data, technology, and policy.
3. Maintain up to date greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for Council and the community that are monitored, reviewed, and publicly reported against.
4. Ensure consistency with state, national, and international legislation, guidelines, benchmarks and targets, as appropriate.
5. Prioritise the management of risk to people, property, and the environment from the impacts of climate change in accordance with Council's obligations and its Enterprise Risk Management Framework.
6. Mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from Council activities as far as possible. Council may offset the remaining emissions to meet its adopted targets.
7. Incorporate the range of climate projections aligned to emission scenarios SSP2 and SSP3 when managing Council assets and services and when developing studies, management plans and in land use planning. When making decisions, use SSP2 for short-term scenarios and SSP3 for longer-term scenarios.
8. Work with the community and key stakeholders to reduce emissions, address climate risks and enhance resilience across the Northern Beaches.
9. Ensure Council decisions consider the impacts of climate change for current and future generations.

10. Identify and manage climate change impacts and obligations through Council's systems and frameworks. This includes project management, enterprise risk management, procurement, business and financial planning, as well as strategic and land use planning frameworks.
11. Reduce current and future risks to the community and the environment by locating new development out of high-risk hazard areas (particularly those expected to be at greater risk from climate change), and/or incorporating appropriate measures to reduce the risk to an appropriate level in accordance with relevant guidelines and statutory controls (including utilising appropriate land zoning).
12. Consider the options of protection, accommodation, avoidance, nature-based adaptations and relocation where climate change poses a significant risk to existing development and land uses.
13. Advocate for, and where possible implement, better building and construction standards, delivery of multi-agency projects, waste minimisation and management, zero emissions transport, sustainable finance and equitable community support to reduce the causes, risks and impacts of climate change.

## **Scope and application**

This Policy applies to officials of Northern Beaches Council and will be implemented across Council's assets, functions and services.

## **References and related documents**

### ***Related Legislation***

- Climate Change Act 2022 (Cth)
- Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023 (NSW)
- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) and associated Regulations
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW) and associated Regulations
- Coastal Management Act 2016 (NSW)
- NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022 (NSW)

### ***Related Council Policies and Plans***

- Council Policy Framework NB-P-01
- Asset Management Policy
- Coastal Erosion Policy
- Bushfire Management Policy
- Enterprise Risk and Opportunity Management Policy
- Procurements and Contracts Policy
- Social Sustainability Policy
- Water Management for Development Policy

### ***Related Council Strategies***

- Protect Create Live. Northern Beaches Environment and Climate Change Strategy 2040

- Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan 2040
- Towards 2040 Local Strategic Planning Statement
- Withstand Adapt Thrive. Northern Beaches Resilience Strategy
- Move Northern Beaches Transport Strategy 2038
- Asset Management Strategy 2022 – 2032

### ***Related Documents***

- National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021-2025 (Cth)
- National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (Cth)
- NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NSW)
- NSW Climate Change Policy Framework (NSW)
- NSW State Disaster Mitigation Plan (NSW)
- NSW Flood Risk Management Manual (NSW)
- NARCLIM Metropolitan Sydney (NSW)

### **Community Strategic Plan**

This Council policy relates to the Community Strategic Plan Outcomes:

- Protection of the environment
- Environmental sustainability.

### **Definitions**

#### *Adaptation responses*

- *Nature-based* Nature based solutions such as protecting and augmenting dunes, revegetating foreshore buffers or undertaking rehabilitation of natural coastal habitats such as mangrove, saltmarsh and salt-tolerant transitional vegetation.
- *Accommodation* Design new structure and/or altering existing structure to reduce vulnerability to impacts. Example: raising the floor height of a flood-prone building.
- *Avoidance* Minimising intensification of existing exposure and preventing new development in areas subject to current or future risks. Example: prohibiting new development in areas subject to bush fire risk.
- *Protection* Implementing temporary or permanent works that provide a barrier between a structure and a hazard. Example: hard protection such as seawalls or levees or soft protection (often referred to as ecosystem-based adaptations) such as dunes, sand nourishment or planting of bush fire resistant vegetation.

• <i>Relocation</i>	Removal or relocation of existing exposed structure or asset out of an at-risk area.
<i>Carbon offset</i>	A reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that is used to compensate for emissions that occur elsewhere. A carbon offset credit is a transferrable instrument certified by governments or independent certification bodies to represent an emission reduction of one metric tonne of CO <sub>2</sub> -e. The purchaser of an offset credit can 'retire' it to claim the reduction towards their own emission reduction goals.
<i>Climate change</i>	Change in the state of the climate that can be identified by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Throughout this policy, the term refers to changes to the climate attributable to human activities such as greenhouse gas emissions or land use changes.
<i>Climate risk</i>	Refers to potential negative or positive impacts of natural hazards and climate under the influence of rising global greenhouse gas emissions.
<i>Emissions</i>	Greenhouse gases released from human activities that contribute to the greenhouse effect, global warming and climate change.
<i>Hazard</i>	A potential natural or human-induced physical event, trend or disturbance with negative consequences.
<i>NARClIM</i>	The NSW Government provides high-quality regional climate projections and information for public use through the NSW and Australian Regional Climate Modelling (NARClIM) project.
<i>Resilience</i>	The capacity of individuals, communities, businesses, and systems to survive, adapt and thrive in response to chronic stresses and acute shocks.
<i>SSPs</i>	Shared Socioeconomic Pathways are a range of scenarios for climate change that consider different levels of greenhouse gas emissions, population, economics, social factors, and other key concepts. They help assess potential climate futures and their impacts.
<i>SSP2 and SSP3</i>	The SSP2 scenario assumes that global trends continue without major shifts. Some countries make good progress, while others struggle. Environmental degradation continues, but resource and energy use become more efficient.
<i>Targets</i>	SSP3 scenario assumes countries prioritise security and economic independence, leading to slow technological progress and high challenges for climate mitigation and adaptation. Includes Council's targets, aspirations, commitments, benchmarks, and actions as outlined in all Council policies, strategies, and action plans.

## Responsible Officer

Executive Manager, Environment & Resilience

## Review Date

2029

## Revision History

Revision	Date	Status	TRIM Ref
1	20/03/2025	Governance review	2025/208727
2	07/05/2025	Legal review	
3		CET endorsed	
		Council adopted	