

ACT NOW ON ADAPTATION

Climate Change Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Package Fact Sheet For Decision Makers

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CALL TO ACTION

The CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere are higher than anytime in the last two million years, and that it is unequivocal that humans have caused warming of the atmosphere, ocean and land¹. The target set in the 2015 Paris agreement of limiting warming to 2 degrees - preferably 1.5 degrees, will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions occur in the coming decades. The effects are already upon us - many weather and climate extremes are impacted in every region across the globe. Changes towards more extremes such as heatwaves and associated bushfires, heavy precipitation causing flood conditions, droughts, and tropical cyclones are increasingly more obvious.

It is estimated that unchecked climate change will reduce the size of the Australian economy by 6.3% by 2070, and lead to a net reduction of 880,000 jobs². However, aiming to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees and investing in climate adaptation measures is estimated to grow Australia's economy by \$680 billion in present day terms and add over 250,000 jobs by 2070. In a time where COVID-19 recovery is front and center for most governments across the globe, there is an opportunity to re-build local and global economies with greater emphasis on sustainability principles and sustainable finance – a concept referred to as "Building Back Better"³.

All States and Territories of Australia have now committed to an emissions reductions target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050³. The NSW Government is committed to helping the state become more resilient to a changing climate and to achieve the emission reduction goal. As a consequence, frameworks, guidance documents, and assistance structures around our response to climate change have been released in the recent years, including national strategies on climate change mitigation and adaptation due to be finalised in 2021.

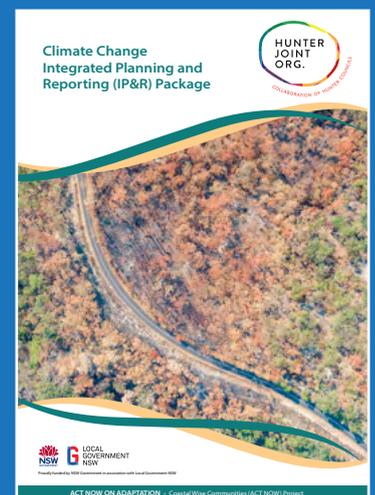
Councils have a duty of care to protect their community and environment. The world is in transition with climate change currently posing one of the biggest threats - there has never been a better time to act.

HUNTER JO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING CLIMATE CHANGE SUPPORT PACKAGE PROJECT

A user-friendly support package, with an aim to assist Councils' embed climate action as business-as-usual (BAU) through their Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) documents, was prepared by Hunter Joint Organisation for the 11 Councils in the Hunter and Central Coast Regions.

The package aligns with the framework and timeline for the overarching IP&R documents - Community Strategic Plan (10+ year strategy), Delivery Program (4 year program) and Operational Plan (1 year plan). It provides a pathway for Councils' decision makers to determine their climate change commitment level, and to embed the associated principles and actions into the IP&R documents, with the support of IP&R and climate change staff. It encourages the timely discussion with the executive of Council, elected members, the community, IP&R and climate change staff.

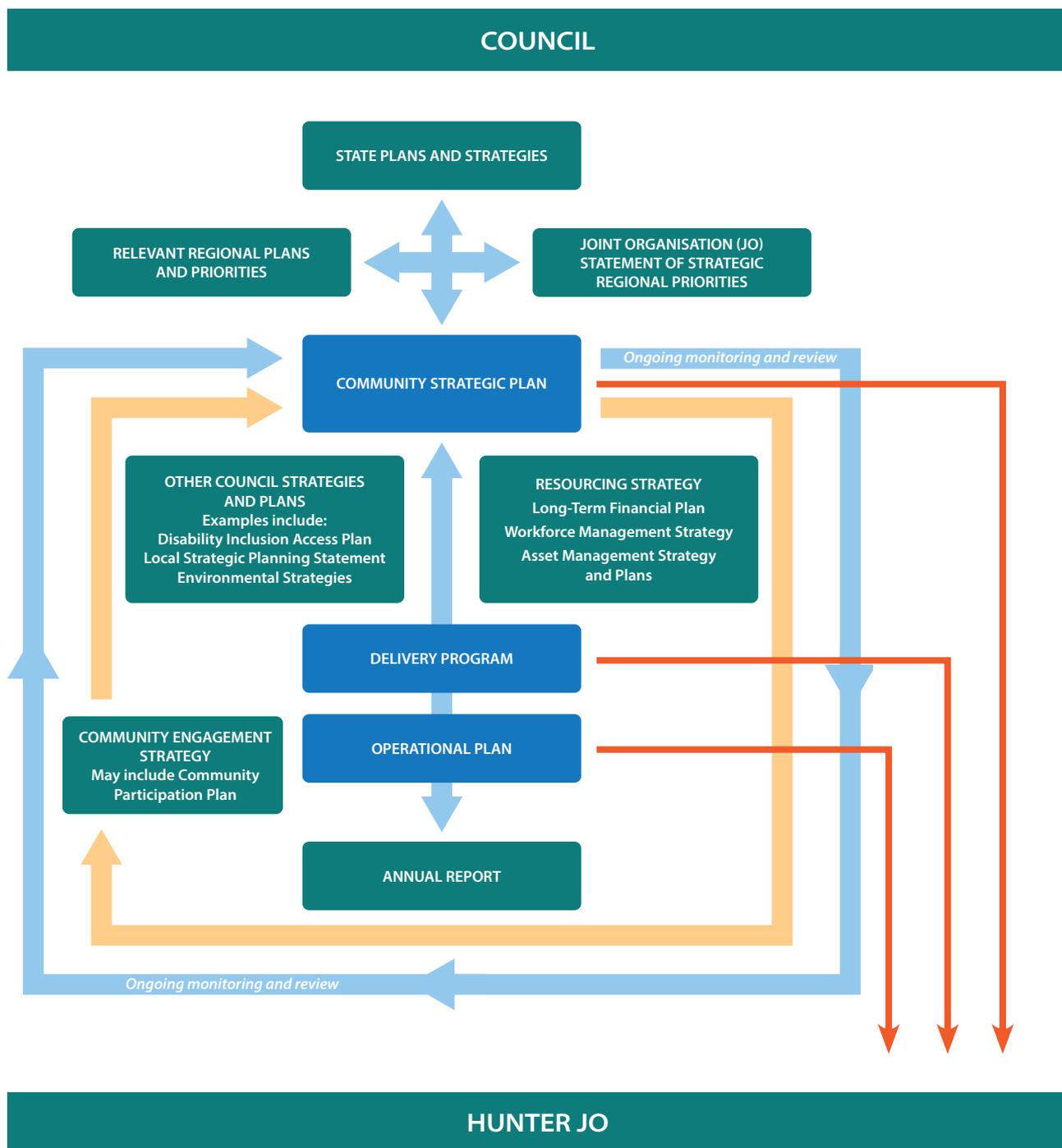
The package provides templates and tools that are in line with guidelines and best practice, providing an efficient way for Councils to establish a holistic climate change journey. During the preparation of the package, consultation was held with representatives from Councils' IP&R staff, climate change staff, executive leaders, and an interorganisational panel of climate change experts.



¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2021, "Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis Summary for Policy Makers", Working Group 1 contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, dated 7 August 2021.

² NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2021, "Net Zero Emissions Insights Series Webinar 1 Summary".

³ Environment, Energy and Science (in Department of Planning, Industry and Environment), 2021, "Climate Risk Ready NSW Guide. Practical guidance for the NSW Government sector to assess and manage climate change risks", dated March 2021.



CLIMATE CHANGE IP&R PACKAGE

Hunter JO's support package comprise the following practical tools and templates:

- Climate Change Commitment Level Framework** - Commitment levels allow Councils to establish a vision and identity for their climate change journey. The three levels established provide typical (but not binding) narratives, which are based on the individual Councils' resources available, risk and opportunity level for the particular Local Government Area (LGA), and their communities' values. The concept supports the discussions within Councils when setting the scene for their IP&R cycle.
- IP&R Templates** - This section provides template wording for strategic priority statements, delivery program objectives and operational plan examples of initiatives and actions for each commitment level, in line with relevant guidelines and best practice principles; and
- Communication and Engagement Package** - This package provides process support, factsheets, template Council papers and presentations.

COMMITMENT LEVELS – COUNCIL'S IDENTITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

Commitment levels were developed to support Councils establish their vision and identity for their climate change journey. It provides a typical, but not binding, narrative giving the general direction of the commitment level. The concept of commitment levels was developed to support the discussions within Councils and is targeted at decision makers when setting the scene for their strategy development.

The commitment levels are usually linked to resources available for a particular Council, but also the level of risk and opportunity for the particular LGA, and their community's values.

Each commitment level is accompanied with a set of templates for the IP&R document development, including strategic statements, objectives and associated actions relevant to the specific commitment level. However, the commitment levels are not a cookie cutter approach; whilst Councils can choose to adopt the templates from one commitment level as an efficient option, they can use templates from various levels to suit their needs if they wish to do so.

Synergies with other strategic areas such as disaster resilience, sustainability, environment, risk assessment are important to acknowledge to leverage efforts and resources, and avoid duplication. However, the format outlined in the package lifts out and emphasises climate change through specific strategic statements, flowing onto objectives, programs and actions.

COMMITMENT LEVEL	THOUGHT LEADERS	TYPICAL NARRATIVE
Leading	Thought Leaders Innovators Influencers Active Drivers Change Agents	<p>Leading Councils declare a climate crisis, or acknowledges climate change, in the introduction of their IP&R documentation and follow up with dedicated programs and resources to prioritise and act on risks and opportunities.</p> <p>The organisational culture is one that values and incorporates intergenerational equity into decision making. Council engages and empowers staff and community to contribute to the action plan.</p> <p>There is a clear and effective governance structure with strong executive sponsorship, a dedicated and accountable climate change risk manager or climate change / sustainability team, organisation wide champions, and a well-defined change management program to ensure climate change is embedded in decision making for both planning and operational functions. They link climate change with other strategic focus areas in a sophisticated manner, allowing for benefits to multiple programs and efficient use of resources and funding.</p> <p>These Councils lead by example. They understand their communities climate risks and needs, and drive large scale behaviour change programs with targeted campaigns to influence community action.</p> <p>Climate change is a focus area in corporate innovation, and research and development programs. A leading Council identifies critical gaps and opportunities, and drives research and innovation to fill them.</p> <p>These Councils are active members of collaborations such as the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) and / or the C40 cities. They work locally with partnering organisations with whom they share interdependent climate risks and opportunities to reduce emissions.</p> <p>A leading Council is looked to as a case study, and contributes to conferences and forums as thought leaders. They measure and report their progress regularly and transparently.</p> <p>The net zero commitment is accompanied by a clear road map with frequent reviews and continuous improvement cycles.</p>

COMMITMENT LEVEL	THOUGHT LEADERS	TYPICAL NARRATIVE
Leading (Cont).		<p>There are opportunities for updates throughout the IP&R cycles in an agile manner reflecting the increasing available information and data associated with the topic and frequent updates in guidance and information.</p>
Motivated	<p>Best Practice Early Adopters Contributors Collaborators Active Participators</p>	<p>Motivated Councils declare a climate crisis or acknowledges climate change in the introduction of their IP&R documentation and follow up with defined projects and programs. They incorporate climate change in their corporate risk assessment and management to prioritise actions in the larger context of Council's requirements with funding allocated accordingly.</p> <p>These Councils seek well documented and validated methodologies for best practice climate change risk assessment and action. This is typically done through active participation in collaborations and partnerships to leverage efforts.</p> <p>The motivated Councils have a dedicated climate change lead or has allocated the responsibility and accountability as an essential part of a wider role. The leadership team is committed and aware with a dedicated sponsor.</p> <p>Motivated Councils realise the links between programs such as waste reduction, sustainability, disaster resilience etc, and leverage their initiatives to benefit multiple outcomes.</p> <p>Council empowers their community by adopting validated community campaigns for large scale behaviour change, and participating in campaigns established by partnerships.</p> <p>A clear road map for net zero emissions is prepared or committed to.</p> <p>The motivated Councils' climate change journey has frequent reviews, continuous improvement, and considerations of wider priority areas for the Council embedded in their IP&R cycles.</p>
Committed		<p>A committed Council acknowledges climate change as a risk and that action is required for a resilient community. These Councils commit to seeking funding and collaboration to enable activities in an opportunistic manner, as dedicated resources are not available internally. Notwithstanding limited resources, a commitment means that climate change is a focus area and Council has strategic backing when seeking funding for programs and projects.</p> <p>These Councils continuously seek grant funding, and beneficial collaborations and partnerships to leverage efforts and funding. External assistance is essential for the successful delivery of their program.</p> <p>Climate change is typically a small part of a wider role. Climate change is considered in the corporate risk management framework in the context of other priorities and available resources.</p> <p>Net zero road map is dependent on external assistance or templates and funding through grants or other types of financial assistance.</p> <p>These Councils mainly seek opportunities that are cost effective / cost positive and have multiple benefits across several Council focus areas. They leverage efforts already in place for linked strategic focus areas such as waste reduction, energy reduction, disaster resilience etc.</p> <p>A committed Council reviews their approach to climate change frequently in consideration of grants and partnership made available to them and in line with the IP&R cycle.</p>

WHY ESTABLISH A COMMITMENT LEVEL?

Establishing a commitment level provides stakeholders with vision and direction, and gives the community confidence that their needs and risks are considered, and that appropriate action will be executed. The commitment levels also support climate change and IP&R staff by providing clarity of direction, boundaries and resources for their work. It establishes a direct link between climate change staff and the decision makers through the mandatory planning and reporting cycle associated with the IP&R framework, which enables a more efficient climate change journey. It encourages leadership at all levels.

FOCUS AREAS FOR A HOLISTIC CLIMATE CHANGE JOURNEY

Through the IP&R framework, the package provides an efficient way to create a holistic climate change journey by providing focus areas that follow the available guidance.

MITIGATION COUNCIL

MITIGATION COMMUNITY

ADAPTATION COUNCIL

ADAPTATION COMMUNITY

GOVERNANCE, PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

In summary, we strive to build resilience to a changing climate through:

- Climate change adaptation: actions that support individuals, communities, organisations and natural systems be resilient to impacts of a changing climate; and
- Climate change mitigation: actions to limit our impact on the climate, either by reducing greenhouse gas emissions or increase the amounts of greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere by sinks.

Councils' action in climate change adaptation and mitigation is typically divided into two categories⁴:

- Council as an organisation ('Council'); and
- The community it serves ('Community').

The package also highlights the importance of governance, partnerships and collaboration for an effective strategy by separating it into a focus area of its own.

⁴ Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2020, "Net Zero Emissions Guidance for NSW Councils. Helping councils plan for a low emissions future", dated May 2020

For more information or to be involved please contact
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