Climate Change Adaptation toolkit

A comprehensive guide to planning for Climate Change Adaptation in three steps.

1. Exploring the Risk Context
2. Developing Adaptation Actions
3. Screening for Climate Change Interactions
About this toolkit

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Introduction

Purpose of this toolkit

In 2011, the City of Greater Geelong released its Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Roadmap to respond to the impacts of climate change. It was recognised that traditional decision-making tools are designed to cope with a limited range of scenarios and linear problems – making them less effective in planning for climate change. The Climate Change Adaptation Toolkit has been developed to facilitate robust decision-making processes and to integrate climate change adaptation across the organisation.

The Toolkit aims to support organisations to:

- integrate adaptation and support effective and efficient risk management
- be more responsive to climate change shocks and trends
- maintain standards of service delivery in the face of more extreme conditions
- make effective and consistent decisions regarding climate change
- form linkages across different work areas, internally and externally
- incorporate uncertainty into decision making
  - make adaptation decisions that work across a range of future scenarios
  - build flexibility into adaptation actions.

Who should use it

Tools 1 and 2 support the development and refining of an adaptation strategy, by exploring risk context, and developing adaptation actions that remain viable under the widest range of probable climate futures.

Tool 3 complements existing decision-making processes by providing a methodology for incorporating climate change issues into the planning and design of initiatives.

Each tool can be used in isolation and the Toolkit is **free for download and use**.

The Toolkit was developed with the City of Greater Geelong for use by local Council and as a result includes examples relating specifically to a local Council context. However, aspects of the Toolkit will be applicable to a wider range of organisations and sectors, and each of the included tools can readily be adapted to specific local and organisational contexts.
Assumed preparatory work

The Toolkit assumes your organisation has already undertaken some form of a climate change risk assessment. The most utilised risk framework used by local governments in Australia is the guide developed by the Department of the Environment and Heritage, Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO) in 2006\(^1\). The guide helps local government integrate climate change impacts into risk management and other strategic planning activities. The guide is aligned with the Australian and New Zealand Standard / International Standards Organisation ISO 31000:2009 Risk Management Principles and Guidelines (formerly AS/NZS 4360).

The common steps in a risk-based assessment are:

1. Establish the risk context
2. Identify and describe the risk
3. Analyse the risk
4. Evaluate the risk

The risk assessment process using the ISO 31000 methodology will produce a list of risks that have been prioritised based on a risk matrix using likelihood and consequence criteria. The criteria should specify ‘priority risks’, that is, those considered most important and/or pressing. The priority risks identified through a risk assessment process can serve as inputs for the Toolkit process, including taking the risks through a more detailed risk exploration process.

Toolkit overview

The Toolkit comprises three tools:

1. **Exploring the Risk Context**: explores a range of priority climate risks previously identified to be explored in detail. Tool 1 explores interactions with other stressors (social, economic and environmental) and assists decision makers to avoid being paralysed by uncertainty inherent in climate projections.
2. **Developing Adaptation Actions**: provides a process for identifying, exploring, evaluating and prioritising adaptation options. Tool 2 provides opportunities to develop a range of potential adaptation actions and test these against several future scenarios.
3. **Screening for Climate Change Interactions**: outlines a screening process to identify potential interactions with climate change risks and adaptation actions, when developing new projects and strategies. Tool 3 helps organisations embed climate change adaptation considerations into decision making processes.

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### ACTIVITY 1: DETAILED RISK ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

(1) **Who or what will be affected by the risk?** Consider what system, asset or group of individuals will be affected? What is the attribute that may be affected? What is the boundary of the risk?  

(2) **What is causing the risk?**  

(3) **Why is the organisation exposed to the climate change risk?**  

(4) **Are there any assets, communities or locations particularly sensitive to the risk?**  

(5) **Does the risk affect the organisation's objectives/obligations/strategic directions?** If yes, describe.  

(6) **What is the time period of the risk?**  

(7) **Does the risk potentially reinforce or exacerbate existing social disadvantage or inequalities?** If yes, describe.  

(8) **Are there already preventative measures in place that would help deal with the risk (either implemented by the organisation or another entity)?** Describe. Where relevant, how have they performed?  

(9) **Is the organisation prepared for or capable of dealing with the risk impacts now?** Describe.  

(10) **Linkages – which other organisation/departments/community groups/sectors have either responsibility for or an interest in this risk? Should joint management be considered?**  

(11) **How often should this risk or class of risks be reviewed?**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Category/ Description of uncertainty</th>
<th>Does it need to be resolved?</th>
<th>Can it be resolved?</th>
<th>What are the implications of the uncertainty on the risk?</th>
<th>Plan of action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>What is causing the risk?</td>
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<td>Why is the organisation exposed to the climate risk?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is the organisation prepared for or capable of dealing with the risk impacts now?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Outcome

- **Does this uncertainty result in re-prioritisation of risk?**
  - Yes □
  - No □
  *If ‘yes’, what is required?*

- **Does uncertainty mean additional research or work needs to occur?**
  - Yes □
  - No □
  *If ‘yes’, what is required?*

### ACTIVITY 3: PROBLEM STATEMENT

...
Climate Change Adaptation toolkit

Tool 2 Developing Adaptation Actions
Tool 2: Developing Adaptation Actions

Activity 1: Brainstorming Adaptation Actions

Activity 2: Exploring an Adaptation Action

Activity 3: Evaluating an Adaptation Action

Activity 4: Prioritising Adaptation Actions

Problem Statement → Developing Adaptation Actions → List and/or Register of Adaptation Actions
ACTIVITY 1: BRAINSTORMING ADAPTATION ACTIONS

Consider...

- the point of intervention: can we reduce exposure, reduce sensitivity or increase our adaptive capacity?
- the potential methods of intervention. For example: accepting impacts, loss prevention, behaviour modification.
Exploring adaptation actions

(1) What is the organisation’s control or responsibility over any or all aspects of the adaptation action?

(2) Does the action ‘lock in’ outcomes? Are the outcomes robust under different futures?*

(3) Describe the assumptions that underpin the effectiveness of the adaptation action? How reliable are the assumptions in light of future uncertainty?*

(4) Describe the equity implications of the adaptation action*

(5) How will the adaptation action interact or respond to other stressors and trends?*

(6) Is there an event that should trigger the implementation of the adaptation action? What is that event?

(7) What are the barriers, if any, to implementing or adopting the action?*

(8) Describe the high level benefits of the adaptation action. Describe the high level costs of the action. Do the potential costs outweigh the potential benefit?

(9) Describe the drivers behind making a decision whether to implement this adaptation action.*

(10) Does the adaptation action demonstrate the key properties of a robust adaptation action?*

   1. Remain viable under the widest range of probable climate futures.
   2. Be insensitive to broken assumptions.
   3. Increase flexibility and preserve option value (where possible).
   4. Maximise their value when planned as part of a portfolio of actions.
   5. Build resilience and redundancy into both physical, organisational and social systems.
   6. Be implemented within planned budgets or based on evidence that is good enough to justify budget/revenue increases

* recommend using scenarios to assist in answering these questions

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**ACTIVITY 3: EVALUATING AN ADAPTATION ACTION**

Select one

(a) Implement immediately
(b) Conduct a further assessment to determine feasibility
(c) Return to earlier stages of this process and obtain basic information on the risk or the adaptation action
(d) Redesign action
(e) Defer adaptation action for future implementation

Briefly justify your selection:
### ACTIVITY 4: PRIORITISING ADAPTATION ACTIONS

This could be the basis for your adaptation action register.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action - describe the adaptation action to be implemented</th>
<th>Assign priority (H/M/L)</th>
<th>Relevant implementation/timing considerations or other notes</th>
<th>Designate responsibility for implementation/monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Climate Change Adaptation toolkit

Tool 3: Screening for Climate Change Interactions
**Tool 3: Screening for Climate Change Interactions**

**Stage 1**: Preliminary Screening for Climate Change Interactions

**Stage 2**: Detailed Review of Climate Risks, Vulnerabilities & Adaptation Actions

**Stage 3**: Determining Class of Interaction & Required Action

*This term has been specifically defined for the purposes of this Toolkit. Refer to the glossary for definition.
CLASSES OF INTERACTION

STAGE 1
- Climate Change Screening Table

STAGE 2
- Register of climate risks, vulnerabilities and adaptation actions
- Review climate risk, vulnerability and adaptation action registers for other potential interactions. How does the proposal interact with climate risks?

STAGE 3
- PART A: Determine the class of interaction
  - Generates a new climate risk or vulnerability
  - Increases vulnerability to an existing climate risk
  - Decreases vulnerability to an existing climate risk
  - No interaction found
- PART B: Does the proposal interact with an existing or planned adaptation action?
- Work through decision tree...

PART A
- Work through decision tree...

PART B
- Work through decision tree

KEY
- Input/output
- Process
### CLIMATE CHANGE RISK SOURCE AND ADAPTATION SCREENING TABLE

#### Aspect Description Examples of risk sources/vulnerability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Coastal planning is the most pressing climate change priority, located developments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>The risks that this area embodies not only relate to current and future planning decisions, but also challenging issues relating to impacts of climate change on coastal properties (existing or new) at risk of physical damage or loss from developments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>Council has responsibility for assets ranging from buildings, to infrastructure systems. Asset management is an area of focus for Council because many of its assets are particularly exposed to climate change due to their location, assets are potentially exposed to extreme events as well as other long term processes such as erosion, sea level rise and drought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Increased frequency and severity of emergency events &amp; impact on personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Increased burden placed on emergency response personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Impact on local community, Council employees, volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community expectations</td>
<td>Role of council to respond to emergency events whilst maintaining service delivery.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budgets</td>
<td>Increased impact to respond and recover, and support vulnerable people.</td>
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#### Council Roles/Responsibility

- New situations and conditions resulting in community requiring assistance, co-ordinated response & management from other agencies & pressure from other levels of Government, not clear definition of roles and responsibility for a particular crisis or problem.

#### Community expectation

- Changed conditions resulting in community pushing Council beyond resources, power and capability.

#### Engagement

- Advocate and implement community initiatives, understand role in preparing for and responding to climate change, understand Council role in improving community engagement and preparing for climate-related events, support the development of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, and Council needs to understand community needs and concerns.

#### Biodiversity

- Loss of vegetation and changes in condition.

#### Community welfare

- Loss of green spaces condition & availability.

#### Resources

- Increased demand on Council personnel to maintain condition of open space environments, prevent impacts from urban island effect.

#### Budgets

- Demand on budgets to respond to changed conditions e.g. not enough water/too much water.

#### Building

- Community has a large role to play in adaptation. To get the local community engaging, it is important to understand Council’s role in managing resources and ensuring that community expectations are met. Council has a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) and communities and assist them to recover from these extreme events such as floods, fires and storms. The MEMP is an important tool that provides an overview of the City’s approach to managing emergency situations such as fires, floods and storms.

#### Council Roles/Responsibility

- Role of council to support vulnerable people (e.g. during emergency response & recovery, increased impact from urban island effect).

#### Community expectation

- Role of council to respond to emergency events whilst maintaining service delivery.

#### Psychological/Health

- Impact on local community, Council employees, volunteers from stress, extreme weather, isolation, lack of support networks, increased mortality.

#### Community expectations

- Role of council to support vulnerable people.

#### Budgets

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A 

Proposal generates a new climate risk or vulnerability

- **Proposal generates a new climate risk or vulnerability**
  - **Priority:** Assess the new climate risk against Council criteria and assign a risk rating.
  - **Non Priority:**
    - **New climate risk is a non-priority risk:**
      - **Action:** Create a new risk in the risk register. Establish a responsible person.
    - **New climate risk is a priority risk:**
      - **Action:**
        1) Create a new priority risk in the risk register. Contact any relevant personnel and establish a responsible person.
        2) Complete Tools 1 and 2 for the new priority risk.

- **Proposal increases vulnerability to an existing risk**
  - **Priority:**
    - **New climate risk is serious enough to justify redesigning or abandoning the proposal:**
      - **Action:** Redesign or abandon proposal
    - **New climate risk is a priority risk:**
      - **Action:**
        1) Create a new priority risk in the risk register. Contact any relevant personnel and establish a responsible person.
        2) Complete Tools 1 and 2 for the new priority risk.
  - **Non Priority:**
    - **New climate risk is a non-priority risk:**
      - **Action:**
        1) Notify the person responsible for the risk. Contact any relevant personnel.
        2) Depending on extent of changes, consider going through full risk context worksheet / adaptation worksheet process again.

B 

Proposal increases vulnerability to an existing risk

- **Proposal increases vulnerability to an existing risk**
  - **Yes:**
    - **Assess the risk against council criteria. Is the increased vulnerability serious enough to justify redesigning or abandoning the proposal?**
      - **Yes:**
        - **Notify the person responsible for the risk. Consider the existing risk context and adaptation documentation (developed using Tools 1 and 2).**
          1) Will the climate risk register need to be updated?
          2) Will additional or a change to existing/planned adaptation actions be required?
        - **Action:**
          1) Update relevant documentation
          2) Depending on extent of changes, consider going through full risk context worksheet / adaptation worksheet process again.
      - **No:**
        - **Is the existing climate risk a priority risk?**
          - **Yes:**
            - **Notify person responsible for the risk. Assess the risk and assign a new risk rating. Is the existing risk now a priority risk?**
              - **Yes:**
                - **Action:**
                  1) Create a new priority risk. Contact any relevant personnel.
                  2) Complete Tools 1 and 2 for new priority risk.
              - **No:**
                - **Action:**
                  1) Consider whether any information on the climate risk register needs to be amended / updated.
                  2) Update relevant documentation.
          - **No:**
            - **Return to complete PART B of the process**
    - **No:**
      - **Is the existing climate risk a priority risk?**
        - **Yes:**
          - **Action:**
            1) Create a new priority risk. Contact any relevant personnel.
            2) Complete Tools 1 and 2 for new priority risk.
        - **No:**
          - **Return to complete PART B of the process**
Proposal decreases vulnerability to an existing risk

Proposal interacts with an existing or planned adaptation action
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