

Human Enhanced Climate Change

(1) AIMS/OBJECTIVES

This policy aims to provide a clear position on the issue of human enhanced climate change to:

- Provide guidance for the Town to ensure that the impacts from human enhanced climate change are considered in decision making, planning and infrastructure provision; and
- Plan and prepare for the impacts from human enhanced climate change so that Cottesloe's community, infrastructure and relaxed lifestyle remain protected.

(2) ISSUES

There is uncertainty surrounding the topic of human enhanced climate change because of the scale of the issue and the difficulty in comprehending the technicalities around the economic and social reforms associated with broad scale action.

There are many legislative, financial and social barriers that limit the Town's capacity to address climate change.

Climate change management costs, while representing a relatively small financial commitment on a global scale, are likely to represent a larger proportion of the Town's spending. The Town already has a wide range of responsibilities in the community and climate change is an additional aspect of environmental management that the Town continues to broaden its suite of services to include.

Acting to ameliorate and/or adapt to climate change is important because it will decrease maintenance and legal liability issues for the Town in the long term.

(3) DEFINITIONS

“Greenhouse Effect” refers to the natural processes of maintaining a regulated temperature in the atmosphere around Earth to support life. Greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, water vapour and nitrous oxide) capture sunlight and radiation energy as heat in the atmosphere.

“Human Enhanced Climate Change” refers to burning of fossil fuels and land clearing activities that have increased the proportion of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorocarbons) in the atmosphere, disrupting the balance of the natural greenhouse effect. This has caused temperatures to rise and has triggered environmental processes (e.g. sea level rising, ice caps melting and changing climatic regions).

“Mitigation” refers to a deliberate effort to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases that are released into the atmosphere from human activities. Mitigation aims to minimize the increased warming of the Earth's atmosphere and the associated negative impacts. Mitigation may involve, amongst other things, improved energy efficiency, sequestration programs and educational or behaviour change programs.

“Adaptation” strategies identify the inevitable changes that human enhanced climate change will cause so that managers can prepare for, and minimize the negative impacts from, these changes in the present and the future.

(4) POLICY

4.0. The Town of Cottesloe is committed to delivering appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies that address human enhanced climate change.

Reflecting appropriate priorities

4.1. Management of climate change impacts will reflect the priorities of the Town and our community. These will be determined by the Town with regard to their environmental, social and economic opportunities and risks.

4.2. The Town acknowledges the need to identify regionally-specific priorities and impacts, and will assist with coordinated cooperative regional climate change management across the political and operational areas under its jurisdiction.

Setting clear objectives and targets

4.3. In order to achieve outcomes and engage in 'best practice' climate change management processes the Town will set, and work towards, internal targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Establishing clear roles and responsibilities

4.4. Climate change management is the responsibility of all local government officers and elected members in dealing with the gamut of their activities. The Town will address climate change at all levels of its own operations, with support from the executive management team.

Apportioning costs appropriately

4.5. The Town, in acknowledging the immediacy and importance of climate change management, will endeavour to ensure that high priority climate change risks are directly resourced or externally funded so that impacts can be ameliorated and/or adapted to.

Mitigation Actions

4.6. The Town will continue to investigate and implement actions to reduce or mitigate our greenhouse gas emissions.

4.7. The Town will become a carbon neutral Council, achieving zero net greenhouse gas emissions, by the year 2015, or as soon as is practicable.

4.8. The Town will continue to encourage the community to mitigate their greenhouse gas emissions through education programs and innovative leadership.

Adaptation Actions

4.9. The Town will determine how the impacts of climate change will effect the physical coastal environment, and the implications for existing infrastructure, in accordance with the Risk Treatment Plan developed in the *Vulnerability of the Cottesloe Foreshore to the Potential Impacts of Climate Change Report* (2008).

4.10. As a participant of the Western Suburbs Regional Organisation of Councils the Town is helping to develop a Regional Adaptation Action Plan to achieve strategic adaptation actions across the western suburbs region, in accordance with the *WESROC Climate Change Risk Assessment and Adaptation Report* (2010).

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4.11. The Town will develop the *Local Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan: 2011-2016* to prioritise and implement adaptation actions in preparation for climate change.

4.12. The Town will work with the community to increase understanding of climate change impacts, and to develop strategies that will help adapt to these.

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