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CENTRAL COAST COUNCIL

CCP 2018

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

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1		

DCP 2018 Schedule of Amendments

Effective Date	Amendment	Reason
2018	N/A	Initial Adoption by Council

A. POLICY SUMMARY

- A1 The Central Coast Council Climate Change Policy (The Policy) sets out Council's position relating to climate change with a view to maximising the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Council and guides the planning and development of the Central Coast Region's resilience to climate change.
- A2 The Policy enables council to align its operational and strategic planning with NSW State policy setting and actions.
- A3 The Policy is a whole of Council commitment as well as support community initiatives to deal with climate change.

B. POLICY BACKGROUND

- B1 There is 97% of global scientific consensus that the acceleration of climate change beyond the earlier predictions is exacerbated by anthropogenic activities.
- B2 In 2015, 195 countries agreed on the United Nations Paris Agreement on climate change. The key objective was to limit the increase in global temperatures to well below 2 degrees and pursue efforts to limit the rise to 1.5 degrees. The commitment is to achieve net-zero emissions globally by the second half of the century.
- B3 In 2016, the Australian Government ratified the Paris Agreement. The current targets for Australia are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26-28% below the 2005 levels by 2030. Australia's policy agrees to meet international commitments on greenhouse gas emission reduction while maintaining energy security and affordability.
- B4 In 2016, the NSW Government endorsed the Paris Agreement and took action consistent with the level of effort to achieve Australia's commitment to the Paris Agreement through implementation of the NSW Climate Change Policy Framework. The current targets for NSW are to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.
- B5 In 2016, the *Central Coast Regional Plan 2036* set a goal to protect the natural environment. Direction 14 of the Regional Plan requires the management of climate change related risks and the improvement of the regions resilience to hazards such as flooding, coastal erosion, bushfire, mine subsidence and land contamination.
- B6 On 12 May 2016, the former Gosford City and Wyong Shire Councils amalgamated forming the Central Coast Council. This Policy aligns with the Council's Corporate Vision to build a vibrant and sustainable Central Coast.
- B7 The Community Strategic Plan outlines the community's objectives and climate change expectations when delivering Council's goods and services to the community. This Policy will be implemented in accordance with the Community Strategic Plan.
- B8 Approximately \$US23 trillion worth of private investments are required globally for net zero emissions target by 2050 and new industries are crucial to realise this goal.

C. THE POLICY

Purpose

- C1 To empower Central Coast Council as a climate leader and enabler for change.
- C2 To ensure the risks associated with the changing climate on the environment and the community are recognised, understood and where practical managed by Council.
- C3 To inform core functions of the Central Coast Council, including Council's response to strategic decision making, planning processes and operations.
- C4 To provide direction on Climate Change for Council and the Central Coast region and strengthen the quadruple bottom line reporting framework (governance, environment, social and economic).
- C5 To commit Council to the strategic principles and policy statements to manage climate change risks for natural and built systems within the Central Coast Local Government Area, and Council business using a combination of sustainable adaptation and mitigation measures.

Strategic Principles

- C5 **Ecological Sustainable Development:** Ability to effectively integrate social, economic and environmental consideration in decision making through the implementation of the four principles a) precautionary principles, b) inter-generational equity, c) conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity and d) improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanism.
- C6 **Holistic approach:** Ability to identify and understand the complex interacting and interdependent components that builds capacity to anticipate and adapt to change.
- C7 **Science or Evidence based:** Ability to facilitate evidence based decision making to deal with the changing circumstances.
- C8 **Collective decision making:** Ability to collaborate with the key internal and external stakeholders to generate diversity and flexibility in adaptation options through learning and shared responsibility.
- C9 **Proactivity and continuity:** Ability to be proactive and establish an on-going process for learning and adaptation to deal with the complex challenges posed by the changing climate.
- C10 **Place-based approach:** Ability to enhance Council and community capacity for climate resilience that is context specific, knowledge based and collaborative.

D. POLICY COMMITMENT STATEMENTS

- D1 Acknowledge the importance of shared responsibility across all levels of Council, community and business in addressing climate change and transitioning towards a Net Zero Emission Central Coast Region.
- D2 Establish a Corporate Governance Framework to lead a whole of Council approach when dealing with emergency risks including those associated with climate change within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and the Central Coast Council Community Strategic Plan.
- D3 Establish a holistic and systemic approach to monitor and understand the climate change risks and their impact on ecological, social, economic and physical built forms systems.
- D4 Recognise the need for an effective and progressive response to the threat of climate change risks with the best available scientific knowledge.
- D5 Align Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions reduction target with the Australian Government's Paris commitment to reduce emissions by 26-28% below the 2005 levels by 2030 and the NSW Government's aspirational objective to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

- D6 Develop a Central Coast greenhouse gas emissions inventory using regional data and establish baselines for an incremental pathway to meet a net zero emissions target for Council as basis for the Climate Change Action Plan (i.e. 2025, 2030 and 2050).
- D7 Establish a Climate Change Action Plan for Council that outlines mitigation and adaptation management actions across Council business that are consistent with the principles of ecological sustainable development.
- D8 Involve the community and stakeholders using a place-based approach in the decision making process for the development of a Climate Change Action Plan encompassing climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience.
- D9 Consider climate change risks in Council's strategic planning process, namely; urban growth and development and land use zoning including the development of planning controls and guidelines to facilitate local investments.
- D10 Review and update the sea level rise planning levels and coastal hazards based on Representative Concentration Pathway Scenarios 8.5 and latest scientific research adopted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for planning in coastal areas and developing appropriate plans and strategies that recognise the long term need to protect, redesign, rebuild, elevate, relocate or retreat as sea levels rise.
- D11 Support initiatives and education programs to enhance the Central Coast community's understanding and resilience to climate change risks; and provide directions for sustainable climate change mitigation and adaptation activities.
- D12 Identify and develop systems and relevant planning mechanisms to consider Council's corporate climate change risks, ongoing disaster response and recovery activities.
- D13 Address the impacts of climate change in biodiversity conservation and natural resource management planning, wildlife connectivity and reduce ecosystem degradation across the Central Coast region.
- D14 Invest in climate resilience opportunities through advancing technology, innovation and continuous improvement in the planning and management of existing built and natural assets, infrastructure renewal projects and renewable resources.
- D15 Consider climate change risks and opportunities in the asset life cycle analysis for all new and existing infrastructure assets through adaptation and mitigation strategies.
- D16 Establish an energy efficient and renewable energy guideline for the creation and renewal of Council's energy using assets as well as stimulate private sector investment in climate actions such as renewable energy initiatives.
- D17 Commit to continually improving Council's energy efficiency and productivity.
- D18 Conduct an annual corporate greenhouse gas emissions inventory including direct (scope 1) and indirect (Scope 2) emissions utilising *National Greenhouses and Energy Reporting Act 2007*.
- D19 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the production, use and disposal of goods and services through Council procurement processes as well as influence Community efforts through partnerships.
- D20 Identify and keep abreast of opportunities to finance climate change initiatives and investing savings from climate actions towards advancing sustainable development goals for Central Coast.
- D21 Create accountability and confidence by supporting the carbon neutral supply chain through implementation of the Australian Government's National Carbon Offset Standards and Carbon Neutral Certification requirements.
- D22 Establish climate partnerships between Council and the business community to identify and develop private investment opportunities for economic stability and growth.

E. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

- E1 This Policy covers all elected members of Council, all personnel employed by Council, any person or organisation contracted to or acting on behalf of Council, any person or organisation employed to work on Council premises or facilities and all activities of the Council.
- E2 This policy does not confer any delegated authority upon any person. All delegations to staff are issued by the Chief Executive Officer.
- E3 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Central Coast Council Code of Conduct.
- E4 It is the personal responsibility of all Council employees and agents thereof to have knowledge of, and to ensure compliance with this policy.

F. DEFINITIONS

- F1 **Council** means Central Coast Council, being the organisation responsible for the administration of Council affairs and operations and the implementation of Council policy and strategies.
- F2 **Climate change** means a change of climate over an extended period, typically decades or longer, which is caused by human activity or natural climate variability that have direct and indirect impact on the environment, community and Council business.
- F3 **Climate resilience** means building capacity to cope with climate change, to recover from the impacts of these climatic changes and to adapt using a combination of sustainable adaptation and mitigation measures.
- F4 **Greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs)** means emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride, a hydrofluorocarbon gas, a perfluorocarbon gas or any other gas prescribed by legislation for the purposes of this definition.
- F5 **Holistic approach** means consideration of all the systems, processes and the interdependencies that influence the environment, Council and Community capacity to adapt and mitigate change on an on-going basis.
- F6 **Place-based approach** means consideration of a context specific approach to plan for places for people by involving the people in the decision making process to maximise their connectivity to the place.
- F7 **Climate adaptation** means consideration of the actions on an on-going basis for preparation in dealing with the impacts of climate change.
- F8 **Climate mitigation** means consideration of the actions to reduce the impacts of climate change.
- F9 **Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs)** means the concentration of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere that equate to global mean temperature rise. Four different scenarios for global warming were projected (RCP2.6, RCP4.5, RCP6, and RCP8.5) and this information is translated to indicate the possible future sea level rise. The RCP2.6 low emission scenario indicates high investment in active removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere from the baseline years. While this translates to insignificant sea level rise, this scenario increases the risk of failure by 85% such as in infrastructure planning. On the contrary RCP8.5 indicates the high scenario i.e. high concentration level of GHGs and higher sea level rise. Hence, planning for the high risk scenarios is precautionary and reduces the risk of failure to only 15%.
- F10 **Precautionary principle** means that if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation. Hence, decision making processes should effectively integrate both long term and short term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage. In the application of the precautionary principle, public and private decisions should be guided by:
- (i) careful evaluation to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage to the environment, and
 - (ii) an assessment of the risk-weighted consequences of various options.

- F11 **Inter-generational equity** means that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generation.
- F12 **Conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity** means that conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration.
- F13 **Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanism** means that environmental factors should be included in the valuation of assets and services, such as:
- (i) polluter pays – that is, those who generate pollution and waste should bear the cost of containment, avoidance or abatement, and
 - (ii) the users of goods and services should pay prices based on the full life cycle of costs of providing goods and services, including the use of natural resources and assets and the ultimate disposal of any waste, and
 - (iii) environmental goals, having been established, should be pursued in the most cost effective way, by establishing incentive structures, including market mechanisms, that enable those best placed to maximise benefits or minimise costs to develop their own solutions and responses to environmental problems.

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