

Local Government Roles and Responsibilities for Adaptation under Victorian-Legislation Guidance Brief

Checklist for decision-makers

The guiding principles of the Climate Change Act 2017 can be used to inform a decision, policy or program, assist Council decision-makers in discharging their duties under the Local Government Act 2020 in the context of climate change adaptation, and prompt necessary conversations between council staff and Councillors.

Examples of decision-making

Questions to ask

Principle of informed decision-making: making informed decisions

Should be based on a comprehensive analysis of information about potential impacts of climate change

- Are there processes in place to access the best practically available information on climate impacts, exposure and vulnerability? See Appendix B for a list of available resources
- Are there processes in place to routinely check accuracy and currency of climate information?
- Is the information that has led to a decision made publicly available?

Ensure that decisions to manage climate risk are not maladaptive and do not perversely contribute to the State's greenhouse gas emissions.

- Have we calculated and taken into account the potential contribution of this decision or action to the State's greenhouse gas emissions?

Principle of integrated decision-making: making integrated decisions

Ensure that the short, medium and long-term impacts of climate change are considered in decision-making processes

- Have we identified the competing considerations relating to climate change over the short, medium, and long term?
- Does decision-making balance the immediate and long-term needs in managing climate risks?
- Are climate risks being considered in the yearly operational plans, four-yearly Council plans, and 10-yearly Community Vision, Financial and Asset Plans?

Ensure that the direct and cross-cutting issues relating to climate change are considered in decision-making processes

- Have we identified the direct and cross cutting social, health, economic and environmental issues relevant to climate change?
- Have we taken relevant regional, state, and national climate change plans and policies are to be taken into account?
- Has effective and proportionate consultation been undertaken with experts and the community to identify issues and inform critical decisions that need to be made?
- Have we considered all relevant issues during the decision-making process? *Use of a risk management framework can assist, such as Australian Standard 5334-2013: Climate change adaptation for settlements and infrastructure: A risk-based approach*

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Examples of decision-making

Questions to ask

Principle of integrated decision-making: making integrated decisions

Ensure any measures adopted are cost effective and in proportion to the problems relating to climate change that are relevant to the decision, policy, program, or process

- Have we costed the adopted measures considering direct costs, operation and consequential costs over time?
- Have we assessed if they are proportionate to the problems relating to climate change?

Principle of risk management: effective risk management

Careful evaluation of the potential climate impacts to avoid, wherever practicable, serious or irreversible damage resulting from climate change

- Have we developed a process for evaluating the potential impacts of climate change using best practicably available information?
- Are we identifying and monitoring the vulnerabilities of our community in a changing climate?

Managing and allocating the risks associated with the potential climate impacts in a manner that is easily seen and understood

- Have we developed a climate change risk register which enables the tracking of physical and transitional risks?
- Are accountabilities for managing climate risks across council clearly assigned and understood?
- Have we documented our process of decision-making and kept appropriate records?

A decision, policy, program, or process should not rely on a lack of full scientific certainty as a reason to postpone appropriate measures to prevent serious or irreversible loss or damage as a result of climate change

- Where there is a lack of scientific certainty, have we adopted a precautionary approach to decision-making to prevent serious or irreversible loss or damage?
- Are processes in place to revise risk management practices in response to new information or changes in risk level following effective implementation of adaptation actions?

Principle of community engagement: effective community engagement

Providing appropriate information to the community

- Are we providing appropriate information on climate change and expected climate impacts to the community?
- Are we continually developing new and effective ways to engage different populations?

Providing opportunities for the community to be involved in the decision, policy, program, or process

- Are we providing opportunities for community involvement in decision-making relating to climate change, especially members of vulnerable or marginalised communities?
- How are we monitoring and evaluating these processes?