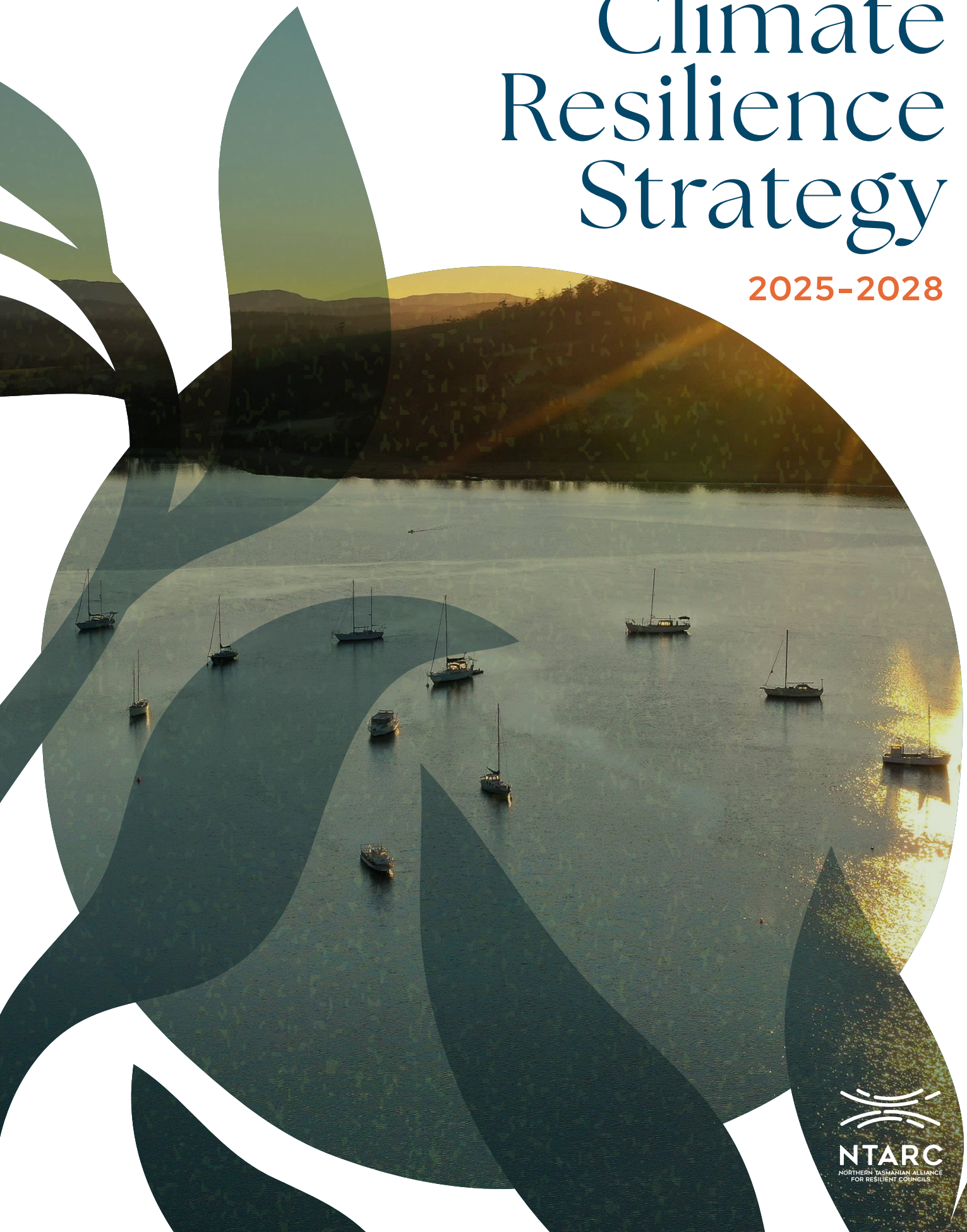
West Tamar
COUNCIL

Climate Resilience Strategy

2025-2028



NTARC
NORTHERN TASMANIAN ALLIANCE FOR RESILIENT COUNCILS

Glossary

Adaptation - *the act of changing something or changing your behaviour to make it suitable for a new purpose or situation.*

Climate Change - *changes in the earth's climate, especially the gradual rise in temperature caused by high levels of carbon dioxide and other gases.*

Mitigation - *a reduction in the unpleasantness, seriousness, or painfulness of something.*

Resilience - *the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties.*

Acronyms

GHG	Greenhouse gas emissions
COt2	Carbon Dioxide tonnes
NTARC	Northern Tasmanian Alliance for Resilient Councils

Contents

Mayor's Foreword

As Mayor of West Tamar, I am proud to present our Council's Climate Strategy - a vital step in preparing West Tamar for the challenges and opportunities of a changing climate.

This Strategy reflects our commitment to leadership, responsibility and long-term resilience. It is a clear signal that West Tamar is ready to act.

Changes to our climate are no longer a future concern - it is happening now.

Our communities are already feeling its effects, and we are being asked by insurers, markets, and legal advisors to demonstrate how we are responding.

We have received clear legal advice that climate change must be considered in our decision-making. This Strategy ensures that we do so with purpose and integrity.

However, we are not starting from scratch. West Tamar Council has existing climate commitments across our assets and services and we are actively progressing them. We understand our carbon and energy footprint and have seen reductions of 4 per cent since our base year of 2019.

We have assessed our risks and identified 13 climate-related risks, associated with rainfall and flooding, bushfire, coastal and combined hazards.

For the Council, one was rated as extreme, two as high, five medium, and five low or emerging.

We are building a strong evidence base to guide our actions. And we are supporting regional collaboration through initiatives such as the Northern Tasmanian Alliance for Resilient Councils (NTARC), which is helping us make informed decisions and avoid potential liabilities.

This Strategy is about more than just reducing emissions or adopting electric vehicles. It's about making sure our assets, services, and communities are climate-ready.

It's about ensuring that future generations do not bear the full burden of climate change.

We are setting a pathway that aligns with our Strategic Plan and positions us for a comprehensive review in 2028. This alignment ensures that climate resilience is embedded in our long-term planning and investment.

We know the road ahead will not be easy. The current statutory and policy landscape is fragmented and reactive, making it difficult for councils to lead.

But this Strategy gives us clarity. It provides a framework for action, helping us move from reactive responses to proactive leadership.

Our message is simple: we all must act, but we need to know when and how.

West Tamar Council is leading by example - getting our house in order, supporting our communities, and preparing for the future.

This Strategy is a foundation for change, and a call to action for everyone who calls West Tamar home.

Together, we can build a resilient, sustainable, and climate-ready region. I invite you to read this Strategy, engage with its vision, and join us on this journey.

Cr Christina Holmdahl
Mayor, West Tamar Council

Our Strategy for a Changing Climate

The West Tamar Climate Resilience Strategy is developed through the Northern Tasmanian Alliance for Resilient Councils (NTARC). NTARC is a partnership by the eight north-east councils to better understand and respond to the changing climate and the wide range of associated social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges. It coordinates and harmonises the councils' responses to provide climate equitable and resilient outcomes for northeast Tasmanian communities.

To support the West Tamar Council develop evidence-based pathways, NTARC worked closely with the Council's staff and its operations to establish a baseline and identify actions to achieve climate resilience. Annual greenhouse gas emissions and energy use inventories from 2019 onwards were prepared to identify trends and opportunities to reduce emissions and energy use. Climate risk assessments of the Council's corporate governance, assets, services and programs identified the adaptation responses required to ensure that the Council is climate ready/reducing its exposure. The West Tamar Climate Resilience Strategy captures key findings and actions from this work, along the Council's existing commitments and sets a pathway to creating a thriving climate resilient community.

WTC Climate Resilience Pillars

West Tamar's Climate Resilience Pillars provide the foundation for guiding the Council to create a thriving, resilient and climate ready community. They emphasise the Council acting to ensure it is climate ready so it can best support and work with the community to develop a resilient future.

1

CREATING A CLIMATE RESILIENT FUTURE

Keeping our communities safe in a changing climate and from intensifying natural hazards

Supporting the transition to low carbon technology

2

WE ARE GETTING READY / PREPARING??

Making sure we understand what climate means for our councils' assets and responsibilities

Making sure we are low carbon and energy efficient across our councils assets, services and programs

3

MAKING CLIMATE READY DECISIONS

Using informed and science-based information to support our community to make good decisions

Working with the best science available - Keeping up to date with information and the policy landscape as it becomes available

4

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS TO FIND REGIONAL AND LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Cooperating and collaboration with councils across the region to share knowledge and learnings, ensure efficient resource use

Looking for opportunities to coordinate and deliver projects

Our Governance Framework

The Strategy builds on and strengthens our Council's commitments to act on climate change identified in its key strategic documents.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022- 2023

Strategic Plan – Pillars

OUR COMMUNITY To maintain an engaged and active community where partnerships are established, needs are identified and Council assists in achieving sustainable outcomes.

OUR FUTURE To encourage sustainable growth and prosperity.

OUR ENVIRONMENT To care for and achieve a balance between the natural and built environment.

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE To ensure the provision and maintenance of efficient and effective infrastructure and assets.

OUR ORGANISATION To be an organisation that values its people and delivers for our community.

Action

Develop and adopt a West Tamar Council Climate Change Action Plan and implement actions annually.

ANNUAL PLAN 2024-2025

Our Environment

Develop and adopt a West Tamar Council Climate Change Action Plan and implement actions annually.

Actions

Development of a Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Strategy.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL BEING PLAN PILLARS

Best Health and Wellbeing

BEST ENVIRONMENT We reduce carbon emissions, minimise waste, design and build for climate resilience, and use renewable energies in all aspects of our lives.

BEST ECONOMY Sustainable building and construction practices support the development of planned climate smart communities.

BEST COMMUNITIES Neighbourhoods are sustainable and climate resilient with inclusive and accessible spaces and places for all.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020

Asset Management Objectives (Strategies)

OBJECTIVE Climate change mitigation.

ACTION Improve and maintain open channels drainage on roadsides and to cater for higher-than-average rain fall events predicted in the future.

TARGET & TIMING Ongoing.

Demand Drivers, Projections and Impact on Services

PROJECTION Predicted greater frequency of large storm events, bush fires and sea level rise due to climate change.

IMPACT ON SERVICES Upgrades required in Stormwater network capacity and elevated maintenance regime required for all open drains and waterways. Increased bushfire fuel reduction management. Investigate options to reduce water inundations of low-lying coastal zones.

Improvement Program

TASK Planning for climate change adaptation and mitigation in relation to all infrastructure assets

RESPONSIBILITY Assets engineering

RESOURCES Internal

TIMING 2022

ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY

OBJECTIVE Planning for climate change adaption and mitigation.

FOGO

The collection of FOGO material also reduces the amount of waste going to landfill, and the production of methane gas which is around 25 times more damaging to the atmosphere than the same amount of CO2.

The WTC Climate Program Covers:

The West Tamar Council's Resilience Strategy encompasses the three critical themes of leadership, adaptation and mitigation that underpin climate resilience at the local government level. The Strategy considers theses across the delivery of programs both within the organisation of a council and across their communities.

LEADERSHIP

COMMUNITY (MUNICIPAL / REGIONAL)

Council are the tier of government closest to, and most trusted by, communities lead and share knowledge/ expertise across communities to: build capacity, coordinate and avoid duplication of effort for mitigation and adaptation responses, develop policy and advocate to State and Federal Government, research sector and peak organisations.

ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Provide an authorizing environment within the Council that enables and supports the integration of climate action across the organisation's governance, strategic and operational functions, through top-down and bottom-up engagement and reporting.

ADAPTATION

CORPORATE (COUNCIL) ADAPTATION

Increase the capacity of councils to:

- protect and future proof their assets/services;
- respond to increased and intensified natural hazards: flooding, bushfire, sea level rise, heat and storms;
- reduce exposure to potential liability in decisions making;
- minimise financial risks which arise from the transition to a low carbon economy and increased natural disasters.

COMMUNITY (MUNICIPAL / REGIONAL)

Assist and facilitate community resilience building and adaptive capacity by providing information on local climate change risks to enable informed decision making and risk assessment.

EMISSIONS AND ENERGY REDUCTION (MITIGATION)

CORPORATE (COUNCIL)

Emissions and energy reduction reducing energy and emissions across council owned assets, buildings, fleet and services; to realise cost savings.

COMMUNITY (MUNICIPAL / REGIONAL)

Provide and support programs to influence and assist households, business, commercial and community groups to reduce emissions and energy use and realise cost savings.

The WTC Climate Principles:

GOVERNANCE

Ensure our policies and regulations incorporate climate change considerations consistent with the Tasmanian and Australian government approaches to adaptation and mitigation.

ADVOCACY

Develop policy and advocate to Tasmanian and Australian Government, the research sector and peak organisations on behalf of our community.

INFORMATION

Provide information on local climate change risks, and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to build resilience and adaptive capacity in the local community.

RESOURCES

Contribute appropriate resources to prepare, prevent, respond and recover from climatic impacts and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

ORGANISATIONAL

Manage risks and impacts, and consider opportunities for assets and services, and ensure good climate governance.

REGIONAL

Work with other councils in informing communities at the municipal and regional level on climate change as a risk, and options for adaptation and mitigation.

COMMUNITY

Work in partnership with the community, local organisations, businesses and other key stakeholders to develop and deliver adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

LEADERSHIP

Provide leadership and collaborate across councils to act on climate change.

Climate is more than EV and Solar Panels

We are understanding more and more that climate change is more than reducing greenhouse gas emissions, solar panels and electric vehicles.

The changing climate is impacting across West Tamar Council's roles, assets and services it provides to our community. This is happening directly through events such as increased flooding, storms, droughts and heatwaves. It also happens indirectly as our insurers and the regulatory environment that we operate in require us to demonstrate how we are preparing for and responding to increased risk and hazard.

The Council is responsible for over $407 million in assets such as our roads, stormwater system, recreational facilities including the Windsor Community and swimming pool, parks and reserves, community buildings, heritage centres and council offices.

We have statutory roles for development planning and public health, and workplace health and safety.

We deliver services across our community – waste management, youth and the Beaconsfield Heritage mine site.

Climate change impacts all of these.

Our insurers want to understand how we are responding to these increasing hazards and risks - poor climate decision making may leave us exposed to potential liability. Tasmania's regulatory environment is increasingly building climate considerations into the responsibilities of councils through development planning and asset management. More broadly the Australian government is continuing to require improved energy efficiency standards across products that benefit our daily lives through reduced energy costs as well reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Our Strategy reflects the changing requirements and sets in place a pathway forward that positions the Council to lead and respond to the changing climate and its impacts across our communities.

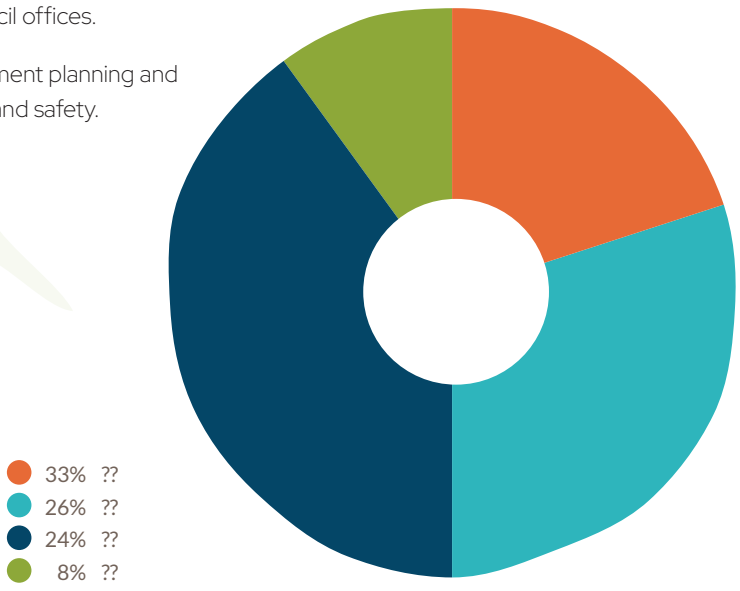
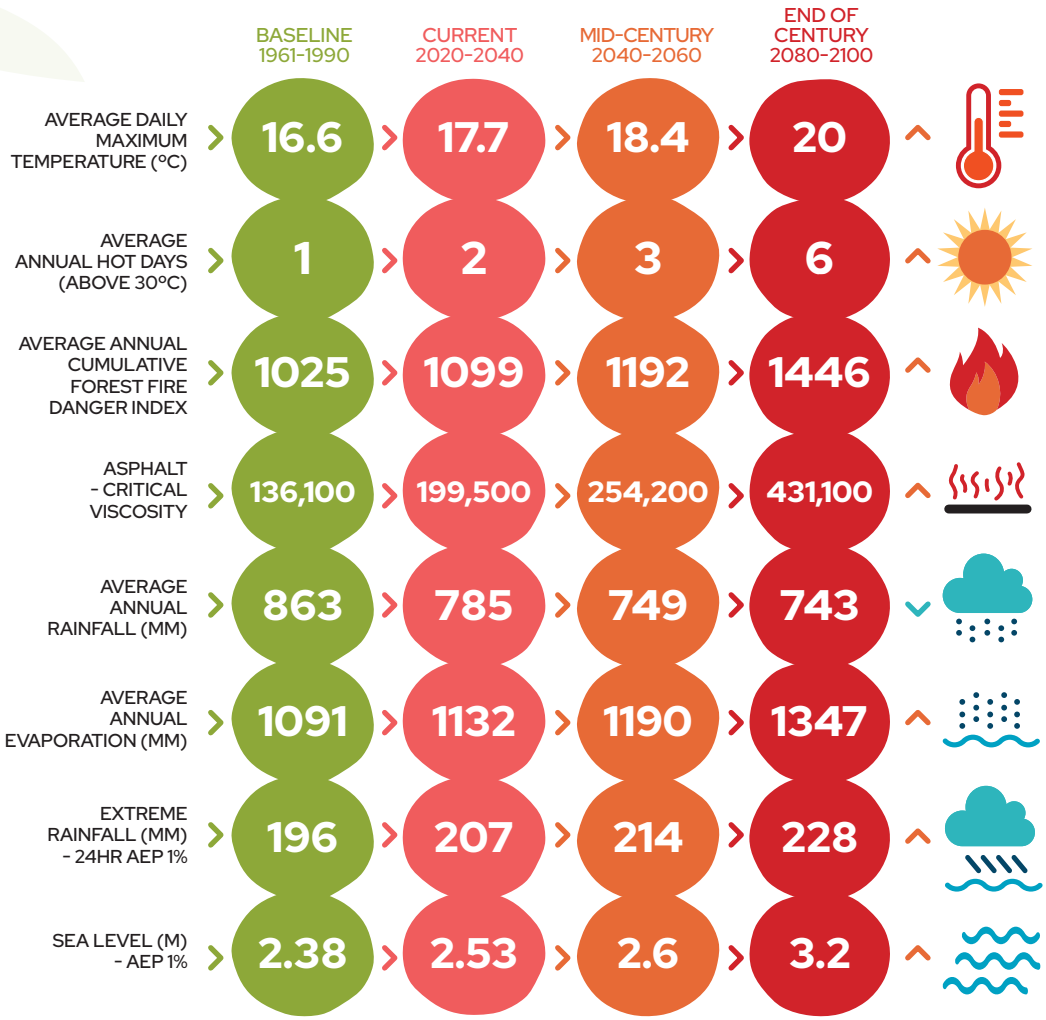


FIgure 1. Title of pie chart here 2025

How the West Tamar's Climate is Changing

To understand how the northeast region's climate is changing the eight councils worked with the University of Tasmania's Climate Futures Tasmania program to identify what this will be like at municipal and regional levels. Understanding this change based on climate models, specific to the region, provides a sound knowledge base for identifying climate risks at a local level and informing appropriate decisions to manage the risks by both council and the community.

The table below shows the change in key climate variables that the Council uses to make decisions across its programs, services and the management of its assets.



CURRENT CLIMATE AND RECENT TRENDS

The West Tamar municipality currently has a temperate (mild) climate with moderate temperature range. Near the coast the average daily maximum temperature is around 21 °C in February, and 12.5 °C in July. Long-term average temperatures have risen in the decades since the 1950s, at a rate of up to 0.15 °C per decade.

The municipalities average annual rainfall is generally 800-1000mm per year with a distinct seasonal cycle. For example, Beauty Point receives 828mm per year (40mm in February and 102mm in August). There has been a decline in average annual rainfall since the mid-1970s, with the decline strongest in autumn.

- Rainfall will trend towards heavier events interspersed by longer dry periods. High daily runoff events are likely to increase, including those that may lead to erosion or flooding. Rainfall volume in a 200-year average recurrence interval (ARI) event will increase by up to 35%.

Inundation along the coastline will increase. The current 100-year storm tide event is around 1.96 m above average sea level. Changes to storm surges by the end of the century will not be as large as sea level rise. Accounting for all effects, the current 100-year event in the region is projected to increase to 2.58 m by 2090. The current 100-year coastal inundation event may become a 10 to 30-yearly event by 2030, and a 4-yearly event by 2090.

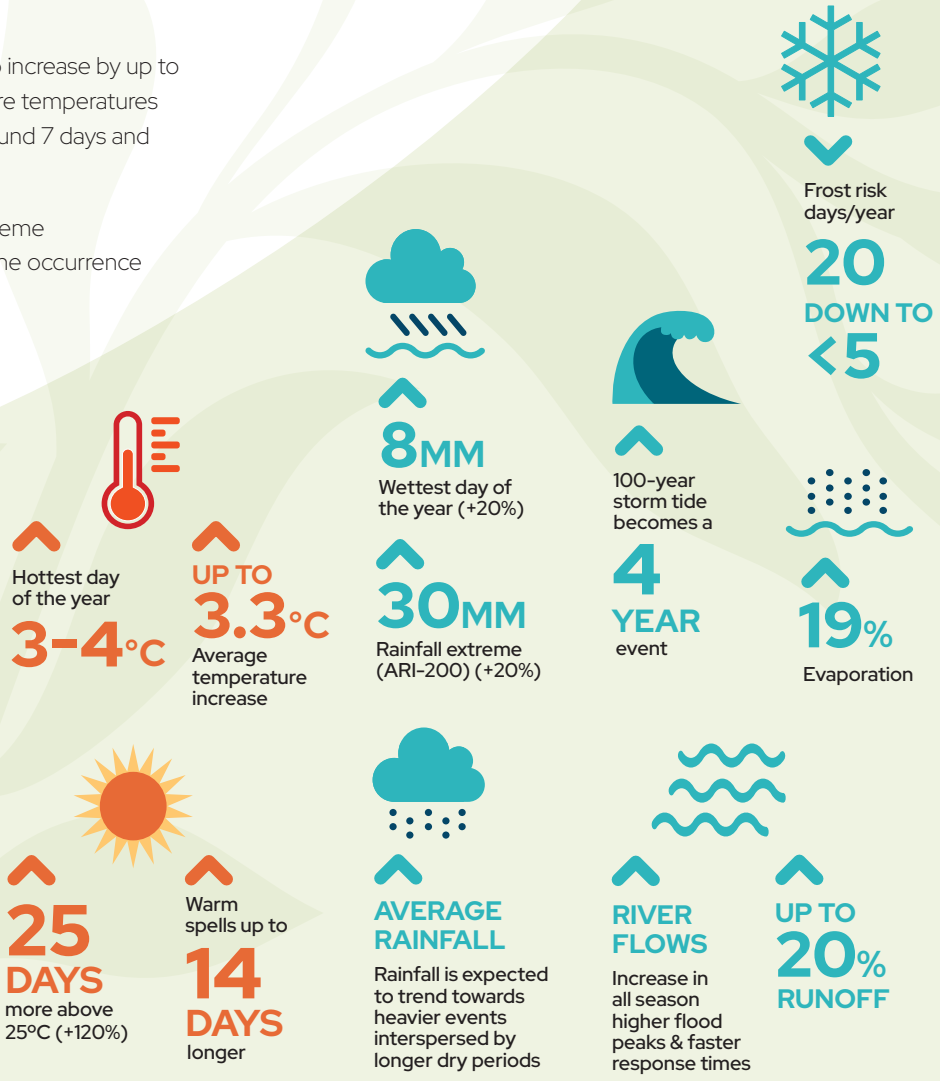
EXTREME EVENTS

The changes in climate that impact the council's infrastructure, roads, and the local community and environment is the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme events. Specific impacts on West Tamar's municipality are as follows:

- The temperature of very hot days to increase by up to 4°C. Warm spells (days in a row where temperatures are in their top 5%) currently last around 7 days and will increase by up to 14 days.
- Extended heat waves and more extreme temperatures are likely to enhance the occurrence and intensity of bushfires.

PROJECTED CHANGE IN CONDITIONS BY 2100

Projected changes for West Tamar by 2090 - 2099 relative to the baseline period (1980-1999)

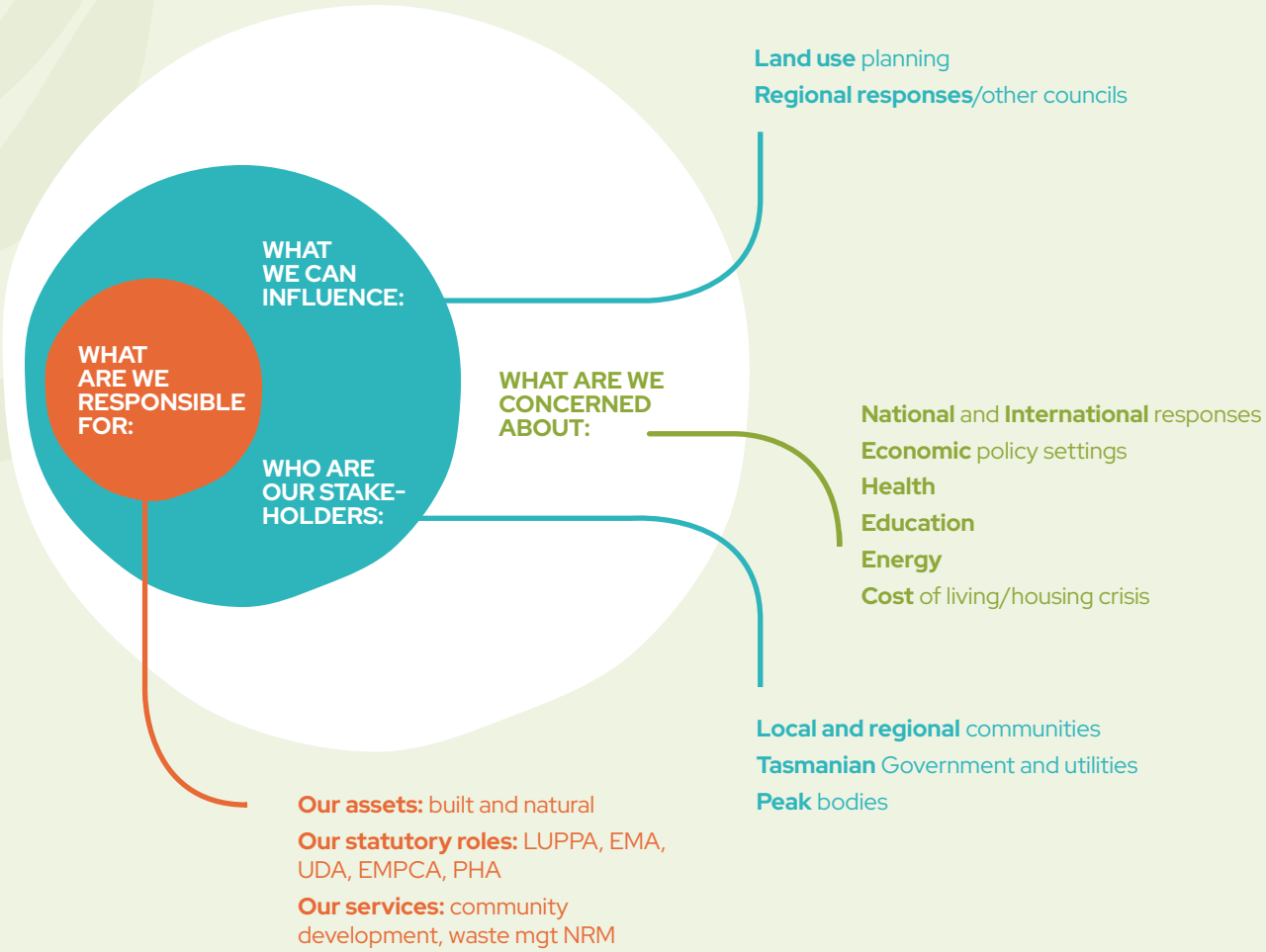


What is Local Government Role?

Tasmanian councils play a crucial role in climate responses. By clearly understanding our role we can develop responses that are effective and efficient, avoid duplication with others, and provide coordinated and collaborative responses across communities and the region. We are well positioned to work with communities due to our:

- Core function to directly support and assist local communities
- Local knowledge and experience
- Understanding of community needs and vulnerabilities
- Key role in responding to emergencies
- Role in infrastructure design, construction and maintenance
- Role in review and update of planning schemes (in relation to identified local impacts and threats)
- Ability to effectively disseminate information and provide support to the community

The diagram below shows what councils are responsible for, what they can influence and where their concerns are in acting on climate change.



The Australian Government recognises that *"Local governments are on the frontline in dealing with the impacts of climate change. They have an essential role to play in ensuring that local circumstances are adequately considered in the overall adaptation response, and local communities are directly involved in adaptation efforts. Local governments are well positioned to inform State and Commonwealth governments about on-the-ground needs of local and regional communities, communicate directly with those communities, and respond to local challenges.[1]"*

At a Tasmanian level the Local Government Act (Tas) 1993 requires councils to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the community; as well as represent and promote the interests of the community; and provide for the peace, order and good government of its municipal area.[2] This role inherently includes climate change which directly impacts across communities. Additionally, the Local Government (Content of Plans and Strategies) Order 2014 s.8. (2) (2) (b) (vii) requires councils to have in place an Asset Management Policy that includes the planning for climate change adaptation and mitigation.[3]

The Australian government states that councils are responsible for:

- Delivery of adaptation responses that align to State and Australian Government legislation.
- Provision of information about relevant climate change risks and contribution of appropriate resources to prepare, prevent, respond and recover from detrimental climatic impacts.
- Informing other levels of government about the on-the-ground needs of local and regional communities.
- Managing risks and impacts to council's public assets and to local government service delivery.

1 National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021 to 2025 (dcceew.gov.au)
2 Local Government Act (Tas) 1993.Section 20 Function and Powers.
3 https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/current/sr-2014-035

What is Involved in Council Climate Change Action

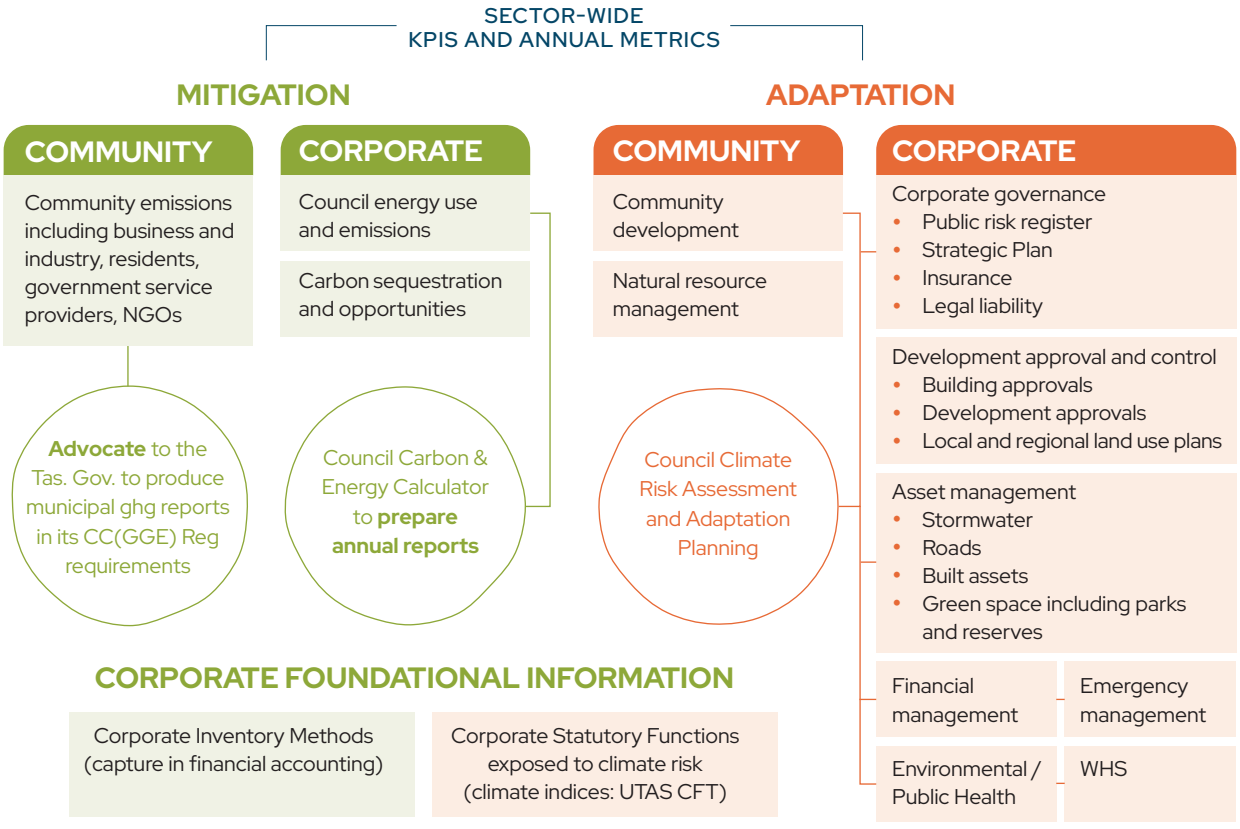
Climate resilience is closely linked to adaptation and related to how well people, our landscapes and or built environment and economies can anticipate, prepare for or recover from the impacts of climate change.

Climate change action consists of two responses:

- **Adaptation to the changing climate** which taking actions that help reduce the vulnerability to the current and expected impacts of climate change.
- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions** which for councils are closely linked to energy use that contribute to climate change and can have benefits of reducing energy costs.

At times these can be overlap whereby efforts to reduce emissions can also support adaptation such as renewable energy projects that include battery storage can have adaptation outcomes as it reduces vulnerability to climate hazards which disrupt energy supply.

For Council climate change action involves both reducing its greenhouse gas emissions and related energy use that it is responsible for, as well as adapting to the changing climate through understanding how climate change will impact directly in terms of hazards and indirectly such as increased insurance premiums or potential liability across our assets, programs and services. The diagram over page shows what the councils is directly responsible for and how they can understand these impacts and changes, along with where councils can influence and work to support our community.



What is our Carbon Footprint?

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Working with NTARC the Council developed a Corporate Carbon and Energy Footprint (CCEF) covering its annual emissions and energy use from 2019/20 through to 2022/23.

The CCEF found that greenhouse gas emissions from the Council's corporate operations totalled 831.3 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2-e) in the 2022/23 financial year. They are approximately 1% of the municipal wide emissions which total 126,000 tCO2e[4].

The largest category of the Council's emissions was from fuel used by vehicles and plant. The emissions generated were 600.2 tCO2-e in 2022/23 (72% of the total), with about 92% from use of diesel in heavy plant and the rest from petrol.

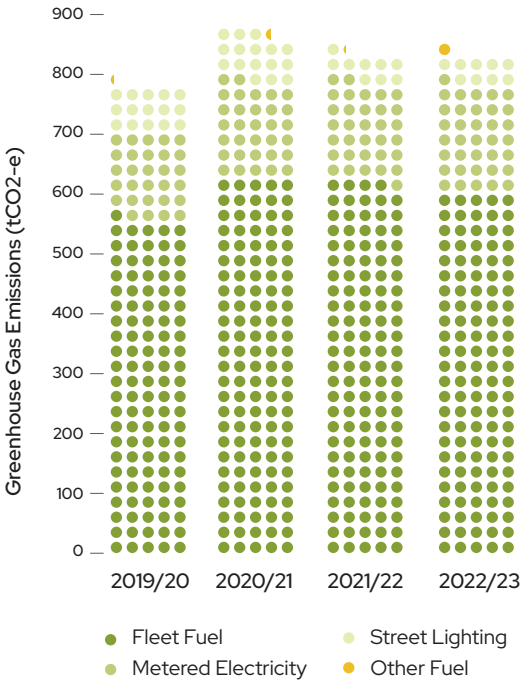


Figure ? *Greenhouse gas emissions sources*

The Council's corporate greenhouse gas emissions increased from 2019/20 to 2020/21, before dropping slightly in each of the two following years. Over the four-year period, the emissions rose from 744.7 tCO2-e in 2019/20 to 831.3 tCO2-e in the 2022/23 year.

It is considered that use of fleet fuel and metered electricity were lower than usual during 2019/20 as result of the impacts of COVID 19, such as lockdowns, on council operations.

ENERGY USE

The total net energy use in corporate operations was 13,406 gigajoules (GJ) in 2022/23. For comparison the typical energy usage of a household with a three-bedroom house and two cars is about 100 GJ, with annual usage of about 30 GJ for electricity in the house and about 35 GJ per car.

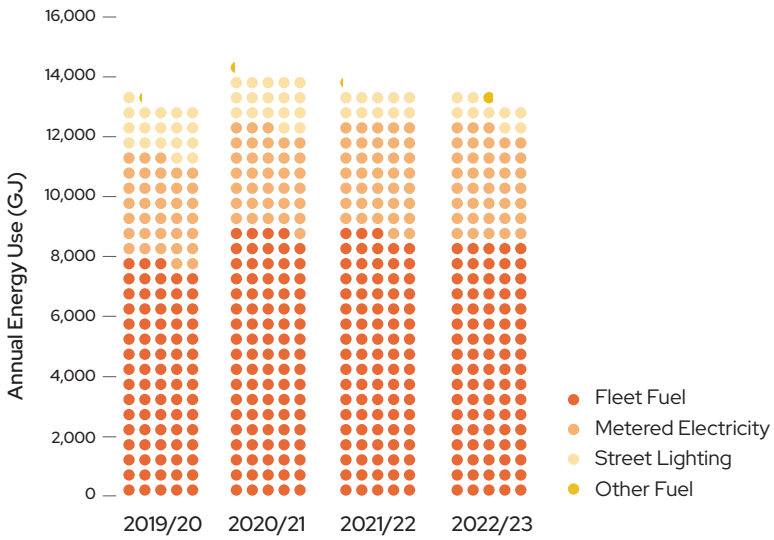


Figure ? *Annual energy use sources*

4 https://snapshotclimate.com.au/locality/municipality/australia/tasmania/west-tamar/

What is our Climate Risk Profile?

The Council completed a climate risk assessment and adaptation plan in late 2024.

It identified a total of 13 climate-related risks associated with rainfall and flooding, bushfire, coastal and combined hazards, for the Council: one was rated as extreme; two as high, five medium, and five low or emerging.

Figure ? *Number of climate-related risks identified in 2024*

The West Tamar municipality has always been vulnerable to natural hazards such as bushfire, land slip, and inundation of the floodplains of the River Tamar and coastal areas. The changing climate is escalating impacts on infrastructure and community wellbeing. It is also intensifying the impacts of extreme weather events. Short-duration higher intensity rainfall events are occurring more often, which can have a day-to-day effect on the municipality, particularly roads and stormwater systems owned and managed by the council, as well as development across ephemeral watercourses.

The Council's costs associated with the repair of assets, maintenance of service levels, and support for the community during extreme events such as flooding, extreme wind, bushfire and heatwave are increasing due to climate change. The unpredictability in the scale and timing of natural disasters presents challenges for the Council's long term financial planning, concerns as to the adequacy of financial contingencies, and increased reliance on external funds to assist with recovery. Unpredictability also challenges how to best allocate resources for building resilience into the Council's operations.

Increasingly local government insurers are advising that councils implement measures to demonstrate that the climate risks are understood, and efforts are the underway to reduce the exposure to impacts across council owned assets and services, and in their decision making. The regulatory environment for councils is also increasingly including consideration and action on climate change. Additionally, communities are expecting councils to develop responses to increasing natural hazards and the changing climate.

The key climate change vulnerabilities, the likelihood that exposed assets, services and communities will be adversely impacted, identified for the West Tamar Council are:

Increasing rainfall intensity and frequency exacerbating the risk of landslip impacting council infrastructure and private property resulting in significant costs to manage the issue and repair damage.

Increasing intensity and volume of rainfall resulting in: more significant stormwater system overflows; diversion of resources to attend to clean up and repairs; potential costs to council for upgrading infrastructure; and reputational damage to council for not meeting service delivery goals.

Increasing extreme rain events causing damage to roads and associated infrastructure resulting in increased cost burden to the Council for repair and maintenance.

Increased inundation from storm tide events and sea level rise resulting in damage to Council owned assets (roads, recreation areas, sea walls, coastal tracks, and stormwater outfalls) requiring increased maintenance and capital expenditure and potentially reduced service levels over time.

Increased call on Council's emergency response team resulting in an urgency to ensure evacuation centres are fit for purpose and procedures and action plans cover all potential scenarios.

Heavier rainfall events creating prolonged rising groundwater resulting in septic tank performance issues at coastal or riverine villages, creating environmental hazard and health issues.

Our Actions

CREATING A CLIMATE RESILIENT FUTURE

- Encourage environmentally sensitive design including adaptation to climate change and best practice water sensitive urban design.
- Build resilience in the community to respond to climate change.
- Plan for the future (future-proof) based on community needs and expectations and to meet future challenges e.g. climate change, population growth.
- Increased resilience is achieved through reduction in waste, adoption of new technologies, sustainable development and planned land use to avoid or abate impacts.
- Sustainable building and construction practices support the development of planned climate smart communities.
- Neighbourhoods are sustainable and climate resilient with inclusive and accessible spaces and places for all.

WE ARE GETTING READY

- Infrastructure planning considers future growth and resilience to climate change.
- Integrate climate change risk management into existing Council wide risk assessment framework.
- Assign an officer to oversee climate change activities and implementation of this Adaptation Plan.
- Development of climate maturity measures.
- Review how Council services and projects are being delivered and whether there are ways to reduce the kilometres being travelled, or the hours plant is being operated, through increased coordination and planning of works and services.
- Undertake a comprehensive audit of lighting at facilities and develop a prioritised program to upgrade further lights to LED, including use of occupancy sensors and controls, where appropriate.
- Identify any Council facilities where heating is provided by gas or direct electrical heating systems (other than radiant panel heaters) and investigate whether it can cost effectively be replaced with a more energy efficient system.
- When the Riverside swimming pool is to be refurbished the design needs to include energy efficiency as a design criterion given the high contribution of energy to operating costs of swimming pools.
- Installation of solar panels at the Riverside Council Office complex, Windsor Community Complex and Beaconsfield offices could have potential, as they all appear to be relatively energy efficient and have suitable roof area without overshadowing.

MAKING CLIMATE READY DECISIONS

- Acknowledge and respond to climate risk in Council's decision making and actions, including working towards reduction of its emissions.
- Consideration of climate change risks and impacts during the development of other Council strategies, policies and plans.
- Ensure that the projected climate impacts are properly considered in the Council's emergency management planning.
- Review the Council's systems to ensure capture of corporate knowledge and establish processes which support the ongoing reporting, management and reduction of corporate energy use and related emissions.
- Include CCEF awareness/information in Employee Inductions as they as onboarded, and in Position Descriptions as appropriate.

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS TO FIND REGIONAL AND LOCAL SOLUTIONS

- Support the implementation of Northern Tasmanian Alliance for Resilient Councils and its delivery of programs across the region.
- Support work at the regional level, via NTARC, to advocate for the council's electricity retailer to provide consolidated data on an ongoing basis.
- Support work at the regional level, via NTARC, to identify agreed council and regional reporting framework and measures.
- Work to accelerate the replacement of remaining non-LED streetlights would entail working with TasNetworks, and this could potentially benefit from a regional approach via NTARC.

MORE INFORMATION

Climate change science | ReCFIT

What are the projected climate change impacts for Tasmania? | ReCFIT

Understanding Climate Change - City of Launceston

Climate change in Australia – CSIRO BOM Australia Climate Service

Climate change in Australia Southern Slopes (Tasmania East)

Climate Futures for Tasmania - climatefutures.org.au

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