



Climate Change Policy

July 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline a blueprint to achieve a cohesive and comprehensive response to Climate Change at Selwyn and take a leadership role to prepare the Council functions, businesses, and its communities, to be responsive, resilient and ready for a carbonneutral future.

Organisational Scope

This policy applies to all Selwyn District Council staff, Councillors, and organisations interacting with the Council. Organisations performing services for the Council should align with the key principles in this policy to ensure all facets of our business operate in a way to promote and improve the Council's Climate Change response.

Introduction

It is indisputable that the Climate is changing. The accelerated growth of industrial, agricultural, and transportation activities have been increasing the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This is causing the Earth to heat up at an unprecedented rate resulting in changes to the surface temperatures and weather patterns.

Many of these changes pose serious hazards such as extreme drought, heat, rainfall, floods, coastal inundations etc., thereby posing risks to properties, water services and road infrastructure, affecting livelihood, social and economic well-being of our communities and people. These changes also come with many opportunities for our communities and businesses to be explored.

Council has moral and legislative responsibility to work towards mitigation of the carbon emissions

from its business and activities in line with the 'Zero Carbon' Act targets. Additionally, taking a leadership role in the assessment of the Climate Change impact on its communities and, planning and implementing adaptation action for the district.

The Policy

Climate Change Policy at Selwyn District Council

Climate Change response forms an integral part of the Council's decision-making process. This policy has been developed to encapsulate both the moral and legal responsibilities of the Council in relation to incorporating Climate Change response into its day to day business and the decision making for its communities and businesses.

To achieve a comprehensive Climate Change response at Selwyn District Council;

- the Council will align its activities to reduce carbon emissions across all its areas of influence to create the conditions for a smart, innovative, low-carbon economy that meet or exceed the targets set within the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act -2019.
- the Council will carry out regular risk/opportunities assessment related to Climate Change and its impact/benefits to the Council's assets, businesses and its communities.
- the Council will make Climate Change mitigation and adaptation a core component of its planning and decision making and mainstream it into the Council's function and activities.

- the Council will provide consistent and timely information related to Climate Change across its key processes like long term financial planning, assets development and management, strategic planning, service delivery, emergency response, Governance, communication, and other community engagement functions, and provide required resources to implement the actions planned to mitigate/adapt to the impacts, harvest the opportunities, and to increase long-term resilience to Climate Change.
- the Council will engage with our Iwi (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu), the local hapū(s) and takata whenua to exchange knowledge of Climate Change, develop understanding of Māori perspective in relation to climate risks/opportunities and collaborate on works related to Climate Change response and community resilience. This recognises the requirement to consult with Māori in relations to 'Te Tiriti O Waitangi'.
- the Council will engage with its communities to increase awareness of Climate Change impacts and opportunities and lead the community resilience planning and Climate Change adaptation.
- the Council will engage with the regional and national level authorities, Climate Change forums, workgroups and other stakeholders to actively contribute to the Climate Change related understanding and work, at the local, regional and national level.

Key Definitions

Climate Change

The Earth's atmosphere is made up of oxygen, a large amount of nitrogen, and a small percentage of so-called 'greenhouse gases' (GHGs) such as carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄).

GHGs act like a blanket around the Earth. They trap warmth from the sun and make life possible. Without them, too much heat would escape and the surface of the planet would freeze. However, increases in the volume and concentration of emissions have caused the Earth to heat more and its climate to change.

This process is often called global warming but it's better to think of it as Climate Change. This is because while warming is the main effect, other aspects of the climate also change including more frequent extreme events such as floods, storms, cyclones, and droughts.

(Ref: MfE website).

Mitigation

Mitigation refers to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enhancing forests and other "sinks" to remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, with the objective of limiting Climate Change for future generations.

(Ref: MfE website)

Net Zero Emissions

This refers to all emissions, except biogenic emissions CH₄ and N₂O. Net Zero includes reduction measures but also could explore offsets. These will be addressed later through the Emissions Plan.

Adaptation

Adaptation is about an ongoing process of adjusting to the actual and expected changes in the environment resulting from greenhouse gas emissions which have already been released into the atmosphere, and those that may be released in the future.

(Ref: MfE website)

Adaptation includes planning for direct impacts on infrastructure, economy, health, safety and well-being, and indirect impacts such as potential food and water insecurity, and disrupted health services.

It also means adjusting the way we live and work to prepare for a zero-carbon future and being open to the opportunities this will bring.





Related Policies, Procedures and Forms

- Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019
- Local Government Leaders' Climate Change Declaration 2017
- Waste Minimisation Act 2008
- Building Act 2004
- Health Act 1956
- Resource Management Act 1991
- P301 - Procurement Policy
- S201 - Solid Waste Policy
- C504 - Vehicle Replacement and Procurement Policy
- C213 - Community Grants Policy
- H101 - Housing Policy
- All leasing policies
- All Infrastructure policies
- Sustainability Policy (Under development)