

Policy No. 91: Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

POLICY MANUAL

Policy No. 91	Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption
Purpose	The purpose of this Policy is to provide a basis for acting to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.
Department	Governance
Author	Jonathan Harmey, General Manager
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POLICY

1. Definitions

<i>Adaptation</i>	The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects (<i>adapted from IPCC – Assessment Report 5</i>).
<i>Climate Change</i>	A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (eg. using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer (<i>IPCC – Assessment Report 5</i>).
<i>Mitigation</i>	A human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases (GHGs) (<i>adapted from IPCC – Assessment Report 5</i>).
<i>Greenhouse Gas Audit</i>	An assessment which seeks to quantify a list of an organisation’s greenhouse gas emissions and emission sources. A strategic tool for understanding, managing and communicating emissions from an organisation’s activities.

Heated and Cooled Spaces A communal space for members of the community to attend to seek shelter from extreme weather conditions which would otherwise affect the health and well-being of community members.

2. Objective

To acknowledge climate change as a factor to be managed and the Meander Valley Council's commitment to work with other levels of government, industry and the community to responsibly mitigate and adapt to the local effects of climate change.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all the Meander Valley Council's operations, practices, services and community facilities; including the management of natural areas.

Responses and specific actions to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change will be progressed in line with this Policy through normal planning and risk management systems.

4. Policy

1. The Meander Valley Council acknowledges the world's climate is changing due to increasing concentrations of greenhouse emissions in the atmosphere caused by human activity.
2. All levels of government, industry and the community need to minimise greenhouse gas emissions. Coordinated and integrated action is needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and the Meander Valley Council supports the Australian and State Governments acting to contribute to global climate change mitigation in a way that responsibly achieves environmental, economic and social sustainability.
3. The Meander Valley Council recognises that while all local impacts of climate change may not be immediately known, it is necessary to minimise pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and related environmental impacts, plan and adapt to emerging and future risks arising from climate change.
4. The Meander Valley Council commits to working with all levels of government, other local government municipalities, industry and the community to minimise pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and related environmental impacts and manage the economic, social and environmental risks that climate change pose.
5. The Meander Valley Council will seek to promote energy efficiency within the community, to assist the community in reducing individual greenhouse gas emissions and promote safety surrounding the emerging impacts of climate change.

6. The Meander Valley Council commits to providing ongoing professional development and education to staff and Councillors surrounding climate change and how it will affect the region.
7. The Meander Valley Council commits to conducting a Greenhouse Gas Audit on Council operations within 12 months of this Policy review. This will ensure a baseline understanding of the sources of the Council's greenhouse gas emissions, costs of maintaining greenhouse gas emitting assets and address where mitigation strategies should be targeted, including those actions which could provide cost saving to the Council. Once received, the Greenhouse Gas Audit will be assessed and proposed actions developed to reduce emissions.
8. In the event of a prolonged weather event in the Meander Valley local government area, the Council will implement measures (including use of Heated and Cooled Spaces) to support vulnerable members of the community, including those over the age of 65-years and the very young. These measures will include the use of Heated and Cooled Spaces and the Council will identify facilities that would be suitable for this purpose.
9. Meander Valley Council will continue to identify opportunities to innovate in, and in the way we live to build a sustainable and resilient community against climate change.

5. Legislation and Related Standards

Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008

6. Responsibility

Responsibility for the operation of this Policy rests with the General Manager.