



**POLICY**  
**CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY**



## Climate Change Policy

**To ensure that the City of Kwinana understands and addresses climate change impacts in a local, regional and international context, evaluates the climate change implications of operational decisions and policy positions, and is committed to greenhouse emissions reductions and risk management through appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies.**

Adopted:	23 January 2013 #274
Last reviewed:	
Legal Authority	Local Government Act Section 2.7 – The Role of Council

### Policy:

#### 1. Acknowledging climate change impacts

In order to ensure that City of Kwinana understands the relevance of climate change impacts to its operational and strategic framework, City of Kwinana adopts a series of acknowledgements on the impacts of climate change.

##### 1.1 Acknowledging Climate Change

1.1.1 City of Kwinana recognises that the global climate is changing as a consequence of increased concentrations of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere, and that these increased concentrations are largely the result of human activities.

1.1.2 City of Kwinana considers climate change to be a serious current threat to our current way of life and the Earth's ecosystems.

1.1.3 City of Kwinana acknowledges that some human-induced climate change is already having an impact on human and natural communities and that further climate change will occur as a result of past, present and future emissions.

##### 1.2 Costs of Delayed Action

1.2.1 City of Kwinana acknowledges that while uncertainty is present in the existing climate science, this does not present a reason for inaction or delay of action and that the 'Precautionary Principle' should be applied to the use of climate science.

1.2.2 City of Kwinana acknowledges that delayed action on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies will increase costs and potential liabilities to Local Government in a range of areas, in particular planning and infrastructure management and risk management.

### 1.3. Australia's Obligation to Act

1.3.1 City of Kwinana acknowledges that the Australian community has historically contributed, and continues to contribute, disproportionately to global greenhouse gas emissions. Australia has achieved considerable economic wealth in the process. It therefore has a responsibility for current climate change and an ethical obligation and opportunity to play a leadership role, commensurate with its capabilities, in contributing to the national and global greenhouse gas reductions necessary to avoid dangerous climate change.

1.3.2 City of Kwinana asserts that climate change, being a matter of national significance, is a direct responsibility of the State and Federal Governments and that as a result the State and Federal Governments have an obligation to address climate change in cooperation with Local Government, and in consultation with the Australian community as a whole.

### 1.4 Mitigation – Emission Reductions

1.4.1 City of Kwinana recognises that Australia has the capacity to contribute to global climate change mitigation, by reducing emissions now, in a way that creates positive opportunities for communities, industries and our economic sustainability.

1.4.2 City of Kwinana acknowledges that the magnitude of the mitigation task ahead is substantial, and that planning, investment and infrastructure decisions made today will shape the carbon intensity of our future. It therefore considers that a successful response to the challenge of meeting appropriate emission reduction targets should begin immediately and will require cross-sectoral action by government, business and broader community at all levels. City of Kwinana supports the establishment of institutions and regulations that ensure effective, integrated action by these stakeholders.

1.4.3 City of Kwinana acknowledges that no single policy measure will provide a solution to climate change. City of Kwinana considers a wide range of policy measures - from regulatory intervention and market-based mechanisms through to voluntary schemes, education and behaviour change programs - is required to successfully achieve appropriate and adequate emission reduction targets.

1.4.4 City of Kwinana acknowledges that no single technology will provide a solution to climate change; and that all reasonable options need to be researched, explored and facilitated.

### 1.5 Adaptation – Collaborative Action

1.5.1 City of Kwinana acknowledges that the magnitude of the adaptation task ahead is substantial, and that planning, investment and infrastructure decisions made today will determine how successfully the community is able to adapt to the impacts of climate change, reduce its risks and vulnerabilities to these and take advantage of any opportunities. It therefore considers that a successful response to the challenge of adapting to climate change impacts should begin immediately and will require cross-sectoral action by government, business and broader community at all levels. City of Kwinana supports the establishment of institutions and regulations that ensure effective, integrated action by these stakeholders as being crucial to cohesive and effective climate change management.

## 1.6 Equity and Social Justice

1.6.1 City of Kwinana acknowledges that both the impacts of climate change and the policy responses required to contribute to the avoidance of dangerous climate change have significant equity implications. These equity considerations have domestic and international dimensions, and implications for both present and future human generations, and for the survival of other species.

1.6.2 City of Kwinana acknowledges that climate equity has both domestic and international impacts. It supports global equity and the right of developing countries to increase their share of global wealth in ways that remain within the ecological capacities of the planet.

1.6.3 City of Kwinana acknowledges that the burden of reducing greenhouse emissions domestically must be equitably dispersed and that disadvantaged communities or cultural groups need access to State and Commonwealth support in order to enable them to adequately respond to and cope with the cost increases likely to arise from a variety of mitigation and adaptation schemes, including the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

1.6.4 City of Kwinana acknowledges that in order for standards of living to become globally equitable, culture shift towards sustainable standards of living in developed and prosperous countries, including Australia, will be required.

## **2. Committing to immediate climate change action**

In order to deliver appropriate climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, City of Kwinana adopts the following policy commitments:

### 2.1 Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change

2.1.1 City of Kwinana is committed to preventing dangerous, human induced climate change by working towards the realisation of Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) [*ie "The ultimate objective of this Convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner."*] It recognises that increases in average global surface temperature have already occurred and that further warming is now inevitable.

2.1.2 City of Kwinana supports all local and global actions and targets intended to contribute to limiting the increase in average global surface temperature to within 2 degrees Celsius (above pre-industrial levels), in accordance with current scientific understanding that this is the threshold under which the worst consequences of climate change may be able to be avoided.

## 2.2 Costs of Delayed Action

2.2.1 City of Kwinana is committed to immediate action on climate change mitigation and adaptation. City of Kwinana notes that in addition to the irreversible environmental and social consequences of human-induced climate change, economic analysis indicates that delayed action has significant economic impacts, which would be more costly than early action.

2.2.2 In acknowledging that climate change has immediate impacts, and that any delay of action could have financial and social cost implications, City of Kwinana is committed to identifying and addressing local and regional climate change impacts in a timely manner. Given that recent climate change science indicates that actual warming is tracking at the upper levels of the IPCC Report (2007) predictions and that in order to limit global warming to acceptable levels deep cuts will need to be made, immediate action must be taken to identify, prioritise and address climate change risks via a robust risk management process and setting appropriate targets.

## 2.3. Australia's Obligation to Act

2.3.1 City of Kwinana is committed to actively promoting and supporting efforts to develop effective global, national and state strategies to reduce the severity of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions in a manner consistent with the intention of Article 3.1 of the UNFCCC [ie *"The Parties should protect the climate system for the benefit of present and future generations of humankind, on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Accordingly, the developed country Parties should take the lead in combating climate change and the adverse effects thereof."*]

2.3.2 City of Kwinana is committed to meeting its local, national and international obligations through participation in protocols and agreements established under the UNFCCC, including but not limited to the Kyoto Protocol and its successor international treaties, and supporting the Kyoto Protocol's further development and effective implementation.

2.3.3 City of Kwinana is committed to actively addressing climate change in a way which reflects Australia's disproportionate per capita contribution, as opposed to its global emissions ratio contribution.

## 2.4 Mitigation – Emission Reductions

2.4.1 City of Kwinana is committed to working towards agreed national emission reduction targets, with caps and timeframes that will ensure the achievement of Article 2 of the UNFCCC, while also taking into account Australia's status as a developed country party to the UNFCCC given its high level per capita emissions.

2.4.2 City of Kwinana is committed to supporting the introduction of a well designed and equitable national emissions trading scheme and regards an effective price on greenhouse gas emissions as an important measure for achieving emissions reduction targets.

2.4.3 City of Kwinana is committed to reducing its operational greenhouse gas emissions and supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the community.

2.4.4 City of Kwinana acknowledges the critical role that innovation will play in combating climate change and is committed to supporting and encouraging policies and measures that drive appropriate technological development and commercialisation.

2.4.5 City of Kwinana acknowledges that technological solutions go only part way to helping meet the necessary reduction in greenhouse emissions and that citizens must be encouraged to adopt more sustainable lifestyles that reduce greenhouse impact. City of Kwinana is committed to supporting community and business in the transition towards sustainable lifestyles.

## 2.5 Adaptation – Collaborative Action

2.5.1 City of Kwinana is committed to contributing to the common goal of ensuring that Western Australia's human communities and natural ecosystems have the resources and other assistance necessary to enable them to build maximum resilience and adapt to climate change impacts that are now understood to be unavoidable.

2.5.2 City of Kwinana asserts that it is the responsibility of all spheres of Australian Government to inform individuals and communities about the likely impacts of climate change. City of Kwinana is committed to working with the community to ensure a high level of understanding of climate change impacts and develop strategies to help adapt to these.

2.5.3 City of Kwinana asserts that it is the responsibility of all spheres of Australian Government to ensure that all current regulation and policies take into consideration the likely impact of climate change on current and future human settlements, natural resources and ecosystems and facilitate adaptation to these. These policies should include but not be limited to those pertaining to disaster relief, national security, infrastructure, planning, water, energy, housing, health, transport, environment and energy.

## 2.6 Equity and Social Justice

2.6.1 City of Kwinana supports Australian participation in actions, strategies and agreements that support and increase global climate justice. City of Kwinana recognises the human rights dimension of climate change impacts and policy, and the necessity to address the disparity in resource use, emissions, wealth and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change between industrialised and non-industrialised countries and between different individuals and communities within countries.

2.6.2 In working towards the reduction of global and national emissions, City of Kwinana is committed to working towards and supporting an equitable and fair framework for the international allocation of emission rights, which is then reflected in the commitments and actions of individual countries including Australia. This framework recognises:

- That all people have equal rights to the Earth's atmosphere;
- That climate change should be addressed globally with regard to relative per capita emissions;
- That climate change should be addressed globally with regard to differing historic responsibilities for man-made greenhouse gas emissions, and
- That climate change should be addressed with regard to differing ability or capacity to pay for mitigation and adaptation actions.

2.6.3 City of Kwinana recognises that, domestically, certain individuals, households and communities, are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and to the impacts of some of the policies required to adapt to, and mitigate dangerous climate change. Examples include indigenous communities, those with low material wealth and/or access to services and communities dependant on adversely affected primary industries, resources industries or energy industries.

2.6.4 City of Kwinana considers it essential to minimise the impacts of policy responses on, and provide additional assistance to, these vulnerable communities and individuals within Western Australian society and recognises that the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme has made some attempt to address the needs of vulnerable businesses and householders.

2.6.5 City of Kwinana considers it essential that strategies are developed that identify the climate change risks and vulnerabilities of disadvantaged communities, measures are developed to reduce these and resources are allocated to enable adaptation and resilience building in these communities.

### **3. Reflecting appropriate priorities**

The management of climate change impacts must reflect the priorities of City of Kwinana and its community. These will be individually determined City of Kwinana, with regard to their environmental, social and economic opportunities and risks.

City of Kwinana acknowledges the need to identify regionally specific priorities and impacts, and the associated need to coordinate cooperative regional climate change management across the political and operational areas under its jurisdiction.

It is essential for City of Kwinana to identify climate change risks to its operations and its communities and work together with Commonwealth and State Governments to plan and implement appropriate adaptation strategies.

### **4. Setting clear objectives and targets**

In order to achieve outcomes and engage in 'best practice' climate change management processes it is essential for City of Kwinana to set and work towards a set of internal targets for greenhouse gas emissions reduction. It is necessary to adopt targets at Council and publicise the targets in order to achieve stakeholder and community support.

**5. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities**

While climate change management is the responsibility of all Local Government Officers and Elected Members, there is an expectation that a primary 'team' will be established within City of Kwinana in order to ensure that outcomes are met within a reasonable timeframe. As a significant global concern, climate change must be addressed at all levels of Government. City of Kwinana, in its turn, must address climate change at all levels of its own operations, with support from the Executive Management Team.

**6. Acknowledging resourcing barriers and constraints**

Climate change management costs, while representing a relatively small financial commitment on a global scale, are likely to represent a larger proportion of City of Kwinana spending. City of Kwinana already has a wide range of responsibilities in the community and climate change is a new and additional aspect of environmental management that City of Kwinana will have to broaden its suite of services to include.

The cost impacts of addressing climate change, exclusive of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme direct costs, are likely to be proportionately high for Local Governments. Additionally Local Governments are likely to be expected to undertake projects and policy work in this area.

Local Governments must be adequately resourced via Australian Government revenue avenues to meet these community and political obligations. City of Kwinana asserts that funds from the Climate Change Action Fund (CCAF) or a similar funding mechanism should be made available to Local Governments to fund these costs and additional activities.

**7. Apportioning costs appropriately**

City of Kwinana, in acknowledging the immediacy and importance of climate change management, will ensure that high priority climate change risks are directly resourced or externally funded so that impacts can be ameliorated and/or adapted to. This should decrease legal liability issues for City of Kwinana in the long term.