

## 1. Rationale

The global climate is changing, with the severity of impacts projected to increase significantly due to past, current, and future greenhouse gas emissions driven by industrial human activity. Globally and locally, climate change is expected to have widespread adverse impacts on the environment, human health, economic stability, and social wellbeing. Community demands and compliance measures are continuing to grow in this space.

Our region has already become hotter and drier with more variable and extreme weather and these trends are projected to continue. Key climate variables and associated hazards that will impact the City of Marion now and increasingly into the future are:

- **Increased heat:** Higher average temperatures and more frequent and intense heatwaves will impact the health of our natural environment, community, assets, services and workforce. It will also result in more dangerous fire conditions.
- **Reduced annual rainfall:** Average annual rainfall will decline and more time will be spent in drought. This places stress on our trees, parklands biodiversity and agriculture.
- **Increased rainfall intensity and storms:** Despite an overall decrease in rainfall, the number and intensity of heavy rainfall events and storms will increase. This places stress on our stormwater systems and can increase risks of flooding.
- **Sea level rise and oceanic change:** Sea levels will continue to rise along with increases in storm surges, increases in ocean temperatures and changed ocean conditions. This will increase coastal erosion and will impact coastal ecology.

Council has a responsibility to act in the best interests of the community, which includes reducing greenhouse gas emissions and planning for future climate impacts to ensure a liveable, sustainable community.

## 2. Policy statement

The City of Marion is committed to leading by example in reducing greenhouse gas emissions from its operations and supporting broader community efforts to cut emissions—contributing to global action to limit climate change.

We will work alongside our community to adapt to a changing climate and support a just transition to a sustainable, low-carbon future.

Climate change considerations will be embedded across all areas of governance, service delivery, and operations, with a proactive approach to identifying and managing climate-related risks and building climate resilience.

### Policy Ref/Security Classification:

**Category:** Public

**Owner:** Manager Engineering Assets and Environment

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The primary objectives of this Policy are:

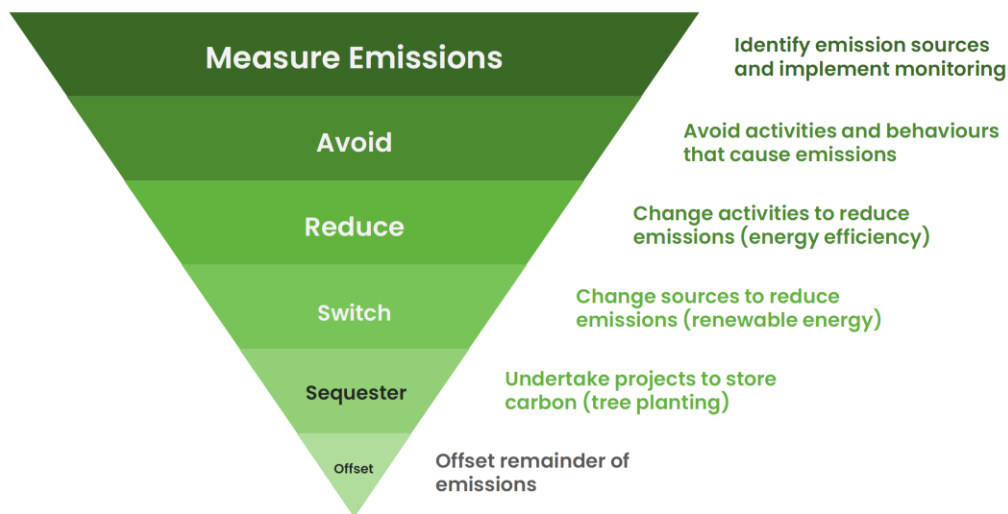
- To incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation throughout council's planning and operations.
- To guide services that support our community to reduce emissions, build resilience and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.
- To guide services that build resilience into the natural environment and ecosystems.
- To work in collaboration with regional partners and the wider community to reduce and adapt to climate change.

### 3. Policy scope and implementation

This Policy sets council's commitment to respond to climate change and applies to all council activities.

This Policy will be implemented through the following key approaches:

- **Utilise evidence-based decision making:** Make climate-related decisions informed by the best available science, including current findings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and data sources adopted by State Government.
- **Utilise climate projections and scenarios:** Plan for short-, medium- and long-term future climate scenarios at least 100 years into the future, considering both high and medium emissions scenarios and using the best available science that is aligned with approaches in our region, and State and Federal Government.
- **Emissions tracking and targets:** Monitor council's corporate emissions using best-practice inventory methods and maintain an emissions reduction target that reflects our responsibilities and demonstrates strong climate leadership.
- **Prioritise emissions reduction:** Apply the emissions reduction hierarchy (Figure 1) to guide corporate climate actions—prioritising avoiding and reducing emissions first, then transitioning to low-emission alternatives, with sequestration or offsets used only for unavoidable residual emissions.



*Figure 1. Emissions Reduction Hierarchy*

- **Reduce supply chain emissions:** Seek to reduce emissions across our supply chain by engaging with suppliers and implementing policies that support and encourage low-emissions procurement.
- **Manage climate risks:** Proactively identify and respond to climate-related risks through ongoing assessment of physical, transitional, legal, social, and financial impacts. These risks will be documented and regularly reviewed within council's Climate Risk Register and through our involvement with regional emergency management planning.
- **Transparency and disclosure:** Publicly disclose emissions and key climate risks annually in line with the internationally recognised Greenhouse Gas Protocol and relevant state and national accounting standards, adhering to the principles of relevance, completeness, consistency, transparency and accuracy.
- **Deliver climate-resilient assets and services:** Design, build and maintain council assets and services to be resilient to current and future climate impacts including a preference for nature-based solutions where possible.
- **Ensure good climate governance:** Embed climate change considerations into governance structures, including strategic and financial planning, asset management, risk management and decision-making to drive consistent and accountable climate action across the organisation.
- **Build capacity:** Council will ensure that staff and council members are trained for climate change literacy and responses to ensure effective decision-making and service delivery.

- **Engage with the community:** Council will promote education and awareness of climate change in the community and will engage with the community on climate change adaptation planning decisions.
- **Partnerships and collaboration:** Council will work collaboratively with key partners—including neighbouring councils through the Resilient South Regional Climate Partnership, state and federal governments, local communities, businesses, and industry—to drive effective, efficient and coordinated responses to climate change and the development of a low carbon economy.
- **Monitoring, evaluation and continual improvement:** Council will seek independent verification of the effectiveness of council's climate responses and continually improve to support ongoing resilience.
- **Advocacy:** For matters that are outside of the direct control of council, but are of high relevance to our community, we will advocate for a fair and just transition to a climate resilient in line with the principles of this policy.

## 4. Definitions

Term	Definition
<i>Adaptation</i>	Taking action to avoid, withstand or benefit from current and projected climate changes and impacts.
<i>Climate change</i>	Refers to any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or as a result of human activity.
<i>Climate variable</i>	Climate variables are the measurable physical elements of the climate system that describe weather and long-term climate patterns. E.g. temperature, rainfall, wind, sea level etc.
<i>Climate hazard</i>	Climate hazards are specific physical events or trends driven by changes in climate variables that pose a threat to people, infrastructure, or ecosystems. E.g. Heatwaves, bushfires, flooding, drought, coastal erosion.
<i>Climate risk</i>	Climate risks are the potential impacts that arise from climate change. Climate risks can be broadly categorised as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Physical risks:</b> These are assessed by considering exposure and vulnerability to a climate hazard e.g. damage to a council asset from flooding.</li> <li>• <b>Transition risks:</b> These are assessed by considering impacts of climate-related policy, regulation, technology,</li> </ul>

Term	Definition
	markets or community expectations and looking at financial, reputational or legal consequences e.g. how council responds to emissions reduction.
<i>Climate Risk Register</i>	A register of council's strategic climate risks and their controls developed in accordance with the <i>City of Marion Risk Framework</i> .
<i>Greenhouse gas (GHG)</i>	A gas in an atmosphere that absorbs and emits radiation within the thermal infrared range. This process is the fundamental cause of the greenhouse effect. The primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) can be emitted through transport, land clearance, and the production and consumption of food, fuels, manufactured goods, materials, wood, roads, buildings, and services. For simplicity of reporting, GHG emissions are often expressed in terms of the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide referred to as "CO <sub>2</sub> e" or "CO <sub>2</sub> -equivalent" or "carbon emissions".
<i>Greenhouse Gas Protocol</i>	The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol is the globally recognised standard for measuring, managing, and reporting greenhouse gas emissions. It provides comprehensive frameworks and tools for governments, businesses, and organisations to account for emissions across their operations and value chains. It includes key standards such as the <i>Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard</i> , and supports consistent, transparent, and credible climate reporting.
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)	The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a United Nations body that assesses scientific knowledge on climate change. It provides reports on the causes, impacts, and potential solutions to climate change, guiding global policies and actions to mitigate its effects.
<i>Low carbon economy</i>	An economy based on low carbon power sources that therefore has a minimal output of greenhouse gas emissions into the environment. Can also be referred to as 'low-fossil-fuel economy' or 'decarbonised economy'.

Term	Definition
<i>Mitigation</i>	Taking action to reduce or prevent emission of greenhouse gases and/or to increase the amounts of greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere. Can also be referred to as 'Abatement'.
<i>Nature-based solutions</i>	Engineered solutions that aim to protect against hazards, including those from climate change, that provide co-benefits to people and nature and improve sustainability. For example, establishing wetlands or raingardens to reduce flooding risk whilst also providing habitat and improving amenity (compared to concrete drains or dams).
<i>Resilience</i>	The ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self-organisation, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change. Climate resilience requires an integrated approach that considers climate risk reduction, emissions reduction, and adaptation. It requires partners working together using their knowledge and experience.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
<i>Environment Sustainability Team</i>	Coordinate and report on the implementation of this Policy across the City of Marion.
<i>Sustainability Committee (Internal)</i>	Oversee council's climate response and ensure buy in and accountability

## 6. References

- Environment Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Asset Management Strategy and Policy
- Risk Management Framework

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## 7. Review and evaluation

The Manager Engineering, Assets & Environment reviews this Policy every four years (or earlier if required) in accordance with the City of Marion Policy Framework. Council approves this Policy.