

# Climate adaptation and resilience project

This is part of a series of fact sheets prepared for the Environment Committee's 2019/20 Estimates examination of Vote Environment.

The climate adaptation and resilience work involves:

- progressing the Government's response to the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group recommendations report
- commissioning and delivering the first National Climate Change Risk Assessment
- providing guidance for local government on climate change adaptation.

## Why work on climate change adaptation and resilience is needed

The climate is changing and past emissions have already locked in further change. The pace and scale at which New Zealand will need to adapt to climate change will largely be driven by the world's ability to meet the Paris Agreement goals of reducing emissions.

New Zealand is already highly exposed to natural hazards – including flooding, landslides, and coastal inundation. Climate change will exacerbate existing hazards, as well as bring a broad range of other impacts.

While there are no comprehensive studies of the costs of climate change to New Zealand, recent studies have made estimates in the billions of dollars. A Local Government New Zealand report, released in February 2019, estimated the replacement value of local government-owned infrastructure exposed to sea level rise to be between \$2.7 billion at 0.5 m of sea level rise, and \$14.1 billion at 3 m of sea level rise.

In May 2018 the Climate Change Adaptation Technical Working Group (CCATWG) recommended 21 actions for New Zealand to adapt to climate change. These included 'core actions' of a national climate change risk assessment, a national adaptation plan, and monitoring and reporting on adaptation actions.

## Implementation of CCATWG recommendations

### Community Resilience Group work programme

The Ministry for the Environment is working with other central government agencies and Local Government New Zealand to implement the CCATWG's recommendations. A key way we're doing this is through the inter-agency Community Resilience Group (CRG). The CRG is developing a joint programme of work to improve community resilience and adaptation in the face of increasing natural hazards and the effects of climate change.

The Ministry continues to work with the CRG agencies on the following work areas:

- information to better support decision making – (led by Land Information New Zealand)

- enhanced use of risk assessment – (led by the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management)
- alignment and adequacy of regulatory frameworks – (led by the Ministry for the Environment)
- insurance markets and risk financing – (led by the Treasury and the Earthquake Commission)
- principles and approaches to funding and financing, including liabilities – (led by the Treasury).
- After the Central-Local Government Forum in June 2019, the aim is to advance a jointly developed and resourced work programme with local government to progress in these work streams.

### **Preparation of the first National Climate Change Risk Assessment**

The National Climate Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA) will provide a national overview of how various hazards and threats may be influenced by climate change, to raise awareness and inform effective and prioritised adaptation action.

A panel of nine experts in risk and risk assessment frameworks was established in April 2019 to produce the risk assessment framework to be used for the first NCCRA.

The panel has delivered the final draft of this framework to the Ministry for the Environment and it is due to be published in late August 2019.

The first NCCRA is due to be completed by the end of FY19/20. Work on the first NCCRA is expected to get underway in September 2019.

### **Implementation of the adaptation functions in the Zero Carbon Bill**

Once the Zero Carbon Bill is enacted, the Government and the Climate Change Commission will have new functions in relation to climate adaptation, including the Government being responsible for:

- producing a National Adaptation Plan to set out its response to the key risks identified in the NCCRA
- administering a new adaptation reporting power, which will include the development of regulations.

## **Providing and maintaining climate change adaptation guidance for councils**

### **Coastal hazards and climate change guidance**

Local government entities have responsibilities under the Resource Management Act and the Local Government Act to prepare and respond to the impacts of climate change. The Ministry for the Environment provides information and guidance to local government to support adaptation.

The Ministry for the Environment updated its *Coastal Hazards and Climate Change* guidance for local government in 2017. We provided implementation support to councils using the updated guidance last year, in the form of a series of workshops and public meetings. We intend to produce new case studies in FY 19/20 on how the guidance has been applied since its release. This will further support councils in implementing the guidance.

## Disclaimer

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Published in July 2019 by the  
Ministry for the Environment  
Publication number: INFO 896



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