



Climate change and Pacific peoples

What the national adaptation plan means for you

Adapt and thrive: Building a climate-resilient New Zealand

Our first national adaptation plan will help New Zealanders adapt to the effects of climate change now, and better protect us against changes to come.

Many impacts are already with us, with unstable and unpredictable weather, worsening floods, droughts and storms, and rising sea levels around coastlines. We can expect more changes will happen. Lowering emissions can reduce the impacts of climate change but won't eliminate them all.

The national adaptation plan sets out what actions the Government will take over the next six years to help all New Zealanders adapt and thrive in a changing climate.

It has actions relevant to every sector and community in New Zealand, and addresses the priority risks that need action now.

Climate change risks and the costs of adapting will need to be shared across society, but through the actions in the plan we can reduce the long-term costs across the motu.

Managing risk now and into the future

In 2020, the National Climate Change Risk Assessment set out 43 risks New Zealanders face from the impacts of climate change up to 2026.

These include risks to people health and property, risks to our infrastructure like roads and water supplies, and risks to our natural environment.

The national adaptation plan is the first in a series. It will be updated every six years to respond to changing climate risks.

Why this plan affects you

Everyone is affected by climate change. But some people are more vulnerable to the damaging effects than others.

Pacific peoples are used to extreme weather events. However, these events and coastal flooding will increase due to climate change. This will have a direct and significant impact on Pacific nations – affecting people’s physical, cultural and mental wellbeing, as well as where and how they live.

As climate impacts become more severe, Pacific communities in Aotearoa New Zealand will also be affected. Pacific peoples often have more crowded households and lower incomes, making them more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. More frequent extreme storms and floods could damage some homes, churches, workplaces and infrastructure. In some cases, families and communities may need to move away from high-risk or disaster-struck areas and resettle in new locations.

New Zealand will also experience more hot days. This can create health risks for people with underlying health problems and people who work outside.

What you told us during consultation about the draft adaptation plan

The consultation period included engagement workshops with Pacific peoples facilitated by the Pacific Advisory Group. Submitters who identified as Pacific peoples noted:

- Pacific communities have a wealth of knowledge and experience in adapting to climate change as they have been living with climate change for a long time and are at the front line of adverse weather events
- the plan needs to be flexible to reflect current adaptive measures
- support is needed for Pasifika households and communities to adapt since they are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

How actions in the plan will help Pacific peoples adapt to climate change

Actions in chapters across the plan will enable Pacific peoples to understand the climate impacts that affect them and how to take action to adapt.

The plan outlines a programme of work to support Pacific peoples to adapt. It brings together existing actions and proposed future work.

Enabling better risk-informed decisions

The actions in the plan provide information, guidance and tools about climate change threats and responses. Pacific peoples can use these to assess the risks they face and decide how to adapt. Some of the key actions include:

- Action 3.2 Design and develop risk and resilience and climate adaptation information portals: these will collect and make available data and information on social and equity risks. The portals will also help assess people’s vulnerability to climate change, including disproportionately affected groups such as Pacific peoples.

- Action 3.22 Work with community housing providers to enable effective climate hazard response: an action programme will increase the resilience of community housing by supporting strategies for emergency management and long-term adaptation. In turn, this will reduce community housing tenants' exposure to climate risks. The scheme will also focus on working with Māori and Pacific providers. It will help increase resilience in culturally appropriate ways, and respond to the needs of Māori and Pacific recipients.
- Action 3.25: Design methodology for risk assessments of public buildings: this will help owners of public buildings understand and adapt to climate risks. It includes important 'social infrastructure' like hospitals, churches and schools, and things like cultural and heritage values will be considered

Adaptation options including managed retreat

Many communities are already under threat from natural hazard events. Successfully adapting will be vital as climate impacts worsen. Some people and communities may have to alter how and where they live.

One option is managed retreat, which may be necessary to reduce or eliminate exposure to intolerable risk. It's a carefully planned and managed process of relocating assets, activities and sites of cultural significance away from at-risk areas.

The plan will support Pacific peoples to understand the range of adaptation options available. Actions relevant to Pacific peoples include:

- Action 5.7: Reduce and manage the impacts of climate hazards on homes and buildings: this will help building owners to understand and assess their adaptation options. This action includes collating existing information to help adapt now; researching the impacts of climate hazards on different typologies; producing property-level guidance; developing an assessment framework; and investigating incentives. This action is also necessary to inform further work such as regulatory changes.

Embedding climate resilience across government

The Government will embed climate resilience across all its strategies and policies.

The **communities chapter** in the plan sets out how we'll support all communities around Aotearoa New Zealand, including Pacific communities, to adapt to climate change now and in the future.

- Action 9.4 Implement the Climate Migration Action Plan: this will support Pacific peoples to live in their own countries where possible, and to grow and thrive even when climate change impacts mean they have to move or migrate.
- Action 9.6 Build community resilience through social cohesion: this work will lessen instability and community disruption caused by climate change. It will help everyone, including Pacific peoples, to feel safe and belong, and to access opportunities.
- Action 9.9 Expand current funding for proactive community resilience: to help communities adapt to climate change and its future impacts, this would expand the community funding provided during COVID-19 for communities to carry out their own long-term plans, and make more funds available through Whānau Ora.

- Action 9.11 Develop and deliver initiatives in *Responding to the Climate Crisis: An Implementation Plan*: this 2019 report set out goals and objectives in response to the Defence assessment “The Climate Crisis – Defence Readiness and Response,” which explores the links between climate change and security. It underscores the importance of working with and learning from our Pacific partners, to understand and respond to intensifying climate impacts.

Future engagement during implementation

As the plan is implemented, more targeted engagement with different stakeholders, including Pacific peoples, will take place.

Inclusive engagement, particularly with those disproportionately affected by climate change, will help to ensure actions lead to equitable climate resilience.

We are taking the same approach to implementing the emissions reduction plan, and encouraging engaged and active public participation.

Find out more

Read [Aotearoa New Zealand’s first national adaptation plan](#)

