



Shire of Esperance Climate Change Declaration

Introduction

Climate change is having, and will continue to have, significant effects on the Western Australian environment, society and economy, with impacts felt at the Local Government level. The Shire of Esperance acknowledges that human behaviours, pollution and consumption patterns have both immediate and future impacts on the climate and environment, and that as a Local Government it is part of our role to mitigate and manage these impacts on our community.

This Declaration establishes our position on climate change, and outlines our commitments to addressing climate change, which are further expanded upon in our Strategic Community Plan 2017 – 2027, Corporate Business Plan 2020-2024. This is further supported by Council's support of the Cities Power Partnership and the five pledges that were adopted at the June 2020 Ordinary Meeting of Council as follows:

1. Renewable Energy – Install renewable energy (solar PV and battery storage) on Council Buildings;
2. Energy Efficiency – Adopt best practice energy efficiency measures across all council buildings, and support community facilities to adopt these measures;
3. Sustainable Transport – Ensure Council fleet purchases meet strict greenhouse gas emissions requirements and support the uptake of electric vehicles;
4. Sustainable Transport – Support cycling through the provision of adequate cycle lanes, bike parking and end-of-ride facilities; and
5. Work Together and Influence – Develop procurement policy to ensure that the practices of contractors and financiers align with the council's renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable transport goals.

The Shire of Esperance supports the environmental, social and economic benefits of addressing climate change immediately. We see an opportunity for Local Government to demonstrate leadership in climate change management at a community level and support the development of equitable and implementable State and Commonwealth strategies for climate change management.

Declaration

The Shire of Esperance recognises that climate change is occurring, and that climate change will continue to have a significant effect on the Western Australia environment, society and economy.

We acknowledge the central role of Local Government in driving a successful climate response. Hence, we declare that we are committed to addressing climate change within our Local Government area, through the implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies to minimise the effects on our community, environment and economy.

Our overall objectives are to demonstrate climate leadership/reduce our corporate emissions and build the resilience of our Shire to climate change.

Background

International scientific consensus is that climate change is occurring, and that it is driven by anthropogenic causes, with human activities having a profound impact on the concentration of greenhouse gas emissions since the start of the industrial revolution. Ultimately, these activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, land clearing and agriculture, have increased greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, leading to changes in the climate system.

For the Shire of Esperance projected changes to our climate in the future include:

- Further increase in temperatures, with more extremely hot days and fewer extremely cool days;
- More heat waves that will be longer and hotter;
- More frequent, extensive, intensive and longer-lasting marine heatwaves;
- Increased risk of coastal erosion from sea level rise and more intensive storm events.
- Further warming and acidification of the oceans;
- A decrease in cool-season rainfall across southern Australia, including the southwest of WA;
- More frequent, longer and more intense droughts across southern Australia;
- More intense heavy rainfall throughout Australia, particularly for short-duration extreme rainfall events (storms);
- An increase in the number of high fire weather danger days and a longer fire season for southern and eastern Australia; and
- Through a combination of many of these impacts, changes to biodiversity including increased species extinction.

These changes have the potential to impact our environment, assets and infrastructure in our Local Government area, and the health, safety and wellbeing of our people. We therefore need to plan for, and adapt to, these changes to ensure our Shire remains a resilient and vibrant area.

Role of Government

As a signatory to the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Australia has committed to taking action on climate change.

The Paris Agreement recognises the importance of engagement at all levels of government. As such, the management of climate-change risks in Australia is spread across the three tiers of government: Commonwealth, State and Territory, and Local.

The responsibility for Local Governments' to mitigate the impacts of climate change is reflected in the *Local Government Act 1995* (WA):

“In carrying out its functions a Local Government is to use its best endeavours to meet the needs of current and future generations through an integration of environmental protection, social advancement and economic prosperity. (Section 1.3(3))”.

As a Local Government our key responsibilities include administering relevant legislation to promote adaptation, mitigating climate risks and impacts to our community and assets as well as the delivery of our services to our community, collaborating with other Local Governments and with State and Territory Governments to manage regional impacts, and the facilitation of resilience building and adaptive capability in our local community.

Progress to Date

In order to respond to the impacts of climate change, the Shire of Esperance has taken action by:

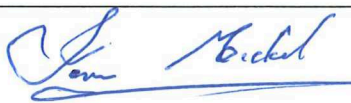
- Retrofitting all Shire buildings with LED lighting reducing emissions from electricity;
- Partnered with GVROC to convert all street lights to LED;
- Installing photovoltaic cells on Shire Buildings including the administration building and Bay of Isles Leisure Centre;
- Preparing the Esperance Coastal Hazard and Vulnerability Assessment;
- Preparing a Coastal Hazard Adaptation Strategy;
- Establishing a Sustainability Working Group

Commitments

The Shire of Esperance commits from the date of signing to:

- Set an appropriate emissions reduction target and work towards its achievement.
- Encourage and empower the local community and local businesses to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Support WALGA to work with State and Federal Government to ensure achievement of greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets as set out in key National and International agreements.
- Support WALGA to work with State and Federal Government to implement key actions and activities for climate change management at a local level.
- Develop and implement a Corporate and Community Adaptation Action Plan and Climate Change Policy.
- Assess the locally specific risks associated with climate change and implications for our services, and identify areas where appropriate mitigation and/or adaptation strategies should be developed and implemented.
- Ensure that, at appropriate review intervals, our Corporate and Community Adaptation Action Plan is reviewed and amended to incorporate the latest climate science, and to reflect the climate change management priorities and progress achieved to date.
- Monitor the progress of our adaptation and/or mitigation actions and communicate our achievements to the Council and Community.

Signatures

Signed: 
 IAN STANLEY MICKEL

Shire President - Shire of Esperance

Date: 26th AUGUST 2021

Signed:

President - Western Australian Local Government Association

Date:

Climate Change Declaration Certificate

The Climate Change Declaration Certificate is a shortened version of the Local Government's Climate Change Declaration and is intended to be displayed by the Local Government to demonstrate its commitment to climate action.

The Climate Change Declaration Certificate template (below) can be edited and used by Local Governments or emailed to WALGA's Environment Policy team (environment@walga.asn.au) to be formatted into an A3 size certificate. WALGA's Climate Change Declaration certificate will display both the Local Government and WALGA logos and be framed by WALGA for the Local Government to display.

Please ensure that an electronic or scanned copy of the Mayor/Shire President's signature is included in the Word document copy before sending to WALGA. If using the Certificate template within the Local Government only, remove the signature line for WALGA President.

WALGA will cover the cost of producing the framed certificate.

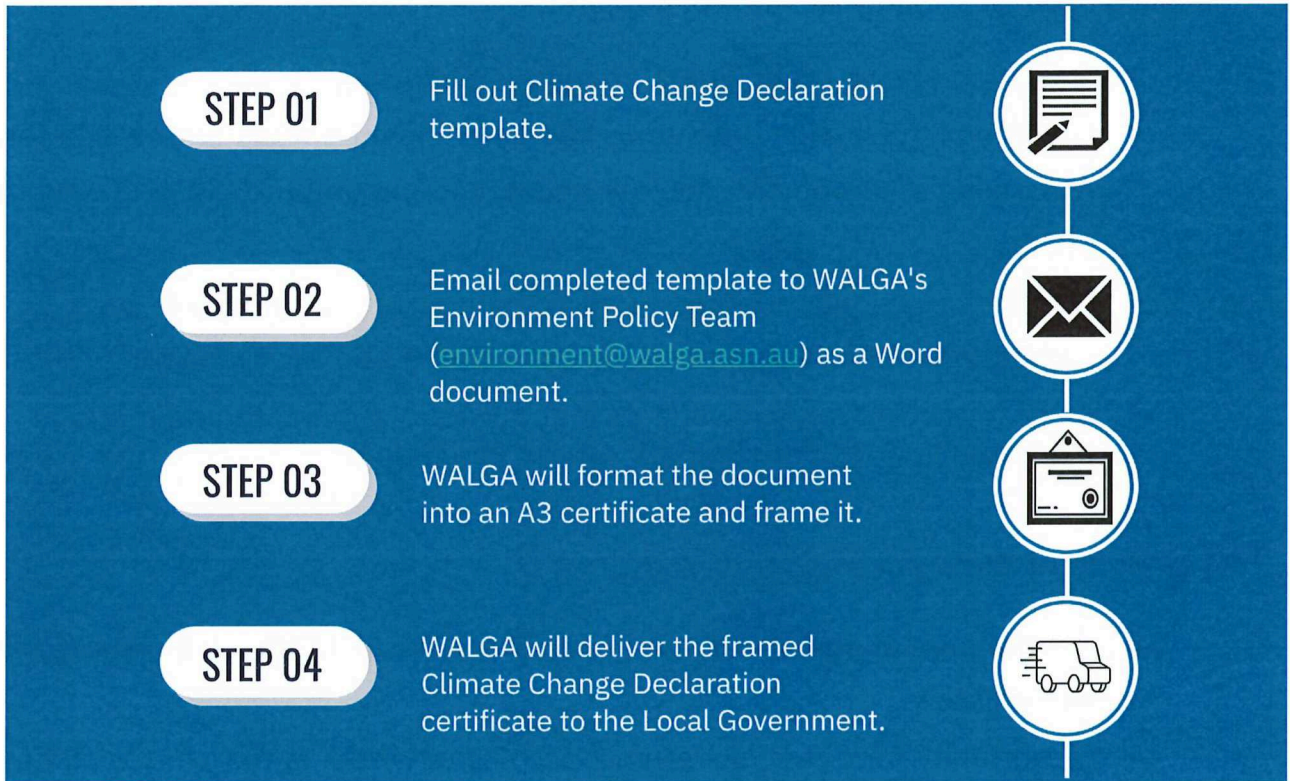


Figure 2: Process for obtaining a Climate Change Declaration Certificate from WALGA.

The Climate Change Declaration Certificate template begins on the next page.

Local Governments may choose to copy and paste the following pages into a new document before sending to WALGA's Environment Policy team to create a Climate Change Declaration Certificate or to use for internal purposes.

Climate Change Declaration

The Shire of Esperance acknowledges that:

- Evidence shows that climate change is occurring;
- Climate change will continue to have significant effects on the Western Australian environment, society and economy, and the Local Government sector.
- Human behaviours, pollution and consumption patterns have both immediate and future impacts on the climate and environment.
- As a Local Government, it is part of our role to mitigate and manage the impacts of climate change on our community.

The Shire of Esperance supports the:

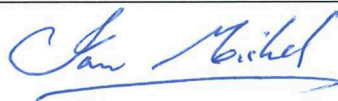
- Environmental, social and economic benefits of addressing climate change immediately.
- Opportunity for Local Government to demonstrate leadership in climate change management at a community level.
- Development of equitable and implementable State and Commonwealth strategies for climate change management.

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