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City of Greater Geraldton

## 3.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

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### SUSTAINABILITY THEME

Environment

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### OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to outline the City of Greater Geraldton's commitment to addressing climate change by:

- Understanding its impacts in a local, regional and international context;
- Evaluating the implications of operational decisions and policies on climate change;
- Reducing green-house emissions through appropriate mitigation and adaptation strategies.

### POLICY STATEMENT

This policy applies to all Council staff, Council Members, contractors and consultants acting on behalf of or employed by the Council.

### POLICY DETAILS

#### Definition and Vision

Climate change has a range of legal, indemnity, budgetary, asset management, infrastructure, planning and environmental implications. These need to be embedded in strategic frameworks and actioned at both a political and operational level. This will ensure climate change liability issues are adequately addressed.

The *Local Government Act 1995* states "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".

The City of Greater Geraldton is the closest sphere of Government to the community. It recognises that the community expects the City to take a leadership role. This policy outlines that leadership intent.

#### Climate Change – Acknowledging Impacts

The City of Greater Geraldton needs to understand the relevance of climate change impacts to operational and strategic frameworks. The City of Greater Geraldton recognises that:

- Global climate change is occurring as a consequence of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. Further climate change will occur as a result of past, present and future emissions;
- It has an ethical obligation and an opportunity to play a leadership role for addressing the impacts of climate change;
- Addressing the impacts of climate change is a direct responsibility of the State and Federal Governments. The State and Federal Governments have an obligation to cooperate with Local Government and the Australian community as a whole.

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## **Mitigating Climate Change – Emission Reductions**

The City of Greater Geraldton acknowledges that meeting appropriate emission reduction targets should be ongoing. No single policy measure or technology will provide a solution to climate change. The City of Greater Geraldton is committed to:

- Reducing its operational greenhouse gas emissions;
- Supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the community;
- Contributing towards agreed national emission reduction targets and supporting the national emissions trading scheme;
- Using appropriate research frameworks and data to inform its own strategies, decision-making and leadership activities;
- Encouraging and supporting community and business in the transition towards sustainable lifestyles that reduce greenhouse impact.

## **Adapting to Climate Change – Collaborative Action**

The City of Greater Geraldton should, through planning, investment and project decisions, involve the community to adapt to the impacts of climate change. This will reduce its risks and vulnerabilities arising from these impacts. The City of Greater Geraldton is committed to:

- Supporting the establishment of institutions and regulations that ensure effective, action by stakeholders for climate change management;
- Ensuring that Western Australia's communities and natural ecosystems have the resources necessary to adapt to climate change impacts;
- Developing individuals and communities to understand and adapt to the impacts of climate change;
- Ensuring that planning, investment and project decisions take into consideration the likely impact of climate change through:
  - Including the impact on current and future human settlements, natural resources and ecosystems;
  - Assessing the adaptive capacity of the plan, investment or project.

## **Resilience to Climate Change – Equity and Social Justice**

The City of Greater Geraldton acknowledges that the impacts of climate change and policy responses have significant equity implications. It advocates that the burden of reducing greenhouse emissions must be equitably dispersed. The City of Greater Geraldton is committed to:

- Supporting local development of policies and strategies that identify and minimise the impacts of climate change;
- Working with State and Commonwealth governments to resource adaptation and resilience building within the community.

## Climate Change Action – Priorities and Objectives

The management of climate change impacts must reflect the priorities of the City of Greater Geraldton and its community. The City of Greater Geraldton is committed to:

- Identifying and working towards regionally specific priorities and outcomes impacts with regard to their environmental, social and economic opportunities and risks;
- Cooperative regional climate change management across the political and operational areas under its jurisdiction;
- Minimising climate change risks to its operations/communities;
- Working with State and Commonwealth Governments to plan and implement appropriate strategies.

### KEY TERM DEFINITIONS

**Adaptation** means adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

**Adaptive capacity** means the ability of a system to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes), to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences.

**Climate change** means to a statistically significant variation in either the mean state of the climate or in its variability, persisting for an extended period (typically decades or longer). Climate change may be due to natural processes or external forcing, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land-use.

**Mitigation.** Means dealing with the causes of climate change by reducing emissions.

**Resilience** means the capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to adapt, by resisting or changing in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning and structure.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Climate change management is the responsibility of all Local Government Officers and Elected Members.

### WORKPLACE INFORMATION

Local Government Act 1995

### POLICY ADMINISTRATION

Directorate		Officer	Review Cycle	Next Due
Infrastructure Services		Senior Coastal & Natural Environment Officer	Biennial	January 2020
Version	Decision Reference	Synopsis		
2.	IS164 23 January 2018	Policy Review		