City of Greater Geraldton Council Policy

3.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

SUSTAINABILITY THEME

Environment

OBJECTIVES

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

- Acknowledging causes and understanding its impacts in a local, regional, and international context.
- Reducing green-house emissions through sustainable decision-making and actions.
- Developing appropriate adaptation strategies.

POLICY STATEMENT

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.

The *Local Government Act 1995* states:

> *"…The general function of a local government must be performed having regard to the following —*
>
> *a) The Need –*
> *(i) To promote the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the district and:*
> *(ii) To plan for and to plan for mitigating, risks associated with climate change and:*
> *(iii) In making decisions, to consider potential long-term consequences and impacts on future generations."*

The City recognises that it has an ethical obligation and an opportunity to play a leadership role for addressing the impacts of what it has declared as a climate emergency.

POLICY DETAILS

1. Climate Change – Causes

The City recognises that:

- Natural processes have determined Earth's climatic change history, but human industrial activities have introduced a new mechanism that is driving Earth's climate change future.
- 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.

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- Carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels today are higher than at any point in at least the past 800,000 years. The last time the atmospheric CO_2 amounts were as high as they are now was more than three million years ago, when the sea level was 15–25 meters higher than it is now.

2. Mitigating Climate Change – Emission Reductions

The City acknowledges that meeting emission reduction targets is ongoing. No single policy measure or technology provides the solution to climate change. The City is committed to:

- Reducing its operational greenhouse gas emissions.
- Supporting the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by the community.
- Contributing towards agreed national emission reduction targets.
- Using appropriate research frameworks and data to inform its own strategies, decision-making, and leadership activities.
- Encouraging the community and business to transition towards sustainable lifestyles that reduce their climate change impacts.

3. Adapting to Climate Change – Collaborative Action

Climate change impacts are not shared equally across Australia. Whilst risk from bushfire is broadly distributed, as a coastal city, risk from flooding and coastal inundation is highly concentrated. The City is committed to:

- Supporting research that assists in effective action by all stakeholders in climate change management.
- Informing individuals, communities and businesses understand the impacts of climate change and the role they play in adapting to it.
- 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.

4. Resilience to Climate Change – Equity and Social Justice

The City acknowledges that the impacts of climate change and policy responses have significant equity implications. The City is committed to:

- Advocating that the burden of reducing greenhouse emissions must be equitably dispersed.
- Supporting development of policies and strategies that identify and minimise the impacts of climate change.
- Working with State and Commonwealth governments to resource mitigation, adaptation, and resilience-building measures within the community.

5. Climate Change Action – Priorities

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

- Reducing greenhouse emissions through sustainable decision-making and actions.
- Addressing the priorities of the City's achieving net-zero plan.
- Reviewing and updating its coastal hazard and risk mitigation and adaptation plan.

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- Working with State and Commonwealth Governments to plan and implement appropriate strategies.

KEY TERM DEFINITIONS

Adaptation means modifying decisions, activities, and ways of thinking to adjust to a changing climate.

Adaptive capacity means the ability to adjust to climate change, taking advantage of opportunities, and coping with the consequences.

City means City of Greater Geraldton.

Climate change means 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 ways of reducing the causes of climate change by reducing emissions.

Resilience means the ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to everyone who's actions could impact or influence climate change.

WORKPLACE INFORMATION

Local Government Act 1995

Western Australia Climate Change Policy

Achieving Net Zero – Corporate Climate Changes Mitigation Plan

Geraldton Coastal Hazard Risk Management and Adaptation Plan

Batavia Region of Councils Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

Council Policy 3.2 Coastal Adaptation

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POLICY ADMINSTRATION

Directorate	Officer	Review Cycle	Next Due

Infrastructure Services		Manager Climate, Environment and Waste	Biennial	2027
Version	**Decision Reference**	**Synopsis**		
5.	TBC	Policy Review		

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