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The voice	of	local	government.



Climate Risk Management A Guide for Local Government Public Health Professionals in South Australia

Climate risks result from extreme weather and incremental changes in our climate. As the frequency of extreme events increases, so does the magnitude of risk.

We can't control the weather, but if we factor climate risks into decision making, our regions, cities, towns and communities will be able to adapt and prosper as the climate changes.

What is the purpose of this document?

This Climate Risk Management Guidance Note describes the potential impacts of climate risks including extreme weather and climate-related events.

Addressing climate risks requires a whole-of-council approach to embed climate considerations into council decision-making. This means the future climate is considered in all decisions of all functions of council, from business continuity and asset management to the provision of community services.

This document focuses on the types of decisions that local government public health professionals influence, and provides information on how to incorporate climate risk issues into public health planning and decision making processes.

Why do public health professionals need to consider climate risk?

Extreme weather and climate events including heatwaves, bushfire, flood and drought, have the potential to impact physical and mental health and community wellbeing. As the frequency of extreme weather events increases and incremental changes in the weather are felt, the risks to health and wellbeing will increase.

Councils provide a range of public and environmental health services to promote community wellbeing. If these services are to remain effective, it is crucial that councils adapt to future weather conditions and community needs. This can be achieved through considering climate risks when planning and delivering public health actions.

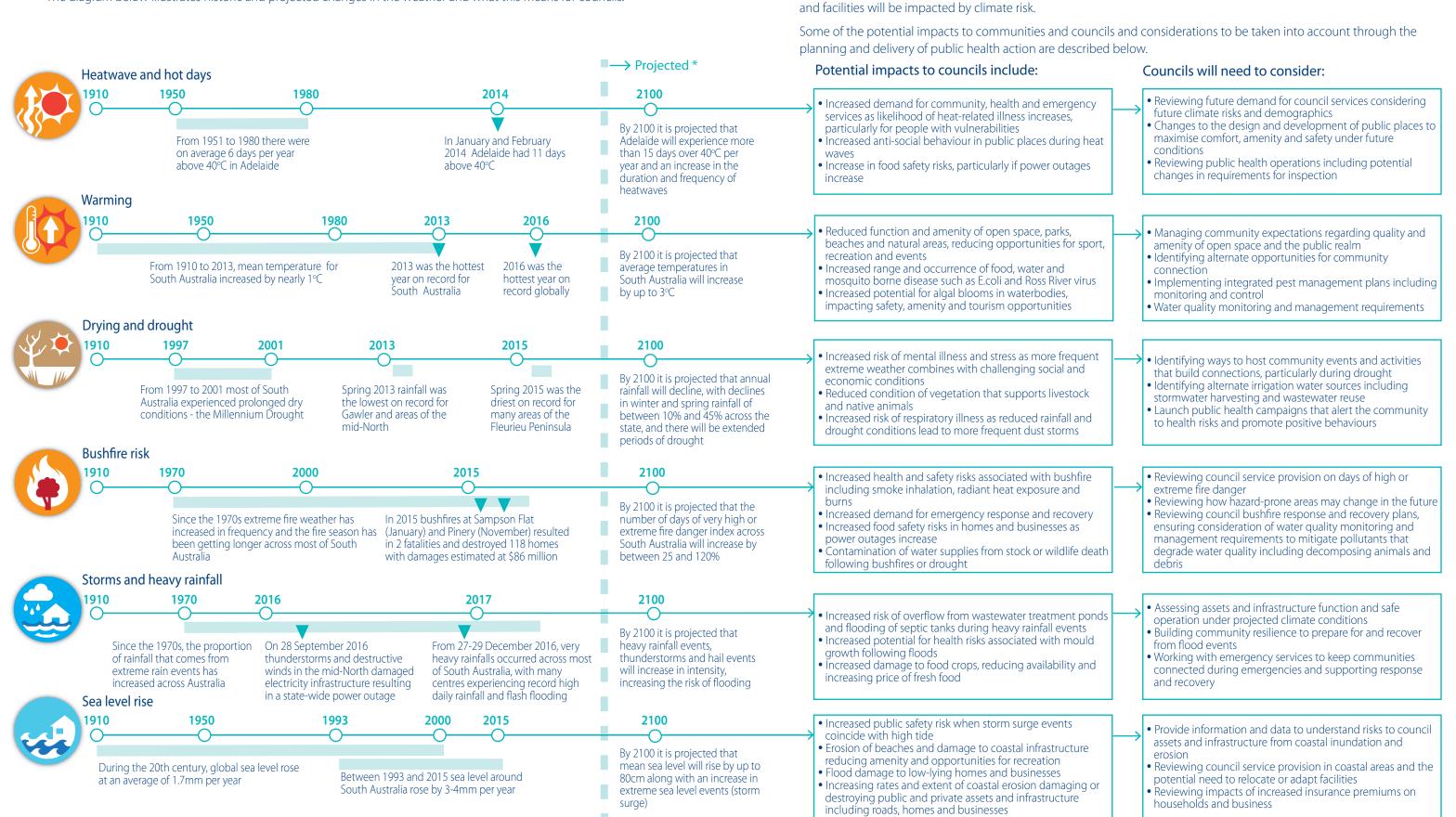
Weather describes
the conditions of the
atmosphere including
temperature, rainfall,
humidity and wind over a
short time period, and can
be highly variable.

Climate is the longer term pattern of weather in a particular area and influences how we plan and design our communities. Climate change refers to significant changes in climate patterns over many years.

How is the climate changing in South Australia?

South Australia's climate varies greatly between seasons and from year to year. As the climate changes, this variability is increasing and temperatures and rainfall are varying more from the long term average. In recent years, heat and rainfall records have been broken and there has been an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events. These events have had significant impacts and are projected to worsen in coming years.

The diagram below illustrates historic and projected changes in the weather and what this means for councils.



What does this mean for councils?

As well as direct physical injury and increased risk of illness and disease, extreme weather and climate related events have

including parks, trails, sporting facilities and natural areas promote exercise and wellbeing. Roads, footpaths, stormwater

recreational facilities promote social and community interactions. Councils' ability to provide and maintain these services

the potential to impact community wellbeing in a variety of ways. Functioning community assets and infrastructure

assets and public realm facilitate community connectivity and influence liveability. Libraries and community and

^{*} Source CSIRO 2015 Climate Change in Australia Cluster Reports

What are council's responsibilities for public health and climate risk management?

Councils provide a range of public and environmental health services which contribute to community wellbeing. As the public health authority for their area, councils have responsibilities under the South Australian Public Health Act 2011 to take action to preserve, protect and promote public health within their area. The Act states that councils must:

Councils must

Prepare a regional public health plan consistent with the State Public Health Plan that identifies existing and potential public health risks (Section 51)



Considering future risks to public health including climate risk and identifying strategies to prepare for those risks to be consistent with the priority area of the South Australian Public Health Plan - Preparing for Climate Change.

Councils must

must

Provide information to communities about risks to public health and provide or support activities to protect or promote public health (Section 37)



Councils need to understand climate risks to public health to inform their communities and develop and deliver strategies and actions that will build community resilience.



Preparing for climate change is a priority of the South Australian Public Health Plan.



As a service provider and asset manager, councils have responsibilities to consider risks and take appropriate risk mitigation action. Council responsibilities are identified in the Local Government Act 1999. The Act states that councils must:

	Make informed decisions (Section 6)	This means	>	Taking risk dat
Councils	Take measures to protect their			Recogn

ata and climate projections) when making decisions. Recognising climate risks to councils, communities and businesses

and providing support to prepare, respond and recover.

account of readily available information (such as climate

must	area from natural hazards (Section 7)
	Civa dua waight in all plans

Give due weight in all plans, **Councils** policies and activities to state and national objectives and strategies (Section 8)



Considering how policies and actions align with and contribute to state and national strategies including climate change and public health strategies.



climate risk and reduce impacts on health and wellbeing.





South Australia's Climate Change Strategy

The Strategy identifies that successful adaptation requires integrating climate risks into risk management and highlights the need to build resilience and raise awareness. Priority adaptation options to increase community wellbeing are included in many of the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plans.

Councils are also responsible for protecting individuals and communities from local nuisance including the adverse effects of smoke or dust. Increased frequency of bushfire and reduced rainfall may increase the likelihood of smoke and dust issues. Council responsibilities are identified in the Local Nuisance and Litter Control Act 2016. The Act states that councils must:

Councils Take action to manage local **must** nuisance (Section 7)



Councils may issue Nuisance Abatement Notices or apply fines to persons responsible for creating a local nuisance.

Liability Considerations

Legal liability may arise from a council's significant failure to fulfil their function or responsibilities described in the South Australian Public Health Act 2011, the Local Government Act 1999 or the Local Nuisance and Litter Control Act 2016, . A council may be liable if they are found to have acted negligently, for example by failing to reflect known risks (such as flood risk) in their development plan or failed to exercise its powers and functions to appropriately manage flood risk. A council may also be liable if they provide inaccurate information relating to flood risk, or if they understate or overstate those risks.

Liability may also arise from councils' responsibilities as a landowner if they fail to manage their land in accordance with common law principles that apply to all landowners including nuisance and negligence.



Climate risk management means considering the current and future climate in all decision making.

What do we need to do as council public health professionals?

Council plans and strategies guide council action and are the starting point for taking action against climate risk. Along with core public health responsibilities such as community health services, food safety, noise and air emissions and environmental protection, public health matters intersect numerous council functions and are a key consideration in council policies including emergency management, open space and recreation, stormwater management, age-friendly neighbourhoods and animal management. Public health (or public health related) council plans, strategies and services are shown in the diagram below, along with suggested actions on how to incorporate climate risk elements into existing processes:

Plans, strategies and services

Climate risk management actions

Regional Public Health Plan

- Identify public health risks that may change as the climate changes and likely timescales for change and
- Identify strategies to address public health risks and promote community resilience for now and that may be required in the future
- Ensure the Public Health Plan reflects the priority theme of the State Public Health Plan Preparing for Climate Change
- Identify information or data needs to inform public health planning
- Involve multiple functions of council in public health planning to reflect cross-functional risks (eq. asset management, open space, planning)

Council Strategic Plan

- Identify climate impacts on strategic objectives, valued features and plans for the future
- Identify long term risks and include necessary mitigation in future planning and budget processes
- Consider the risk of inaction to council objectives and financial sustainability

Other council strategies, policies and plans

eg. management plans for environmental health, waste and wastewater, open space strategies, housing strategies, emergency response and recovery plans

- During review of council strategies, policies or plans, identify and address potential climate impacts on desired objectives for each and identify links to community wellbeing outcomes
- Identify opportunities to support and encourage active travel
- Review emergency response and recovery plans, reflecting new understanding of climate risks
- mosquitoes, dust, bushfire, Consider impacts of changes to open space management on opportunities for recreation and social
 - Identify benefits of greener neighbourhoods and green infrastructure to community wellbeing
 - Review future demand for council services such as community health, transport and wastewater treatment given projected future climate conditions

eg. food safety inspections,

- **Public health operations** Identify and address requirement to alter frequency of inspections or triggers for inspection
 - Review climate impacts on disease vectors and management and adapt management as needed
- immunisation, monitoring Monitor and evaluate public health indicators to support adaptive management and build knowledge

- Aged care facilities identify and address opportunities to mitigate risks of increased extreme heat events or bushfire through design or operation
- Libraries identify and address opportunities to provide respite from extreme weather, opportunities for community connection and engagement
- Swimming pools identify opportunities to change service provision to meet increasing demand during hot weather
- Wastewater management review need to upgrade or redesign to cope with increased heavy rainfall
- Public realm identify and address opportunities to increase shaded areas and green infrastructure
- Stormwater and flood management inform communities about flood risk and support development of response and recovery plans

Provision of

council services

Engagement

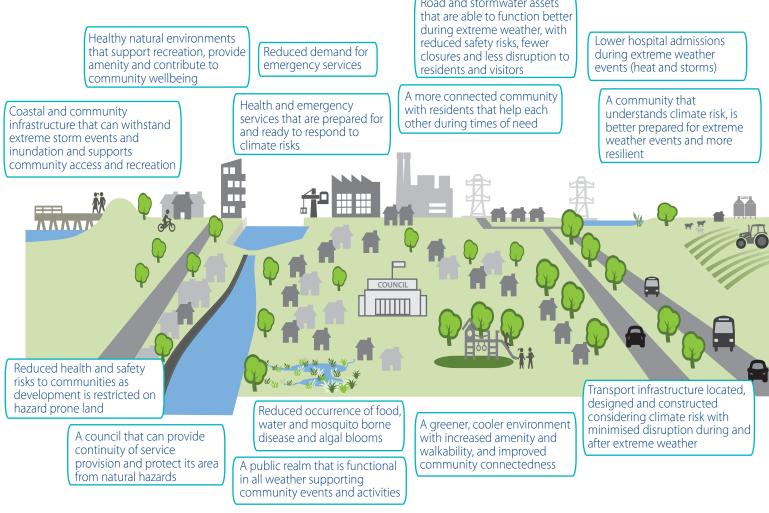
Through all processes

Take advantage of engagement opportunities to:

- Inform the community about changing risks to their health
- Identify opportunities to engage with people with vulnerabilities about climate risk and adaptation strategies
- Provide information on how to prepare for heatwaves, storms, floods, storm surges and bushfires
- Increase climate risk awareness of communities, organisations, business and industry

Communities including residents, business and industry rely on their councils for information about their local area. They expect councils to inform them about things that are changing and how the council is planning and budgeting for the future. Councils must be prepared to provide accurate information about the climate risks in their area so when asked they can provide a current and informed response.

What are the benefits of managing climate risks?



	ging climate risks means changing the way that a council provides its functions and services, so that they are delivered in that is more appropriate for the future climate. By taking a risk based approach, and through early action, your council
	ne opportunity to meet the challenges associated with extreme weather events and incremental change to the climate.
	dering climate risk in public health planning processes allows councils to demonstrate their commitment to building nt healthy communities, to invest in facilities and services that will meet future public health needs.
siller	nt healthy communities, to invest in facilities and services that will meet ruture public health needs.
	iagram below outlines some of the ways councils and their communities will benefit from building resilience into the ery of their public health planning, functions and services.
	Road and stormwater assets that are able to function better
	Healthy natural environments during extreme weather, with reduced safety risks fewer Lower hospital admissions
	that support recreation, provide amenity and contribute to community wellbeing Reduced demand for emergency services Closures and less disruption to residents and visitors Closures and less disruption to residents and visitors during extreme weather events (heat and storms)
istruc eme s idatic	Health and emergency services that are prepared for and ready to respond to climate risks Health and emergency services that are prepared for and ready to respond to climate risks A more connected community with residents that help each other during times of need A community that understands climate risk, is better prepared for extreme weather events and more resilient
AV	TO THE TOTAL PROPERTY OF THE P
s to c elop	de health and safety communities as oment is restricted on brone land Reduced occurrence of food, designed and constructed considering climate risk with
	A council that can provide continuity of service provision and protect its area from natural hazards Water and mosquito borne disease and algal blooms A greener, cooler environment with increased amenity and walkability, and improved community connectedness A public realm that is functional in all weather supporting community events and activities A greener, cooler environment with increased amenity and walkability, and improved community connectedness Considering climate is k with increased amenity and walkability, and improved community connectedness
Vhe	ere can I get more information?
ne LC	GA website contains a variety of information and references, including links to useful websites.
or inf	formation on climate risks and projected climate changes refer to www.climatechangeinaustralia.gov.au
or do	ownscaled climate projections for South Australia, go to SA Climate Ready.
	This document has been prepared for the Local Government Association of South Australia as part of the climate risk management series of guidance notes and documents. This document has been prepared with funding
	support from the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources.
	The series includes guides for: > Local government planners
	> Local government engineers and asset managers
	> Local government economic development activities > Local government financial managers