

POLICY

Policy Name	Climate Change Policy
Policy Category	Strategic
Department / Officer	Environment and Infrastructure / Director Environment and Infrastructure
Date Adopted	
Date/s Reviewed	27 July 2026
Review Frequency	Every Three Years
Strategic Plan Reference	CVH Community Plan 2030 Aspiration 4 We protect our environment

Attachments

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Council's commitment to addressing climate change by mitigating emissions, preparing the community for climate impacts, and integrating climate risk considerations into decision-making and operations.

2. Scope

This Policy outlines Council's response to climate change and applies to all strategic and operational activities. It covers the management and procurement of assets and infrastructure, biodiversity conservation, urban greening and tree management, planning and development, community support, economic development, and the governance of climate change adaptation across corporate processes, frameworks, and strategic plans.

3. Policy Statement (Summary)

The City of Victor Harbor declared a Climate Emergency in December 2019, recognising the significant risks posed by global warming. Council is committed to effective climate change mitigation and adaptation, ensuring that economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations are appropriately balanced. The Policy also seeks to model best practices for the community and local businesses.

Council commits to:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with net zero targets.
- Strengthening community and infrastructure resilience to climate impacts.
- Promoting sustainable practices across energy, water, waste, and transport.

- Leading by example through its operations and supporting the community in adapting to climate challenges.

4. Legislation and Compliance

Relevant legislation includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Environment Protection Act 1993
- Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Commonwealth)
- Climate Change Act 2022 (Commonwealth)
- Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Act 2007
- Coast Protection Act 1972
- Fire and Emergency Services Act 2005
- Green Industries South Australia Act 2004
- Landscape South Australia Act 2019
- National Environment Protection Council (South Australia) Act 1995
- National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Act 2007 (Commonwealth)
- National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972
- Native Vegetation Act 1991
- Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016
- Zero Waste South Australia Act 2004

5. Definitions

Adaptation means action to avoid, withstand or benefit from current and projected climate changes and impacts.

Climate change means any change in climate over time, whether due to natural variability or human activity.

Climate Risk means the potential negative impacts caused by climate change (climate-related physical risk) and also considers the impact of the transition to Net Zero emissions (climate –related transition risk).

Greenhouse gases means gases in Earth's atmosphere that trap heat. They let sunlight pass through the atmosphere, but they prevent the heat that the sunlight brings from leaving the atmosphere. The main greenhouse gases are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, ozone, nitrous oxide, and chlorofluorocarbons.

Mitigation means action to reduce emissions or enhance greenhouse gas sinks.

Resilience means the ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self organisation, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change.

6. Policy Content

Council is committed to four key principles for addressing the challenges of climate change:

6.1 Evidence based decision making and collaborative approach

The City of Victor Harbor is a relatively small regional Council; we acknowledge the need to continue to foster partnerships and collaborate with others for best outcomes. This includes working in partnership with Resilient Hills and Coasts Regional Climate, community, industry, business, education and state and federal governments to maximise the best available research to support informed decision making to address the impacts of climate change.

6.2 Mitigation

Council will continue to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations and community activities.
- Measure, monitor and report greenhouse gas emissions annually.
- Implementations to reduce emissions from energy, transport, waste, and other operational sources.
- Transition to renewable energy and improving energy efficiency across facilities and services.
- Integrate of climate resilience into infrastructure, land management, and community planning.
- Manage and enhance our parks, reserves and roadsides to increase vegetation cover, preserve remnant vegetation and ecosystems.
- Green our city through continuing revegetation, street tree planting and other programs.
- Work strategically with community groups and volunteers to increase capacity and build resilience in our community.
- Investigate and, where appropriate, utilise carbon offsets or carbon credits as a measure to address residual emissions that cannot be feasibly eliminated, ensuring alignment with recognised national and international standards.

6.3 Adaptation

Acknowledging that our focus needs to increasingly change to adaptation, Council will integrate climate adaptation considerations into all council decision making and processes to address vulnerabilities by continuing to:

- Advocate for infrastructure upgrades and planning controls to address climate-related risks associated with wastewater capacity and extreme rainfall events.
- Reduce bushfire risk through strategic fuel load management across Council-managed land, including vegetation management, asset protection measures and collaboration with relevant authorities.
- Improve/increase shade both natural and built community asset.
- Improve water sensitive urban design.
- Plan for extreme events in infrastructure renewal and development.
- Discourage and restrict development in identified hazard-prone areas, including coastal erosion zones, floodplains, bushfire risk areas, and areas vulnerable to sea level rise, consistent with planning legislation and state planning frameworks.

- Promote climate-smart design in homes and buildings through community education, advocacy, and support for best-practice planning and development outcomes.
- Undertake coastal monitoring and implement adaptive management responses in accordance with best practice, available resources, and current and emerging data.
- Manage and restore natural habitats to support species migration and range shifts and incorporate climate-adapted species selection in restoration activities.

6.4 Community support

Council will strive to prepare the City of Victor Harbor and the community to adapt, and to increase resilience to the effects of climate change through:

- The development of emergency management plans and early warning systems for flood and fire and general awareness raising about the predicted effects of climate change.
- Maintaining and enhancing vegetation in public spaces.
- Planning, developing and maintaining heat, flood, and fire refuge areas.
- Community education around preparation and response, develop community messaging around risk and insurance, and encourage business and landholders to develop emergency plans.
- Continuing to build social connectivity through volunteering and community participation.
- Raising awareness about impacts of sea rise on coastal assets, utilise modelling and mapping to identify assets at risk, continue to protect and enhance coastal dunes, establish key hard protection measures, consider future relocation of coastal assets and acquisition of land in high-risk areas.
- Engaging staff, partners, and the wider community in climate action initiatives.
- Supporting the active involvement of young people in climate leadership for the community through the annual Fleurieu Youth Climate Change Summit.
- Supporting innovation and sustainable practices that contribute to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 or earlier.

7. Risk Management

Climate-related risks, including physical risks (such as extreme weather, sea level rise and bushfire) and transition risks (including regulatory, financial and reputational risks), will be identified, assessed and managed in accordance with Council's Risk Management Framework.

8. Implementation/Delegations

The Chief Executive Officer is delegated the authority to implement this Policy.

9. Related Documents

Community Plan 2030
Climate Agenda 2030
Emergency Management Policy
Procurement Policy

Risk Management Policy
Tree Management Policy
Environmental Management Plan 2025-2030
Climate Change Adaptation Plan – Resilient Hills and Coast 2025-2030
Sustainability Policy
Waste Management Policy
Biodiversity and Natural Assets Management Plan (BNAMP)
Asset Management Plans
Victor Harbor Urban Stormwater Management Plan
Victor Harbor Urban Growth Management Plan 2050
Coastal Adaptation Study and Strategy
ISO 14091:2021: Adaptation to climate change – Guidelines on vulnerability, impacts and risk assessment
Statewide Climate Change Risk and Opportunity Assessment for South Australia 2024

10. Availability of Policy

This policy is available on Council's website at www.victor.sa.gov.au. It may also be inspected or purchased at the Principal Office of the Council at 1 Bay Road, Victor Harbor.