

CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

SUNSHINE COAST
Environment Council
www.scec.org.au



2021

Table of Contents

- 01** Acknowledgement of Country
- 02** Message from the Management Committee
- 03** Introduction
- 04** The Climate Emergency
- 05** Goals
- 08** Measuring Progress

Acknowledgement of Country

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) acknowledges that we live, work, learn and create on the land of the Kabi Kabi and Jinibara people and would like to recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of Australia's First Nations People.

We recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance. The Traditional Custodians' unique values, and ancient and enduring cultures, deepen and enrich the life of our community and environment.

We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the important role First Nations people continue to play within the Sunshine Coast community.

Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Message from the Management Committee

Background

In issuing our Climate Emergency Response Plan, the Management Committee recognises human-induced climate change as an existential threat to humanity, non-human species, and eco-systems across the world, and the most important challenge humanity has faced.

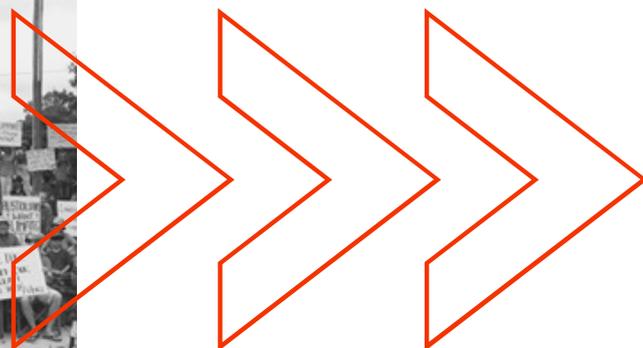
Vision

In accordance with our mission to take a leadership position on the Sunshine Coast and to encourage our community to participate in working towards environmental sustainability, we are compelled to take this stance and to work to change the existing approaches to the natural world which have led to the current crisis.

Commitment

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council is committed to act to address climate change within our own organisation, in our broader Sunshine Coast communities, and in our areas of operation, in accordance with our vision of achieving an ecologically sustainable world through individual and community stewardship of the natural environment. Our goals are outlined in the plan and include:

- Environmental performance in the appraisal of workers' performance
- Pursue continual improvement in corporate responsibility
- Sustainability management and performance



Introduction

The Sunshine Coast Environment Council (SCEC) acknowledges that we are in a state of climate emergency that requires urgent action by all levels of government. On the 4th June 2021, the SCEC Management Committee passed the following motion; SCEC acknowledges that there is an ongoing climate emergency and call on local, state and federal governments to act swiftly and decisively to reduce carbon emissions in the hope that we can avert dangerous climate change.

SCEC operates as the peak environmental advocacy organisation for the wider Sunshine Coast area, representing over 50 community member groups. SCEC has been protecting the Sunshine Coast for over forty years, advocating for better environmental policy and supporting local groups on campaigns to protect our natural landscape and marine environments.

SCEC recognises climate change as an unprecedented threat to the environment, ecosystems, biodiversity, and human society. SCEC also accepts the science that states that current rapid climate change is the direct result of human activities. In recognition of the extreme nature of the threat to life on Earth that climate change represents, SCEC declared a climate emergency in June 2021.

SCEC advocates for urgent climate action from all levels of government, and also at the industry, business, community and personal levels. As a peak environmental body, SCEC believes that it has a responsibility to take a leadership role in local climate action initiatives. This Climate Emergency Action Plan is SCEC's response as an organisation to the climate emergency that we all, humans, non-humans, and ecosystems face. It is built upon three underlying goals, our commitment to reduce our own carbon and environmental footprint, the strengthening of our climate change campaigns and advocacy, and the investigation, demonstration and sharing of clear pathways to achieve a net zero emissions Sunshine Coast.

Our current climate position is the result of human actions, and only by working together can humankind address the incredibly complex problems of a changing climate, minimise climate change impacts and develop equitable solutions for all people, animals, ecosystems, and the earth itself. We invite you to work with us towards this imperative.

The Climate Emergency

Code red for humanity

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) first part of the 6th assessment report; *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis* details the most recent physical understanding of the climate system and climate change, bringing together the latest advances in climate science. The key findings of the IPCC report are dire, indicating that each of the last four decades has been successively warmer than any decade that preceded it since 1850[1]. On the Sunshine Coast, the mean surface air temperature has increased by almost 1°C between 1910 and 2013[2]. The increase in temperature is already having an impact on the region with an increase in frequency and severity of storms and bushfires and increased sea level rise. These impacts are already altering the behaviour of local wildlife. For example, endangered marine turtles that nest on Sunshine Coast beaches are facing increased embryonic mortality and altered sex ratio of hatchlings due to temperature extremes – a trend that is predicted to worsen with climate change, threatening their extinction [2,3]. The region has also experienced damages to both the environment and people from increased severity of storms and bushfires, with eight natural disasters in 2019 alone, including the 2019/2020 “Black Summer” bushfires which destroyed property in Peregian Springs.

Climate change impacts are projected to worsen for the Sunshine Coast region with risks of sea level rise and storm surges along the coast expected to cause beach erosion and damages to coastal properties; flooding affecting properties in floodplain and low-elevation areas; as well as increasing hazard risk for heatwaves, bushfires and cyclones[5]. These impacts pose significant risks to coastal populations, communities and the natural environment and pose significant socio-economic impacts with the value of the Sunshine Coast’s sandy beaches for recreation and tourism bringing millions into the local economy each year. We are facing a climate emergency.

On 5 December 2016, Darebin City Council in Victoria, Australia, became the first jurisdiction anywhere in the world to declare a Climate Emergency. Now, 2,012 jurisdictions in 34 countries have declared a climate emergency. Populations covered by jurisdictions that have declared a climate emergency amount to over 1 billion citizens. Universities, businesses, community groups, schools and charities have also joined in declaring a climate emergency and the Sunshine Coast Environment Council is proud to join them.

Sunshine Coast Environment Council

1 IPCC, 2021: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [MassonDelmotte, V., P. Zhai, A. Pirani, S. L. Connors, C. Péan, S. Berger, N. Caud, Y. Chen, L. Goldfarb, M. I. Gomis, M. Huang, K. Leitzell, E. Lonnoy, J. B. R. Matthews, T. K. Maycock, T. Waterfield, O. Yelekçi, R. Yu and B. Zhou (eds.)], Cambridge University Press. In Press.

2 Dowdy, Andrew. (2015). East Coast Cluster Report, *Climate Change in Australia Projections for Australia's Natural Resource Management Regions*.

3 Jensen, M.P., et al., Environmental Warming and Feminization of One of the Largest Sea Turtle Populations in the World. *Curr Biol*, 2018. 28(1): p. 154-159.e4.

4 Staines, M.N., D.T. Booth, and C.J. Limpus, Microclimatic effects on the incubation success, hatchling morphology and locomotor performance of marine turtles. *Acta Oecologica*, 2019. 97: p. 49-56.

5 Gallina, John and Sidle, Roy. Cumulative climate change influences and hazards affecting the Sunshine Coast [online]. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management*, The, Vol. 33, No. 3, Jul 2018: 30-37.

Availability: ISSN: 1324- 1540. [cited 01 Dec 20].

Goal 1 - To be a sustainable and regenerative organisation



Actions - Short Term

- Actively reduce grid-based energy consumption
 - Within the office environment, energy use will be reported quarterly and an implementation plan will be developed to reduce consumption levels.
- Develop a purchasing policy that will aim to facilitate improvements in appliances throughout the office environment and prioritise local suppliers.
- Provide opportunities for staff and volunteers to work from home
- Event catering will prioritise local plant-based suppliers.



Actions - Medium Term

- Explore opportunities to acquire an electric vehicle in place of the current SCEC vehicle



Actions - Long Term

- Offset residual carbon emissions
- Collating and applying ongoing research and development
- Work with and support large scale revegetation projects

Goal 2 - Strengthen our campaigns and advocacy to deliver messaging around climate change and the climate emergency



Actions - Short Term

- Ensure all campaigns and submissions reference climate change and the climate emergency
- Ensure all advocacy addresses climate change and the climate emergency
- Support and promote climate action campaigns that address rapid decarbonisation across all levels of government
- Work with community groups, environmental organisations and the wider community on a range of local climate action campaigns and events that engage a wide audience and garner a groundswell of support



Actions - Medium Term

- Develop an express SCEC campaign to address climate change that consolidates and captures the diverse advocacy work that SCEC is currently undertaking
- Provide clear information about the climate emergency on the SCEC website and update regularly



Actions - Long Term

- Collating and applying ongoing research and development

Goal 3 – Investigate, demonstrate, share and message clear transition pathways to a net zero carbon Sunshine Coast.



Actions - Short Term

- Continue the ClimateClever partnership
- Promote government incentives local, state that promote emissions reduction – website resources
- Engage with local government on community reference groups and other engagement opportunities to advocate for stronger climate action



Actions - Medium Term

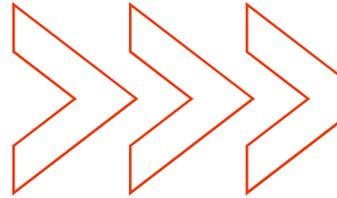
- Develop an express SCEC campaign to address climate change that consolidates and captures the diverse advocacy work that SCEC is currently undertaking



Actions - Long Term

- Explore and collaborate with businesses, community groups and organisations on emissions reduction projects and initiatives.

Measuring Progress



Each goal will be monitored and reviewed regularly

SCEC is dedicated to remain accountable to the commitments outlined in the Plan. Thus, we will ensure the Plan is delivered by embedding it into existing operations and policies and report on the outcomes at the monthly Management Committee meetings. A separate Implementation Plan will be developed in Q2 2022 which will further detail the process of implementation and monitoring. This will utilise SMART goals to ensure the actions from this document are implemented. The actions will be monitored quarterly and evaluated annually by the SCEC Management Committee with suitable revisions and recommendations updated as required.

If civilisation is to survive, this century will have to be a time of dramatic transformation, not just in technological capacity but also in our approach to the natural world - and each other. The road we are travelling now can only end in disaster

Sunshine Coast Environment Council Patron, Professor Ian Lowe AO - 'A Big Fix', 2005

Contact

Sunshine Coast
Environment Council

3 Porters Lane
Nambour, QLD, 4560

scec.org.au
FB /sunshinecoastenvirocouncil
info@scec.org.au