

Council adopts climate change policy

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DOUGLAS Shire Council has taken a vital step towards future-proofing the region by adopting a climate change policy.

The policy will direct Council to acknowledge the impact of climate change during decision-making for the next three years.

Council adopted the Climate Change General Policy (Council Operations) at the Ordinary Council Meeting in Mossman this week.

Mayor Julia Leu said the policy formally acknowledged everything Council was already doing as a climate change leader.

“Climate change is a global problem requiring global solutions, but this Policy highlights the crucial role that local governments play in driving initiatives within their control,” she said.

The policy commits Council to eight operational objectives such as understanding the region’s vulnerabilities; reducing the environmental impact of Council’s operations and protecting existing carbon stores like rainforests and mangroves.

“Douglas Shire is the only place in the world with two adjoining World Heritage listed areas – the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics – and we must do everything in our power to protect that,” Mayor Leu said.

The impacts of climate change are expected to increase the intensity of known hazards including extreme storms, heatwaves, coastal erosion and flooding.

“This policy gives Council the formal framework to undertake climate adaptation and mitigation strategies,” Mayor Leu said.

Climate change initiatives include calculation and reducing Council’s carbon footprint, using renewable energy to power Council buildings and planting native trees in parks and gardens.

This Policy will be reviewed every three years to reconsider up to climate science.

EIGHT OBJECTIVES:

1. To recognise and understand Council’s vulnerabilities associated with climate change based on the best available climate science at the time of this policy’s adoption.
2. To develop and implement climate change mitigation actions which aim to reduce the impact of Council’s operations on climate change.

3. To develop and implement climate change adaptation actions to strengthen Council's resilience to climate change impacts.
4. To protect existing carbon sinks located within the Douglas Shire.
5. To consider the use of carbon offsets where appropriate.
6. To demonstrate climate change leadership to the Douglas Communities.
7. To participate in appropriate national, state and regional groups, which aim to share climate change knowledge, build capability and/or improve resiliency.
8. To comply with applicable legal requirements and implement any relevant State government policies, guidelines and/or directives related to climate change.

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