



24 July 2020

The General Manager, Port Stephens Council

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Port Stephens Council – Draft Climate Change Policy - Submission

Reference **PSC2012-01402**

About TRRA

The objectives of TRRA Inc. include:

To act and be a representative voice for the ratepayers & residents of the Tomaree Peninsula in all matters that will enhance and protect their residential amenity and the local environment, both natural and built.

Given TRRA's role and objectives, we have a critical interest in the response of our community to the widely accepted challenges posed by human induced climate change.

Submission

We welcome the development of this policy, which is long overdue, the need for it having been flagged by Council itself at least since 2009, and by many in the community for much longer.

We submit that the Policy can and should be much more ambitious. It is too narrowly focussed on Council's own operations and appears limited to management and adaptation with little recognition of the need for mitigation.

The implications of climate change and its manifest effects such as on sea level rise and more extreme weather are particularly severe for Port Stephens given its extensive coastline, low lying flood prone land and large areas of bushland and natural wildlife habitat.



We welcome the commitment in the draft Policy to wide consultation on climate change impacts and responses.

We also welcome the commitment to addressing climate change implications for Council's own activities and operations, and recognise that Council has an established track record in energy efficiency, waste management and other sustainability initiatives, and has more such activities under way or planned.

We submit that the Policy should expressly include a stronger and explicit leadership role for Council in addressing the implications for the wider community, including mitigation as well as adaptation.

We submit that the Policy should include some high level targets, both for Council itself and for the whole PS Community, including targets of zero carbon emissions, at least by 2050 (in-line with the State Government commitment¹) – and preferably much earlier.

In section 2 of the draft Policy (Context and Background) – there are three references to 'potential' risks – this word should be removed – the risks are real, known and already evident – no longer just a future risk.

Section 5 of the Policy (Statement) should expressly refer to mitigation (i.e. reducing causes) of climate change risks, as well as adaptation & management of impacts. The only current implicit reference to mitigation is in 5.1(c) which relates only to Council's own contribution to climate change.

Section 5 should much more clearly set out a leadership role for Council in an urgent 'whole of community' response to climate change risk through mitigation, adaptation and management.

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¹ <https://climatechange.environment.nsw.gov.au/About-climate-change-in-NSW/NSW-Government-action-on-climate-change>