



Snapshot

Integrating climate risk into council processes in Gippsland: an example of a regional partnership and collaboration for adaptation

Summary

The project worked with five Gippsland councils to integrate climate risk into processes and to train staff on how to consider climate change. The stages of the project included: 1. understanding each council's context, 2. process mapping to understand where climate change should be considered, 3. developing an approach to assess climate risks and respond to climate risk, 4. delivering tailored staff training to build awareness of climate change and capacity to respond within each council, and 5. hosting a regional forum to share lessons learned.

Gippsland councils recognised that, as they gather more data and information around climate change, they can improve how they plan and implement change. They also considered that working through a regional partnership would offer real opportunities. Adaptation is about increasing resilience to risks through better decision making and taking advantage of opportunities. Embedding adaptation within councils is an important next stage to build on the existing climate change work councils are already undertaking. It can help facilitate change and enable councils across Gippsland to take the lead within their own communities and plan for climate change adaptation at a regional scale.

East Gippsland Shire Council is the lead council for the project. Together with other regional councils (Bass Coast, Baw Baw, South Gippsland, and Wellington), it oversees the \$200,000 in funding from the Victorian Government's Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership (VASP) (see the [VASP Snapshot](#)). Gippsland councils have also contributed funding and in-kind support to the three-year project.

Keywords

Integrating, embedding, adaptation training, local context, regional partnership

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1. Understanding each council's context

Seven strategies were used to understand each council's context (outlined on the website <http://embedadaptation.loopandco.com.au>). Different strengths and weaknesses were found across the region. Some councils had many staff that understood adaptation and had undertaken a lot of action, while other councils understood the potential risks but had not considered them further. The key lesson learned was that simply having the conversation with staff about climate change meant most councils found that some of their staff were already responding to climate-related challenges. These conversations also raised the profile of climate change within their organisations.

2. Process mapping

Process mapping has been undertaken prior to or as part of the training program. This was a useful way to get staff to identify for themselves where climate change should be considered.

3. Common approach to climate change

The common approach adopted was quite high level – **understand** climate change and then **respond**:

- **Understand** – this involves understanding how different climate variables will change, in terms of speed, direction and timing, and outlining the risk assessment approach to help understand climate risks.
- **Respond** – means outlining adaptation measures including soft (community engagement) and hard (engineering or built). A multi-criteria analysis was used to prioritise actions.

4. Training

Training on many topics was delivered across each council following the agreed regional approach (Figure 1). Topics covered general climate change awareness training as well as more specific training on increasing resilience of roads and buildings, water sensitive urban design (WSUD), community development, governance and planning responses.

5. Regional forum

The regional forum was the culmination of an 18-month project funded by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), 'Integrating Climate Risk in Gippsland Councils', that was delivered by consultants Loop and Co, Arup and RMIT University.

The objectives of the forum were to:

- provide an overview of latest climate science and issues of liability facing councils
- showcase adaptation work of the councils of the Gippsland region
- provide opportunity for knowledge sharing to support a regional approach to managing and adapting to climate-related natural hazards.

The keynote speaker sessions brought together executives to build their knowledge of adaptation, with presentations from Dr Karl Braganza (Bureau of Meteorology) and Tayanah O'Donnell (University of Canberra).



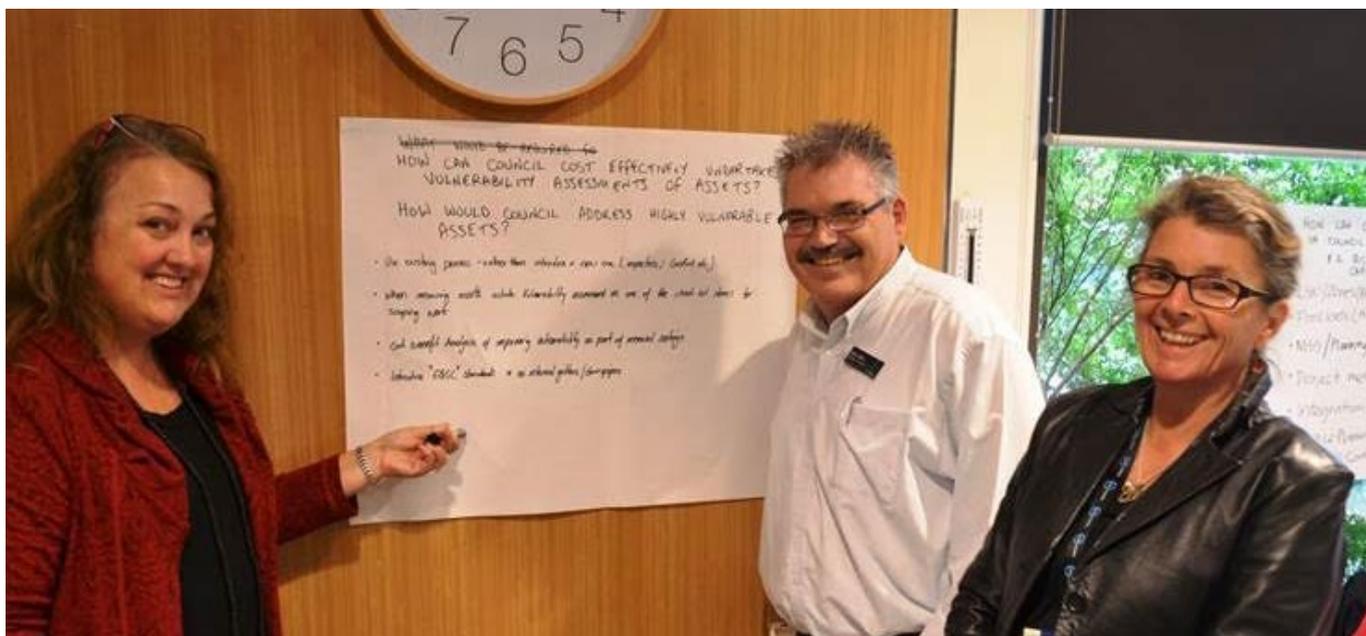


Figure 1: Training at the East Gippsland Shire Council's staff workshop. Source: East Gippsland Shire Council.

Further reading

A knowledge sharing website has been developed to outline the process for understanding each council's context: <http://embedadaptation.loopandco.com.au> (accessed 29 May 2017).

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