



Open Briefing:

Wellington Regional Climate Change Impact Assessment

28 August 2024 – 4.00pm

Attendees

Elected Members: Cr Brown, Cr Dyer, Cr Edwards (via audio-visual link), Deputy Mayor Lewis, Cr Mitchell, Cr Morgan (via audio-visual link), Cr Parkin, Cr Shaw, Cr Stallinger (via audio-visual link), Bruce Spedding, Eastbourne Community Board (via audio-visual link), Emily Keddell, Eastbourne Community Board (part meeting, via audio-visual link), Sheree Freeman, Petone Community Board (via audio-visual link).

Staff: A Geddes, Director Environment and Sustainability; J Scherzer, Head of Climate, Waste and Resource Recovery; M Randall, Senior Advisor – Climate and Sustainability; S Gogo, Advisor Energy and Carbon; J Hayman, Senior Advisor Waste – Planning and Strategy; G Roberts, Waste and Resource Recovery Manager; J Clarke, Advisor Resource Recovery; J Randall, Democracy Advisor.

Apologies

Mayor Barry, Cr Barratt and Cr Tupou.

Presenters

J Scherzer, Head of Climate Waste and Resource Recovery and Miriam Randall, Senior Climate Change Advisor.

Key Objectives of the Briefing

The purpose of the briefing is to outline the Wellington Regional Climate Change Impact Assessment (WRCCIA) findings.

Slide 1 – (Header)

Slide 2 – Climate Change Commission first progress report on the National Adaptation Plan: A quote from the Chair of the Climate Change Commission.

Slide 3 – Context (Header)

Slide 4 – Regional vulnerability assessment: Completed in 2019. The assessment explains how vulnerability will impact people, infrastructure, the environment and ecology.

Slide 5 – Submissions 2022–2023: Council sent submissions to government in 2022 and 2023.

Slide 6 – Coastal inundation and sea level rise assessment for the Hutt City District – NIWA: Council’s planning team commissioned an inundation assessment by NIWA showing future scenarios.

Slide 7 – Progress on adaptation across the motu and at Council: A summary of progress on adaptation since 2019.

Slide 8 – WRCCIA – exploring the report: A Coastal Impact Assessment Act is anticipated for 2025. All information and legislation available will be needed to understand the issue and inform decision making.

Slide 9 – Three stage approach to impact assessment: The Impact assessment will help with understanding the issues before Council seeks solutions.

Slide 10 – Goal of the WRCCIA: A comprehensive overview that informs the next phase.

Slide 11 – Report overview: Beca produced the report with input from GNS Science, NIWA and others. It was peer reviewed by Tonkin & Taylor.

Slide 13 – RCP scenarios: Various scenarios based on representative concentration pathway (RCP) levels. RCP 4.5 and RCP 8.5 are tipping points where impacts will require decisions to be made.

Slide 14 – Risks and opportunities for the region: Risks have been through a risk framework and have been analysed under various scenarios.

Slide 15 – General risk framework: Risks have been identified at a RCP4.5 or 8.5 scenario for each of the five domains. The rating scales between RCP4.5 and RCP8.5 are similar because levels will cause an impact under both scenarios.

Slide 16 – Built environment – top five risks out of 128: How the built environment will be impacted.

Slide 17 – Human – top five risks out of 69: How humans will be impacted.

Slide 18 – Natural environment – top five risks out of 73: How the natural environment will be impacted.

Slide 19 – Economic – top five risks out of 93: How the economy will be impacted.

Slide 20 – Governance risk – 6: How governance will be impacted.

The impacts on each of these five domains will cascade on from each other. Individual risks will exacerbate or diminish the impacts depending on actions taken.

Slide 21 – Baring Head monitoring station measurements: The latest reading is 120ppm CO₂. Over the previous 10 years the level has continued to increase.

Slide 22 – RCP 4.5 (1%AEP + 0.9 SLR): Anticipated inundation from a flooding event at RCP4.5 – a one in 100-year event.

Slide 23 – Key areas of impact: Access to all information is key to decision making.

Slide 24 – Regional scenario at RCP 8.5: During an inundation event of RCP8.5 the number of buildings impacted rises significantly.

Slide 25 – Summary report for decision makers: A summary report is being produced for decision makers with high level information from the report.

Slide 26 – Final words: An excerpt from the draft Summary Report.

Questions and discussion points

- pipe infrastructure is not currently designed to handle flooding events, which makes it expensive to change
- the Regional Adaptation Project is considering what needs to happen when certain thresholds are reached. This will also require community engagement. There are still a number of years before impact thresholds are reached, so reducing emissions should be a priority to limit future sea level rise
- the data does not prioritise Lower Hutt over other areas of Wellington, but Lower Hutt will experience the most severe impacts

- Council's draft District Plan will include additional requirements for those areas most likely to be impacted
- the cost of the impacts of climate change will be too high to be accounted for in Long Term Plans. Councils need to reduce emissions, but it may be too late, so both adaptation and emissions reduction will be necessary
- Councils cannot control governments, but they can engage with and influence them
- Councils' District Plans are a key tool to help to future proof cities. A District Plan can help avoid development in parts of the city most likely to be impacted. Building regulations can also be used, for example to require floor levels to be higher. Insurance availability will also be key to changing where people live
- new mapping will show flood zones under a sea level rise based on climate change forecasts. If residents choose to buy in a flood zone, they will be aware of the risks.

Next steps

The Head of Climate, Waste and Resource Recovery will report back to confirm whether the District Plan is allowing for RCP8.5 and at least one metre of sea level rise.

Once available, officers will send the summary report to Councillors.

Open briefing materials

Attachment 1 – Wellington Regional Climate Change Impact Assessment findings.

The open briefing closed at 4.37pm