

Part 2 – Resource management overview

SRMR – Significant resource management issues for the region

CC – Climate change

[These climate change provisions are a first draft and will be developed further to give effect to legislative changes by the Resource Management Amendment Act 2020 the National Policy on Urban Development, a Nelson City Council Climate Change Options paper and through community engagement.]

Issues

SRMR-CC-11 Climate change [RPS]

Climate change will have significant effects on Whakatū Nelson’s natural and physical resources and the people and communities.

The way in which climate will continue to change is understood from analysis of historic and current trends, and projections into the future. Average temperatures will increase, with more moderate winters but also hotter and drier summers. This is likely to increase risks of heat stress, drought and fire, and may see the introduction of new pests and subtropical diseases. There are likely to be more frequent and intense heavy rainfall and storm events and sea levels are projected to continue rising, further increasing flood frequency from both river and sea.

It is difficult to determine exactly when, where and how the various components of climate change will impact on Whakatū Nelson.

The location of Whakatū Nelson’s existing urban areas, strategic infrastructure (including Nelson Airport, Port Nelson and State Highway 6) and significant ecosystems between the mountains and the sea means that the range of responses to the adverse effects of climate change relating to sea level rise and river flooding need to be carefully considered.

How the region manages the use and protection of natural and physical resources will need to include adaptation to the effects of climate change to ensure the resilience of the economy, environment and communities into the future.

The Council is committed to working to achieve net carbon zero. To achieve this, Council will look to emissions it can directly manage and work with the community on wider emissions.

Objectives

SRMR-CC-O1 Responding to the effects of climate change [RPS]

Whakatū Nelson’s community is resilient and responds positively to the likely effects of climate change.

SRMR-CC-O2 Reduce carbon emissions [RPS]

Council carbon reductions will be in line with the Climate Change (Zero Carbon Amendment) Act 2002 (net carbon zero by 2050, with the exception of biogenic methane, for which there is a range of targets from 24 to 47% reduction).

Policies

SRMR-CC-P1 Understanding the potential effects of climate change to Whakatū Nelson [RPS]

Improve the community's understanding of the potential effects of climate change to Whakatū Nelson by:

1. continuing to undertake research and monitoring to improve our understanding of the impacts of climate change and associated risks to Whakatū Nelson; and
2. sharing the research findings with the community.

Explanation

A better understanding of the likely effects of climate change and associated risk is the basis for any decision making on how to adapt to them. Climate science is complex and continuously evolving. International and national research findings need to be reviewed and translated to the local context and the local conditions monitored in order to gain a comprehensive picture. Council has a key role to play in collating climate change related knowledge and sharing it with the community.

SRMR-CC-P2 Reducing potential effects of climate change [RPS]

Reduce the potential effects of climate change and associated risks by:

1. developing and implementing with the community, a strategic and adaptive approach to responding to the effects of climate change;
2. taking a risk-based and precautionary approach to managing existing and new natural hazards risks that are likely to be affected by climate change as set out in SRMR – HAZ – Hazards and risks; and
3. enabling the community as global citizens to take responsibility for reducing emissions through promotion and education.

Explanation

Given the uncertainties related to the exact nature of future climate change, it is prudent to take a risk based approach to managing potential effects of natural hazards that are likely to be affected by climate change, as described in SRMR – HAZ – Hazards and risks.

Climate change effects will be felt across all levels of the community, and significant and ongoing change will be required to respond to those changes over the next 100 years and more. Hence it is important to work with the community to develop an adaptation strategy for how to manage this transition and increase resilience, using an adaptive planning process that enables short-term actions

while keeping options open for adaptations later. The implementation, review and amendment of this strategy will become an ongoing process.

While past and current greenhouse gas emissions already commit us to a certain level of adaptation in the future, it is crucial to minimise and/or offset any further emissions to reduce the level of adaptation actions required as much as possible. The Nelson Plan encourages actions that reduce and/or offset carbon emissions, such as active transport, intensification, renewable energy and the protection and restoration of indigenous vegetation.

Methods

Regulatory methods	Who	Links to policy
The Nelson Plan		
<p>SRMR-CC-M1 [RPS]</p> <p>Include a framework of objectives, policies and rules to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ensure that activities that are likely to be affected by climate change consider these impacts and associated risks; and 2. encourage activities that increase Whakatū Nelson’s resilience to the impacts of climate change by avoiding, remedying or mitigating the potential effects of climate change and reducing emissions. 	Council	SRMR-CC-P1

Non-regulatory methods	Who	Links to policy
Non-statutory plans and strategies		
<p>SRMR-CC-M2 [RPS]</p> <p>Develop a strategic framework with Whakatū Nelson tāngata whenua and the community, to adapt and increase resilience to the effects of climate change.</p>	Council, iwi, community	SRMR-CC-P1
<p>SRMR-CC-M2 [RPS]</p> <p>Investigate Council’s carbon emissions and develop a strategic framework, an action plan and tools and other resources to reduce carbon emissions.</p>	Council	SRMR-CC-P1
<p>SRMR-CC-M3 [RPS]</p> <p>Take account of climate change effects in all of Council decision making.</p>	Council	SRMR-CC-P1

Advocacy and education		
<p>SRMR-CC-M4 [RPS]</p> <p>Share the findings of research on climate change and potential effects of climate change on Whakatū Nelson’s natural and physical resources.</p>	Council	SRMR-CC-P1
<p>SRMR-CC-M5 [RPS]</p> <p>Provide education on how to avoid or minimise the effects of actions on climate change (e.g. reducing of carbon emissions).</p>	Council	SRMR-CC-P2
Funding and assistance		
<p>SRMR-CC-M6 [RPS]</p> <p>Encourage innovative approaches to respond to climate change through initiatives like a climate fund and acknowledgements and rewards.</p>	Council	SRMR-CC-P2
<p>SRMR-CC-M7 [RPS]</p> <p>Review the findings of international and national climate change research and undertake technical work to better understand the implications of climate change for Whakatū Nelson.</p>	Council	SRMR-CC-P1
Partnerships		
<p>SRMR-CC-M8 [RPS]</p> <p>Support the work of community initiatives like the Nelson Tasman Climate Forum, and the realisation of any strategy culminating from the Forum’s work.</p>	Council, Climate Forum	SRMR-CC-P2
<p>SRMR-ECO-M9 [RPS]</p> <p>Collaborate with government departments and agencies, adjoining and other local authorities, the business community and private landowners to better understand and respond to the effects of climate change.</p>	Council, government departments, business, owners	SRMR-CC-P1

Principal reasons

SRMR-CC-PR1 [RPS]

The effects of climate change will be significant for Whakatū Nelson’s natural and physical resources and will be felt across all levels of the community. Precautionary and risk based decision making and ongoing adaptive planning is required, due to the high uncertainty about what exactly will happen and when and the high levels of risks associated with the effects of climate change.

The climate change related responsibilities of Council under the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) currently focus on adapting to the effects of climate change rather than mitigating its causes. The Resource Management Amendment Bill 2019 (after its second reading) proposes to widen the responsibilities of Councils to also consider climate change mitigation when making and amending regional policy statements, regional plans, and district plans and when making decisions under the RMA, effective from 31 December 2021. This would include the provisions of any emissions reductions plans and national adaptation plans. The above provisions anticipate this change, but are likely to be developed further once legislative reform is concluded.

Anticipated environmental results

Relevant policies	Anticipated environmental result
<p>SRMR-CC-P1 [RPS]</p> <p>Improve the community’s understanding of the potential effects of climate change to Whakatū Nelson by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. continuing to undertake research and monitoring to improve our understanding of the impacts of climate change and associated risks to Whakatū Nelson; and 2. sharing the research findings with the community. 	<p>SRMR-CC-AER1 [RPS]</p> <p>Whakatū Nelson’s community is aware of the likely effects of climate change and associated risks.</p>
<p>SRMR-CC-P2 [RPS]</p> <p>Reduce the potential effects of climate change and associated risks by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. developing and implementing with the community, a strategic and adaptive approach to responding to the effects of climate change; and 2. taking a risk-based and precautionary approach to managing existing and new natural hazards risks that are likely to be affected by climate change as set out in SRMR – HAZ – Hazards and risks; and 3. promoting actions to reduce or offset carbon emissions. 	<p>SRMR-CC-AER2 [RPS]</p> <p>Whakatū Nelson is resilient to the likely effects of climate change and associated risks.</p>