

Report No.	21-42
Information Only - No Decision Required	

REGIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE RISK ASSESSMENT: PROGRESS REPORT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment project.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 21-42.
- b. notes that the Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment is due to be completed in mid 2021 and will provide important information for action planning by this Committee.
- c. agrees to receive complementary advice on transition and governance risks.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. The information in this report has no immediate financial impact.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. A community engagement campaign was conducted in the early stages of this project, to elicit views on values and concerns. The next significant opportunity for engagement is likely to be on completion of the project, in the first or second quarter of FY21/22.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS RISK IMPACT

- 5.1. This report does not identify any significant business risk.

6. CLIMATE IMPACT STATEMENT

- 6.1. The project described in this report is a major element of the region's response to climate change. Once completed, we anticipate that it will provide a focus for councils' adaptation efforts.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1. Over the course of this financial year, the region's local authorities are working together on a **Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment (RCCRA)**. The project is supported by Tonkin and Taylor – an organisation with experience in similar assessments at a national and regional level.
- 7.2. The RCCRA will provide a basis for prioritising and responding to the impacts of climate change in our region, by identifying local issues that most urgently need attention. The project's objectives are to:
- Identify community risks in the face of climate change;
 - Prioritise those risks for action;

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- Build a common understanding of the issues across councils;
- Identify interventions required at a central-government level to enable an effective local response; and
- Share information about vulnerabilities and the approach we are taking with communities.

7.3. The RCCRA is a high-level, largely desktop exercise that uses existing datasets, reports, information, and expert knowledge. The project comprises two stages, as illustrated in Figure 1 below. The first stage assesses exposure of community values to climate change hazards. The second stage considers in more detail the vulnerability (sensitivity and adaptive capacity) of communities and ecosystems to climate impacts. This results in an overall assessment of climate-related risk.

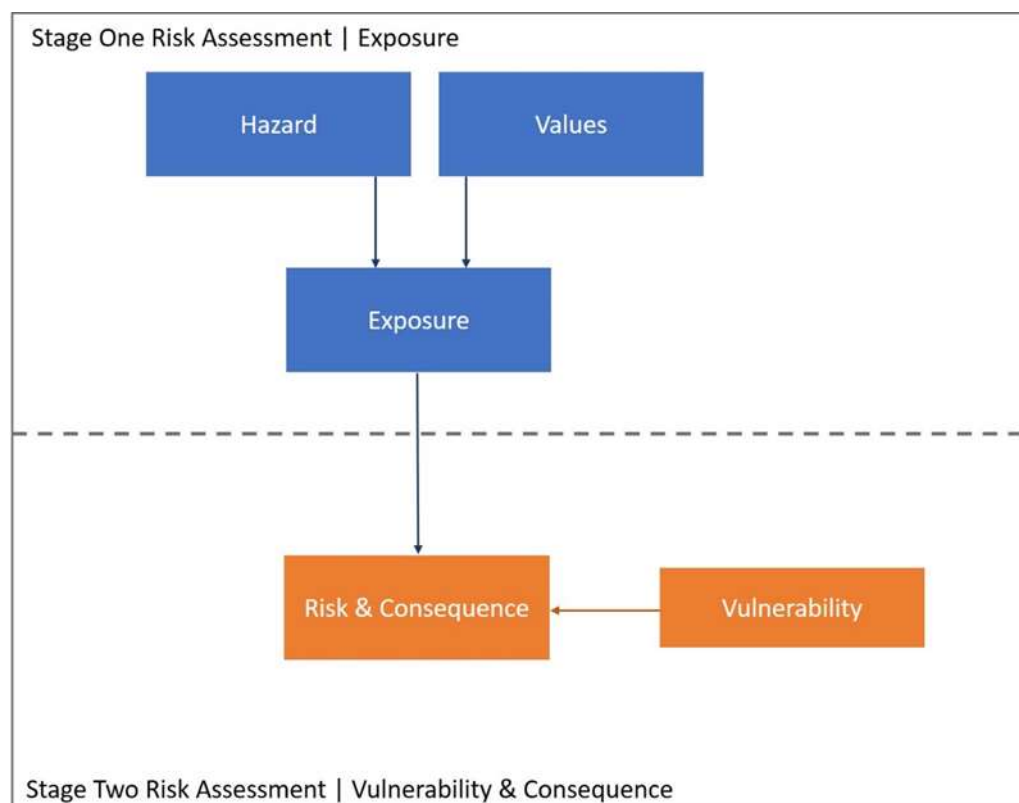


Figure 1: RCCRA project stages

7.4. Tangata whenua involvement is important to the success of the project. Iwi and hapū hold knowledge about climatic conditions and hazards based on long-term experience. They, and their taonga, are likely to be disproportionately affected by climate change. We are seeking to provide opportunities for iwi involvement at each step along the way.

8. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 8.1. The project is now approaching the completion of Stage One – exposure of things that communities value to climate-related hazards.
- 8.2. This stage of the project commenced with a community engagement campaign in September 2020, to identify community values and concerns in relation to climate change. The campaign was promoted through multiple channels including social media, council websites, radio, a letterbox newsletter, and direct email. Community members could respond to the survey in a number of ways including an online platform, email and post. The online community engagement tool (Social Pinpoint) included an interactive map on

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which respondents could place markers and add comments. Just under 300 responses were received.

- 8.3. Responses have been analysed to provide an initial identification of community values. Broadly, these reflect a strong concern for the natural environment, as well as the built environment, transport, recreation, community wellbeing, and the economy.
- 8.4. Face-to-face workshops and hui were scheduled for early March 2021 – and were disrupted by changes in COVID-19 alert levels. Workshops with council staff, stakeholder groups and industry representatives proceeded online. Planned hui with rangatahi were postponed; these will be rescheduled as a matter of priority.
- 8.5. We are now working to combine information gathered through workshops and earlier community engagement with other datasets, such as flood-risk layers and demographic information, to produce an assessment of 'exposure'.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1. A range of council staff, iwi representatives, and stakeholders have been consulted or involved in some capacity in the project to date. No consultation has occurred specifically in relation to this update report.

10. NEXT STEPS

- 10.1. Stage One of the project is due to be completed in April 2021. An interim report, focusing on the exposure dimension of climate change risk, will be made available to council staff and iwi representatives at that time.
- 10.2. Stage Two will focus on vulnerability, as well as an overall assessment of risk. It will involve further workshops and hui, probably during May.
- 10.3. The final report is due to be completed in mid 2021 and submitted to this Committee for consideration at its September meeting. We anticipate that it will highlight key risks at both a regional and district scale. How best to respond to these issues will be a matter for affected communities, and their councils. We suggest that this Committee take an active role in coordinating that response, providing advice to participating councils, and tackling barriers to progress.
- 10.4. The approach being taken to the RCCRA has a biophysical focus. As a result, it is unlikely to fully consider transition and governance risks for the region. We propose to develop advice on those dimensions separately. That advice would be submitted to this Committee alongside the RCCRA to inform prioritisation and action planning.

11. SIGNIFICANCE

- 11.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

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ANNEXES

There are no attachments for this report.