

RANGITĪKEI DISTRICT COUNCIL

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN

2024

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KEY TERMS

Term	Definition
Adaptation	Taking action to prepare for and adjust to both the current effects of climate change and the predicted impacts into the future.
Carbon footprint	A measure of the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organisation, or community.
Decarbonisation	The reduction or elimination of carbon dioxide emissions from a process or activity.
Hazard	The potential occurrence of climate-related physical events or trends that may cause damage and loss.
Mitigation	Taking actions to reduce emissions that cause climate change.
Resilience	The capacity or ability of a system or community to withstand or recover quickly from the impacts of a climate hazard.
Risk	The exposure of a system or community to a hazard.
Vulnerability	The degree to which a system or community is susceptible to, and unable to cope with climate hazards.

Mayors Message

Tēnā koe, we have a responsibility to our children and their children to leave our district and the world in a better environment than we found it and we are failing badly. Surely no one can dispute climate change is happening as a consequence of our actions. To say that it is a result of other countries' serious emissions and that we will make little difference is inexcusable.

We cannot do this alone, we must work with our regional partners, advocate for change nationally and globally and at the same time provide leadership for adaptation and mitigation in our beautiful district. Without significant action now and consideration to the environment in every decision that Council makes, every contract we enter into we will continue to fail.

Council has joined the Manawatū- Whanganui Joint Action Committee, which I sit on as Mayor and through this has completed the regional risk assessment and the regional Action Plan. Council has completed the Spatial Plan, continues to work in the Civil Defence space and considers the impact of climate change on our infrastructure and planning. We need to tell this story more widely than we currently do because we are doing things to make a difference.

We need to follow our community lead - our farmers through River Collectives and planting regimes are making a difference, many communities such as the Tutaenui Restoration Society, the Friends of Taihape, coastal settlement groups along with numerous iwi schemes are already showing us the way, thank you to all of you.

The climate change strategy in this document clearly lists Council's work plan and the partners we need to work with. I thank councillors and staff for the concise way it is laid out however unless we have a set process and timeline for reporting against it and adding to it the danger is that it becomes just another report. It must be also something that our businesses and community buy into and replicate beyond Council



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Watson'.

Nga mihi.

Andy Watson Mayor

Our Purpose

He oranga whenua,
He oranga tangata,
He oranga wairua,
Tihei Mauriora!

If our land is cared for,
If our people are looked after,
If the spirit is strong,
We can build a better future for all,
Let there be life!

Welcome to Rangitīkei District Council's first Climate Strategy and Action Plan

Climate change is one of the most tangible threats to our way of life that society will face in the coming decades. In order to respond to this, there is a role for Rangitīkei District Council (RDC) to play our part and support our district decarbonise, adapt, mitigate and prepare for the coming challenges.

This requires a collaborative approach including supporting the actions being taken at a regional level through the Manawatū Whanganui Climate Action Joint Committee and implementing the Horizons Regional Climate Change Risk Assessment and Manawatū-Whanganui Climate Change Action Plan.

As a Council we are still in the early stages of our climate journey, but we are committed to continuing to develop upon the positive steps that have already been taken by the Council and wider community, agricultural sector and businesses.

Our ambition is to make practical progress towards positive climate action and support the movement towards a more resilient district and region. While the challenges we will face are daunting and will be felt inequitably across our community, we are also presented an opportunity to move towards an equitable, low carbon, resilient Rangitīkei and act now for the benefit of the future of our district.

Our ambition is to **play our part** in driving **adaptation and mitigation** initiatives both within RDC operations and the wider district, to support a **low carbon, resilient Rangitīkei**

Our ambition is guided by clarity that all climate action will require an integrated approach that considers sustainable outcomes for us as a council and district. We aim to support this ambition through two key themes, and six commitments.



We Play Our Part

Rangitīkei District Council leads the way on climate action, and we hold ourselves accountable.

Our Council commitments

- We will adopt climate as a key lens in major Council strategic and investment **decision making**.
- We will integrate **emissions reduction** initiatives and **adaptation planning** into the way we do business.
- We will develop a plan to **reduce council emissions** and measure progress each year.



Enabling a Low Carbon and Resilient District

Our influence on climate outcomes for the District is maximised and Rangitīkei businesses and communities feel empowered.

Our district level commitments

- We will support and **play our part** in the region to reduce emissions.
- We will actively promote adaptation planning for the district and support initiatives for a **resilient** economy.
- We will leverage climate thinking, building on efforts to date, to create an **inclusive, regenerative, circular** district.

Our District

The Rangitikei District covers a diverse landscape from the sand country of the southern coast to the sprawling hills of the Upper Rangitikei.

With a relatively small (but growing!) population compared to its size, our district is littered with exceptional natural features and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Our diverse terrain and environment supports a wide range of industries to complement our strong primary sector. The agricultural sector, especially sheep/beef and dairy, is a significant contributor to economic outcomes in the district.

While our close connections to the environment make Rangitikei a great place to live, we are also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Our coastal and river townships are vulnerable to rising sea levels and increased flooding. Our roading/transport and infrastructure networks are at risk of disruption and disconnection during severe storms. While efforts are already being made by agricultural communities to understand and adapt, these communities also remain at risk of the effects of climate change – impacting lives and livelihoods. The impacts of climate change are already being seen in Rangitikei, and in just the last five years we have experienced record temperatures and extreme flooding.

The disruptions to our people, economy and natural systems are already occurring and will worsen in the coming decades. The time for action is now, and we must develop the frameworks that will shape our response to the challenges and opportunities created by climate change. Our passionate and motivated community are already taking positive steps towards a resilient future, and we are committed to continuing to support the initiatives that are underway.

Potential Climate Change Impacts for Our Region by 2050

Identified in the Horizons Regional Council Climate Change Risk Assessment*



More severe flooding 7% increase in rainfall depth



Up to 20 more days >25°C per year



Sea level rise of up to 0.3m



Up to 15% more annual rainfall



Average temperature increase of up to 1.25°C

**Increases on 2017 baselines under RCP8.5 projections*

What are we already doing?

LED STREET LIGHTING PROJECT

Streetlights in Rangitikei are definitely lighting the way to a better future!

Traditionally powered by High-Pressure Sodium (HPS) light bulbs, these have been replaced over recent years with LED light bulbs. This means longer lifespan than the traditional bulbs, less replacements and less waste going to landfill. This change has decreased energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and saved in operating costs.

Partnering with Waka Kotahi on this project saw Council finish the replacement bulbs.



Tutaenui Reserve Restoration Project

Community led, collaboration with Council and completed.

The Tutaenui Reserve Restoration Project is a fantastic example of for Community by Community with collaboration from Council. Following the harvesting of pine trees around the reservoir in 2017, the community has led the planting of more than 50,000 native trees, the development of walking and biking tracks and recreation facilities. Not only has a long-term native forest been established which acts as a carbon sink, but the community now has a significant, well used recreation facility close by, which reduces the need to travel to enjoy the outdoors.

The transformation of the Tutaenui Reserve Restoration project, from a raw water source earned a nomination at the 2022 LGNZ Excellence awards.



Our Community

We all have a part to play in managing the future of our district, and we all have an opportunity to be climate leaders within our sphere of influence at home, at work, as business leaders and within our communities.

Through targeted individual and collective action, we can have a huge impact on the future of Rangitikei for generations to come. As a Council, we are committed to continuing to work collaboratively with all partners and stakeholders for the betterment of the whole Rangitikei community. We will also collaborate with other councils to work towards common goals for the wider region.

Partnering with Iwi

We are committed to continuing to work with and support iwi and hapū to achieve a shared vision for the future of the district. Further development of our approach to emissions reduction and adapting to climate change needs to provide for Māori aspirations through our ongoing partnerships with iwi and hapu.

Building on key engagements to-date, including recent engagements around Rangitikei's Community Spatial Plan, Pae Tawhiti Rangitikei Beyond and 2023/24 Annual Plan, and the Manawatū-Wanganui Joint Climate Change Action Plan, our goal is for all iwi groups to be influential across all sectors in our district. Iwi have a unique perspective to offer in our climate journey, incorporating mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) and te ao Māori lens in decision-making processes with guidance from marae, iwi and hapu groups. This will help us to direct climate action in a targeted way to benefit our entire community.

Stakeholders

In preparing our initial Climate Strategy we have identified a number partners and stakeholders as having an important voice in helping us to consider the priorities and actions we need to progress over the coming years, as we reduce carbon emissions and respond to the effects of climate change for our people, communities, and infrastructure.

We welcome you to get in contact if you would like to be involved in our climate response.

Marae, Iwi and Hapu based in Rangitikei District	Iwi; hapū; Ngā Puna Rau o Rangitikei; Te Roopuu Ahi Kaa
Central and Local Government Partners	Horizons Regional Council; Accelerate 25; Waka Kōtahi.
Community & Groups	Rangitikei River Catchment Collective; Rangitikei Environment Group; Scott's Ferry Beach Community Committee; Koitiata Residents Committee.
Business & Industry Groups	Federated Farmers; Manawatū and Whanganui Chambers of Commerce; Whanganui and Partners; Business Rangitikei; Beef + Lamb NZ; DairyNZ.

Our Responsibilities

Concerted effort and effective long-term planning is needed for RDC to meet our obligations and requirements under legislation, as well as contribute to positive outcomes in applying national guidance and policy.

While this is an ever changing and evolving space, some of the key legislation and policy we need to consider are outlined in the table below:

Legislation / Policy	Target / Requirement Set	Relevance to RDC
Te Tiriti o Waitangi (as enshrined into law)	To uphold Te Tiriti in all Māori–Crown engagements and processes. Uphold Māori rights and interests under Te Tiriti and ensure an equitable transition for Māori.	RDC should embed partnership in council-led climate action to uphold Te Tiriti principles and enable whānau, hapū and iwi to determine and deliver climate education, action and resilience at a local level.
Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019	Minister may request climate change adaptation related information from Councils, ‘must comply’ with request. National carbon targets; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All greenhouse gases (excluding biogenic methane) to net zero by 2050. Minimum 10% reduction in biogenic methane emissions by 2030, and 24-47% reduction by 2050. 	RDC will need to understand council’s carbon footprint, set reduction targets, understand climate risks and implement adaptation plans.
Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 2023	Natural hazard information to be provided in Land Information Memoranda.	RDC will need to prepare for changes from July 2025, align with Horizons Regional Council to ensure necessary information is available.
National Adaptation Plan (NAP)	Support all New Zealanders to adapt, live and thrive in a more damaging climate.	RDC must ‘have regard’ to the NAP in plans and should align climate strategies with NAP priorities using published guidance.
National Emissions Reduction Plan (ERP)	Support all New Zealanders to reduce emission from all aspects of the economy; from transport to industry, land use to energy. Local government clearly stated as a key agency in reducing emissions.	RDC must ‘have regard to’ ERP in plans and should align RDC plans with ERP targets.
Resource Management Act 1991	Shall have ‘particular regard’ to effects of climate change listed	RDC must have particular regard to the effects of climate change when exercising functions under the RMA.

There are also a number of recent and emerging government strategies that are relevant included but are not limited to:

- Climate Change Adaptation Bill
- Te Rautaki Para | Aotearoa New Zealand Waste Strategy
- Equitable Transitions Strategy
- Circular Economy & Bioeconomy Strategy (under development)
- National Energy Strategy

Our Action Plan

We will know if our climate strategy is effective by regularly tracking progress against the target outcomes of our Action Plan.

Climate action needs to be dynamic and adaptable to changing economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions, and focused on achieving our aspirations and commitments identified in this strategy.

Actions	Enabling Processes/Actions		Outcome
We Play Our Part			
1 Develop a register of key legislative and regulatory requirements for RDC	1.1	Develop a register that lists key legislative and regulatory requirements associated with climate change (2024).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDC has clearly defined roles and responsibilities and an understanding of RDC’s position within wider national and regional initiatives.
1.2	Continue to monitor developments in legislative requirements and central government guidance (ongoing).		
1.3	Incorporate updates to climate legislative/ policy responsibilities in Executive Leadership Team meeting agendas, and where required develop clear actions with delegation of responsibility (as required).		
2 Integrate climate into long term planning and decision making	2.1	Use the Climate Impact Lens to assess significant projects for their climate risks and opportunities for the 2024-34 Long Term Plan (2023/24).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The climate impacts of major projects are addressed. Staff have a good understanding of climate risks and mitigation opportunities for the Rangitikei. Council understands the climate risks and mitigation opportunities for major projects.
2.2	Provide ongoing training to key staff on climate change (ongoing).		
2.3	Incorporate climate impact considerations into decision making by adding a climate risk and carbon mitigation opportunities section to all Council papers (2024).		
2.4	Involve iwi partners and local stakeholders in development of detailed climate response / actions, and in evolving this climate strategy over time (ongoing).		
2.5	Review resourcing for implementing climate change related initiatives (2024).		
2.6	When reviewing Council’s procurement strategy, incorporate climate change considerations (2024).		

Actions		Enabling Processes/Actions		Outcome
Adaptation				
3	Integrate climate risk and adaptation in our processes	3.1	Advocate for Horizons Regional Council to update district climate hazard maps (ongoing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear understanding of at-risk council assets and effective long-term plans to manage RDC's climate risk. • Investment decisions are made based on a sound evidence base, resulting in best value outcomes for the district. • Insurance and other associated costs rising are minimised through resilient assets and dynamic adaptation.
		3.2	Assess the climate risks associated with the location of any new Council projects (as required).	
		3.3	Review the natural hazards section of the District Plan (2026).	
		3.4	Identify the risk associated with council infrastructure by completing a high-level screening of key climate risks and opportunities (2026).	
		3.5	Work collaboratively with Horizons Regional Council on the re-modelling of the Tūtaenui Stream catchment (2025)	
Mitigation				
4	Develop a Council carbon footprint and set annual monitoring and reduction targets	4.1	Develop a baseline council carbon footprint for emissions from Council operations and establish reduction targets (2024).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear understanding RDC's footprint and opportunities for emissions reductions. • Council has a decarbonisation action plan for reducing council emissions.
		4.2	Continue to incorporate low-emissions vehicles into the council fleet (ongoing).	
		4.3	Explore what central government funding opportunities are available to RDC to support mitigation initiatives (ongoing).	
Enabling a Low Carbon and Resilient District				
5	Support community-led action on climate change	5.1	Share climate change information, progress, case studies and lessons learned with the community (including through RDC website) to build momentum around a collaborative climate response, and community-led actions (2024 then ongoing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our people are empowered to get involved in community-led climate action. • An engaged and proactive community who are actively involved in climate initiatives.
		5.2	Develop a programme or leverage others' work in the District to engage with youth and disadvantaged groups on climate issues (2025).	
		5.3	Explore opportunities to support existing community-led groups that are implementing climate change initiatives (as required).	

Actions		Enabling Processes/Actions		Outcome
6	Partner effectively with iwi groups on climate action and management of natural hazards	6.1	Use existing forums to continue engaging with iwi and hapu groups on climate issues and action (ongoing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our iwi and hapū are able to fulfil their aspirations. • Te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori will be embedded in district-level climate initiatives.
		6.2	Collaborate as required to increase resilience of significant sites and taonga to physical hazards (as required).	
		6.3	Collaborate as required on projects that are focused on climate mitigation (as required).	
7	Encourage innovation and the use of developing technologies in industry and employment	7.1	Building on existing community environmental initiatives, support regional / national initiatives that incentivise rural sector use of sustainable technologies and practices (as required).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rangitikei rural sector is a leader in sustainable and high value primary production. • Empowered and engaged rural communities who are passionate about going beyond compliance to support positive environmental outcomes.
		7.2	Recognise the role renewable energy projects have within the district (e.g., wind and solar) as a key mitigation tool (ongoing).	
		7.3	Implement and support waste reduction initiatives, including for organic waste (ongoing).	
Adaptation				
8	Complete a Climate Change Risk Assessment for the district	8.1	Provide quality, accessible information about hazards, risks, and how the climate is likely to change to local industries to empower Marae, communities and individuals in for better decision-making and community-led adaptation initiatives (ongoing).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear understanding of the most at-risk areas of Rangitikei, and a roadmap to increase resilience. • Clear pathways and an understanding of community risk tolerance established to inform future adaptation actions. • Maladaptation is avoided. An equitable transition to a more resilient district for all members of the community.
		8.2	Undertake a district-wide risk assessment to understand the risks impacting our communities (2025).	
		8.3	Engage with communities and businesses to improve understanding of climate risks and adaptation planning in the district (ongoing).	
		8.4	Support rural communities to become resilient to extreme and changing weather patterns (ongoing).	
		8.5	Work with at-risk communities to develop adaptation plans in line with national and international guidance and best practice (beginning in 2025).	

Actions	Enabling Processes/Actions		Outcome
Mitigation			
<p>9</p> <p>Develop a carbon footprint for the district</p>	9.1	Develop a community carbon footprint for activities within the district (2027).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rangitikei District is proactively contributing to national and regional emissions reduction ambitions. • Businesses are empowered to assess their own emissions and opportunities for reductions.
9.2	Explore if a district emissions reduction target should be set in alignment with national emissions reduction initiatives following the development of a community carbon footprint (2027).		
9.3	Assess mode shift opportunities to expand walking, cycling and public transport provision within and between towns; including infrastructure for alternative fuels (ongoing).		
9.4	Support community groups and businesses in their own emissions reduction journeys through the provision of information (ongoing).		