



# International climate adaptation context

## National Adaptation Plan supplement

As a signatory to international agreements, Australia is committed to meeting global obligations to address climate change. Key agreements include the:

- Paris Agreement with its global goal on adaptation
- Sustainable Development Goals
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

## Paris Agreement adaptation goal

Adaptation is one of the 3 long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, along with mitigation and finance. Article 7 of the Paris Agreement sets a global adaptation goal, and adaptation actions which signatories can undertake. The global goal on adaptation is to:

- enhance adaptive capacity
- strengthen resilience
- reduce vulnerability to climate change.

At the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Dubai in November 2023, Parties to the Paris Agreement agreed to the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience (the framework) to assess progress towards the global goal on adaptation. The framework included both thematic and process targets.

The framework targets are a guide for Parties to undertake adaptation action specific to their circumstances. Adaptation process targets include:

- **Impact, vulnerability and risk assessment:** By 2030, all Parties have conducted up-to-date assessments of climate hazards, climate change impacts and exposure to risks and vulnerabilities. By 2030, they have used the outcomes of these assessments to inform their formulation of national adaptation plans, policy instruments, and planning processes and/or strategies. By 2027, all Parties

have established multi-hazard early warning systems, climate information services for risk reduction, and systematic observation to support improved climate-related data, information and services.

- **Planning:** By 2030, all Parties have in place country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent national adaptation plans, policy instruments, and planning processes and/or strategies. As appropriate, these cover ecosystems, sectors, people and vulnerable communities, and have mainstreamed adaptation in all relevant strategies and plans.
- **Implementation:** By 2030, all Parties have progressed in implementing their national adaptation plans, policies and strategies. As a result, they have reduced the social and economic impacts of the key climate hazards identified in the assessments referred to in the framework.
- **Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL):** By 2030, all Parties have designed, established and operationalised a system for MEL for their national adaptation efforts. By 2030, they have built the required institutional capacity to fully implement their MEL system.

While approaches differ for adaptation MEL systems, there are common challenges associated with assessing the effectiveness of adaptation policy and action. These include dealing with uncertainty and long timescales, attribution of outcomes to specific policy drivers or adaptation measures, identifying appropriate measures for success, and ensuring monitoring and evaluation leads to learning and informs future decision-making (UNFCCC 2023).

The United Nations Environment Programme reports that 171 countries (87%) now have at least one national adaptation policy, strategy or plan (UNEP 2024). Canada and New Zealand have published their first plans. Other countries such as Germany and the United Kingdom have released their third iterations. The National Adaptation Plan replaces Australia's National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021–2025.

## Framework for disaster risk reduction

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 forms another part of the international context for climate adaptation (UNFCCC 2017). It provides a roadmap setting out how we make communities safer and more resilient, and drives international disaster risk reduction action.

Australia is a party to the Sendai Framework, and the National Emergency Management Agency leads the implementation of the Sendai Framework within Australia. The National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework is currently the nationally agreed policy for implementing the Sendai framework in Australia, and its implementation is overseen by the National Emergency Management Ministers' Meeting. The relationship between climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and resilience are described further in Box 1.

Aligning adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction efforts can result in significant benefits. Conversely, risks arise when they are not aligned. The IPCC and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) both highlight the need for integrated, coordinated climate policy that can harness co-benefits, avoid maladaptation, incentivise on-ground action, and lead to efficient,

effective policies. By integrating adaptation measures into disaster recovery, communities are better protected against the increasing frequency and intensity of climate-related hazards.

**Box 1: Adaptation and resilience**

The terms ‘adaptation’ and ‘resilience’ are sometimes used interchangeably, but they have distinct meanings.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), *adaptation* is the process of adjusting to actual or expected climate change and its effects.

Meanwhile, the IPCC defines *resilience* as follows:

The capacity of social, economic and ecosystems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure as well as biodiversity in case of ecosystems while also maintaining the capacity for adaptation, learning and transformation (IPCC 2022, p. 7).

From a different lens, a common disaster risk reduction definition of *resilience* incorporates this concept of maintaining function, but includes the ability to adapt; defining *resilience* as follows:

‘The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions’ (UNDRR 2009).

The government is also delivering international measures to support countries in the Indo–Pacific region to adapt to the effects of climate change. For example, Australia's [international development policy](#) will guide how our development program supports a peaceful, stable, and prosperous future for Australia and our region. The policy is underpinned by a [performance and delivery framework](#) that will drive key reforms and improve transparency and accountability. The policy is also informed by the [Development Finance Review](#) that has considered how financing instruments can maximise the impact of our support to help countries in our region achieve their development goals, including climate change and gender equality.

## Regional context for defence and national security

Regional security and stability are important to our national security. Climate change impacts (such as rising sea levels) will result in the displacement of individuals and communities. They will also result in second-order impacts to regional stability (such as resource scarcity and weakened essential service provision) at varying degrees depending on each nation’s ability to adapt.

As outlined in the [2024 National Defence Strategy](#), the effects of climate change are amplifying existing stressors across the region, such as poverty, food security, and cross-border migration and

displacement. The increasing frequency of climate events will place higher demands on the Australian Defence Force for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

## References

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