



CORPORATE POLICY STATEMENT NO. 26

CLIMATE ACTION

August 2023

1. OBJECTIVE

To provide guidance on the role of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the department) in contributing to whole-of-government action on climate change.

2. SCOPE

This policy outlines how the department is, and will continue to, contribute to action on climate change as part of a whole-of-government response. In determining its contribution, the department will consider its statutory responsibilities and the agreed actions under the [Western Australian Climate Policy 2020](#) (WA Climate Policy) and other subsidiary documents.

3. CONTEXT

In March 2021, the WA Government established a Climate Action portfolio to support commitments around climate change, ensuring a timely and coordinated transition to net zero emissions by 2050 and enhanced climate resilience for the State.

The Minister for Climate Action, with support from a Ministerial Taskforce and through the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER), is leading the Government's legislative response and policy settings for climate action.

The primary policy for climate action in Western Australia is the WA Climate Policy. It outlines the plan for a climate-resilient and prosperous low-carbon future as part of a coordinated and collaborative approach across government, business, industry and community.

Across the WA Government there has been significant progress and action in response to climate change, including:

- **Climate change legislation** to create a framework for reducing emissions and responding to climate change is expected to be introduced into Parliament in 2023.
- **Climate Adaptation Strategy** and a collaborative Climate Adaption Action Plan to help identify and manage climate impacts and enhance climate resilience. The Strategy was released in July 2023.
- **Sectoral Emissions Reduction Strategies (SERS)** to transition the economy to net zero emissions by providing credible emissions reduction pathways for the key economic sectors are expected to be announced by the end of 2023.

- **Climate Risk Capability Initiative** was established in September 2022 to support public sector agencies to better understand climate risk and improve their climate change adaptation practices. Interim climate change risk management guidelines were released in June 2022.

All areas of the department have a role in supporting and contributing to action on climate change. The implications are broad, from adapting the ways the department manages land, water, biodiversity and attractions, to how it sites and designs infrastructure, to managing fleet emissions and energy consumption of buildings, and engaging with our joint management and cooperative management partners and the broader community.

4. LEGISLATION

While the legislation administered by the department listed below does not specifically identify climate change, the department has responsibilities to consider the long-term and short-term implications of climate change to its business.

- *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*;
- *Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority Act 1998*;
- *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984*;
- *Rottneest Island Authority Act 1987*;
- *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006*; and
- *Zoological Parks Authority Act 2001*.

5. POLICY

The department will:

- 5.1 Engage with, support and contribute to a whole-of-government approach to action on climate change, and facilitate engagement of staff in climate initiatives within the department and across government.
- 5.2 Consider climate change risks, vulnerabilities and impacts when planning, undertaking and reviewing work decisions across the breadth of the department's business areas.
- 5.3 Assess and continue to adapt and improve the way the department manages the land, water, biodiversity and attractions to account for existing and projected impacts of climate change.
- 5.4 Undertake science and research to support the conservation of biodiversity and management of land, water, biodiversity and attractions in different climate scenarios.
- 5.5 Incorporate environmental sustainability and climate resilience principles into planning, design and budgeting for new infrastructure, or upgrades.
- 5.6 Adopt more efficient and effective technologies to lower emissions, especially in long-term or high-emitting contexts like built infrastructure and fleet.
- 5.7 Engage with our joint management and cooperative management partners and the broader community in relation to climate action.

6. STANDARDS

The department's contribution to climate action will support the WA Climate Policy and other whole-of-government climate action commitments and priorities including climate change legislation.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Western Australia achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- Western Australian Government achieving the 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of 80 per cent below 2020 levels.
- [Climate Change Risk Management Guide \(interim\)](#) and assessment [tool](#).
- [Climate Adaptation Strategy](#).
- [Climate Resilient WA: Directions for the State's Climate Adaptation Strategy](#).
- [State Electric Vehicle Strategy for Western Australia](#).
- [Shaping Western Australia's low-carbon future](#).
- [Climate Science Initiative](#).
- Commonwealth State Climate Change Engagement Strategy.

7. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The department will:

- 7.1 Be represented (by the Director General or delegate) on the Climate Action and Environment Portfolio Oversight Group.
- 7.2 Be represented (by the Director Policy and Legislation or delegate) on the Climate Action Senior Officers Group.
- 7.3 Convene an internal Climate Action Working Group made up of representatives of all divisions and statutory authorities of the department, that meets regularly to share information and provide an avenue for collaboration and coordination of matters related to climate action.
- 7.4 Establish a senior position (Senior Policy Officer) to lead and coordinate the department's response to climate action. The Senior Policy Officer will provide support to the Climate Action Working Group to maintain information sharing on climate related projects, plans and initiatives being undertaken across the department.
- 7.5 Implement the following departmental actions under the WA Climate Policy:
 - Carbon for Conservation Initiative.
 - Restoration of landscapes under Plan for Our Parks.
 - Enhanced Prescribed Burning Program.
 - Enhanced resilience to bushfire risk (with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services).

These actions represent significant opportunities for the department to contribute to the Government's goal to transition the WA economy to net zero emissions and enhance resilience to climate change.

7.6 Implement the following departmental actions under the *Climate Adaptation Strategy Action Plan*:

- Support climate adaptation research on biodiversity and identify on-ground actions to enhance climate resilience.
- Manage the south-west native forests through an adaptive, evidence-based approach that prioritises biodiversity, forest health and resilience.
- Develop a Sectoral Adaptation Plan for the Natural Environment.
- Investigate climate adaptation practices currently being delivered through the Aboriginal Ranger Program funded groups and identify future opportunities.

These actions represent the department's commitment to continue to apply an adaptive management approach to its business that contributes to building a climate resilient future.

7.7 Contribute to the SERS for the Land Use sector and provide advice on policy matters for other sectors as required. The delivery of support to DWER contributes to achieving Government's goal to transition the economy to a prosperous, low-carbon future.

7.8 Develop an Emissions Reduction Plan for the department focused on scope 1 and 2 emissions, with interim targets to support the Government to achieve its own emission reduction targets of 80 per cent below 2020 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050.

7.9 Undertake a first-pass Climate Risk Assessment to clarify the implications of climate change on the department's ability to meet its strategic objectives. This supports implementation of the whole-of-government risk framework to monitor, assess and report on implications of climate change on the State's finances, infrastructure, physical assets and service delivery.

7.10 When reviewing the department's key documents (Corporate policies and guidelines) consider climate action as required.

8. CUSTODIAN

The custodian of this policy is the Director General.

9. PUBLICATION

This policy will be made available on the department's internet and intranet.

10. KEY WORDS

Climate action, climate change, climate resilience, climate adaptation, emissions reductions

11. REVIEW

This policy will have its initial review no later than two years after approval.

12. APPROVAL

Approved by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SS', written over a faint, illegible background.

Stuart Smith
DIRECTOR GENERAL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Date: 8 August 2023