



Department of Planning and Environment

MAKING COMMUNITIES MORE RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CRCC Outcome Evaluation – Management Response

December 2023



Published by NSW Department of Planning and Environment

environment.nsw.gov.au

Title: CRCC Outcome Evaluation – Management Response

ISBN: 978-1-923132-76-4

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning and Environment 2023. You may copy, distribute, display, download and otherwise freely deal with this publication for any purpose, provided that you attribute the Department of Planning and Environment as the owner. However, you must obtain permission if you wish to charge others for access to the publication (other than at cost); include the publication in advertising or a product for sale; modify the publication; or republish the publication on a website. You may freely link to the publication on a departmental website.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (Dec 2023) and may not be accurate, current or complete. The State of New South Wales (including the NSW Department of Planning and Environment), the author and the publisher take no responsibility, and will accept no liability, for the accuracy, currency, reliability or correctness of any information included in the document (including material provided by third parties). Readers should make their own inquiries and rely on their own advice when making decisions related to material contained in this publication.

Executive summary

The Making Communities More Resilient to Climate Change (CRCC) Program has a primary goal of improving the resilience of communities, governments, and businesses to climate change by delivering climate information, climate risk and adaptation support, and financial support.

The CRCC Program was delivered through a partnership between two Departmental Directorates - Climate and Atmospheric Science, and Climate Resilience and Net Zero Emissions (renamed Climate Adaptation Land Sector and Opportunities in 2021).

The CRCC Program is made up of 11 projects that have been delivered under three streams - Tools and Information, Adaptation Support, and Funding. Delivery was guided by the principles of *'we do the right science'*, *'we transform this into the right information'*, *'we provide this to the right people'*, *'we provide it at the right time'* and *'we provide it in the right format'*.

The effectiveness of the CRCC Program in achieving its intended outcomes, and the extent to which the CRCC Program principles were applied through the projects, were assessed by an independent Outcomes Evaluation conducted by Clear Horizon (2023). This evaluation identified that the CRCC Program contributed to its overarching outcome of *'government, businesses, households, and the community manage risks posed by climate change and extreme weather events'* by establishing central foundations for climate risk management. More specifically, the evaluation identified:

- the development and dissemination of tools, information, and support contributed to building knowledge and capability for climate risk management and to instances of climate risk becoming better embedded into decision-making
- through the Climate Risk Ready project and the development of the Climate Risk & Resilience Strategic Roadmap, the CRCC Program contributed to improving the high-level authorising environment and governance for climate risk management, which may contribute to more widespread, strategic, and sustainable changes in climate risk management in the future
- through the provision of funding to councils and community groups, the CRCC Program facilitated the implementation of 53 on-ground projects to address climate risk.

Other (unintended) achievements of the CRCC Program include culturally safe work practices leading to increased practice of culture on Country and providing support for the development of Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosure Statements.

Overall, the evaluation recommended only 7 areas of improvement for the CRCC Program (Table 1). The majority of recommendations relate to the lack of a coordinated, strategic approach to the CRCC Program design and delivery, which consequently limited the scale and the sustainability of achievements. These recommendations are being addressed as part of the Department's delivery of the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (the Strategy). The Strategy capitalises on, and extends the outputs of the CRCC Program. Governance and program co-ordination have been of particular focus in the establishment of projects under the Strategy. As such, the Department has fully accepted 6 recommendations, and has noted one recommendation of the Outcomes Evaluation. Table 2 outlines the management response to each evaluation recommendation.

Table 1 Summary of recommendations and program team management response

Recommendations	Actioned or Accepted	Partly accepted	Not accepted
7	6	0	1 (noted)

Management response to evaluation recommendations

Table 2 Evaluation findings and response

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response	Action/Explanation	Responsible party (proposed)	Action contributors	Timing
1.	<p>Actively map and engage end-users in the strategic design, delivery, and evaluation of climate adaptation projects.</p> <p>The evaluation found the CRCC projects did not have a sufficiently detailed and documented description of their target end-users and associated needs. This limited the robustness of the evaluation of the effectiveness of each of the projects, as evidence of intended and actual use of information was either limited or absent. By actively mapping and engaging end-users throughout the design, delivery and evaluation of projects, there is greater opportunity to ensure the projects are effectively influencing intended outcomes (i.e., changes in knowledge, skills, behaviour and/or decision-making as opposed to just 'reach'), and that end-users are engaged in informing the continuous improvement of projects throughout delivery.</p>	Accepted	<p>There are several actions under the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy that depend on input from end-users. For example, newly appointed Climate Change Risk Officers and Knowledge Brokers are actively engaging with end-users from all NSW Government clusters to identify their needs for developing climate change risks and opportunity assessments, and subsequent action plans. This is informing future program design and delivery (e.g. update to Climate Risk Ready Course training).</p> <p>Actions 7 and 8 NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy will create human centric strategic communication interventions, across multiple stakeholder audiences with different maturities. Monitoring and evaluation data will be collected throughout program delivery, to ensure products are fit for purpose, and are improved and refined in line with stakeholder needs.</p> <p>For the release of latest climate projections (from the *NARClIM 2.0 project), end users and stakeholders are being engaged (early) through an inter-jurisdictional steering committee, a technical working group and public facing activities outlined in a bespoke communications plan.</p> <p>* NSW and Australian Regional Climate Modelling (NARClIM) is a NSW Government led initiative that generates detailed climate projections and data for NSW</p>	Executive sponsors of Adaptation Strategy.	Senior managers who put forward project plans for endorsement and Action Control Groups who endorse project plans	2023/2024 financial year, in line with completion of evaluation plan

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response	Action/Explanation	Responsible party (proposed)	Action contributors	Timing
2.	<p>Ensure strategic whole-of-Program governance and coordination is facilitating collaboration across projects and departments for greater impact.</p> <p>The evaluation found that while the individual projects delivered important foundational work for climate risk management, the absence of strategic Program-level governance and coordination limited collaboration across the projects and the associated impact of these projects. Strategic Program-level governance and coordination should focus on ensuring consistency, alignment and integration of project design and delivery across departments (including in end-user and stakeholder mapping and engagement as outlined in Recommendation 1). This will enable the whole-of-program level outcomes to be achieved.</p>	Accepted	<p>Governance, under the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, includes a Steering Committee, Action Co-ordination Board and several Action Control Groups. These bodies are attended by the relevant Executive Directors (CC&S and SEI) and senior officers from Climate and Atmospheric Science (CAS), Climate Adaptation and Land Sector Opportunities (CALSO) and Climate Change and Sustainability Policy (CCSP) to specifically co-ordinate and collaborate on activities.</p> <p>Project charters for each action under the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy identify interlinkages and dependencies among actions to avoid duplication and to identify opportunities to leverage action outputs.</p> <p>Collaboration is further strengthened through the concept of an 'Adaptation One Team', whereby all delivery partners communicate informally through instant messaging platforms. Regular project team meetings are also attended by representatives of CAS, CALSO and CCSP, where appropriate.</p>	Executive sponsors of the Adaptation Strategy	Program teams, Action Control Groups and Action Coordination Board	Completed

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response	Action/Explanation	Responsible party (proposed)	Action contributors	Timing
3.	<p>Establish robust project and Program-level MERI.</p> <p>The ability of the evaluation to make robust judgements of effectiveness was limited by both a lack of routine project and Program level monitoring data, and the ability of project and Program staff to identify sources or stakeholders to fill these data gaps at the point of the evaluation. Project-level MERI should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be integrated into project planning and delivery as part of best practice project management • primarily focus on capturing and using information to inform continuous learning and adaptation to ensure projects are effective and responsive • focus on enabling the coordination and integration of projects to leverage and demonstrate Program-level outcomes and impacts. 	Accepted	<p>This recommendation is being addressed through the development of an overarching MERI Plan, Program Logic and Data Governance for the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. The overarching instruments will be informed by a series of 'mini-program logics' for each action of the strategy. A mini program logic and evaluation plan has already been developed for the projects being delivered under Actions 3 and 5 of the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, while mini-program logics and evaluation plans are in development for the remainder.</p> <p>A dedicated data lead will be appointed to coordinate and process data from across the projects being delivered for the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy. The data lead will put structures in place to align and provide input to the Climate Change Fund resilience MERI.</p>	<p>Director Climate Adaptation, Land Sector Opportunities</p> <p>Director Climate Change and Sustainability Policy</p> <p>Director Climate and Atmospheric Science</p>	Program Leads	2023/2024 financial year

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response	Action/Explanation	Responsible party (proposed)	Action contributors	Timing
4.	<p>Deliver targeted communications and engagement activities to extend the reach and influence of the AdaptNSW Website and Forums.</p> <p>The evaluation found that the AdaptNSW Website and the Forums/Webinars were key mechanisms for disseminating climate adaptation information to stakeholders, and that there are opportunities to extend their reach and influence. For the Forums/Webinars, this is especially relevant to regional stakeholders. Strategic and targeted communications and engagement activities should be designed and delivered to respond to specific end-user needs (see Recommendation 1) to increase the reach, use and influence of the AdaptNSW Website and Forums/Webinars (these should also have corresponding MERI plans, as outlined in Recommendation 3). The evaluation surfaced a range of mechanisms that could be considered, including digital campaigns, partnership approaches and knowledge brokering arrangements (tailoring messaging to audience skill and knowledge).</p>	Accepted	<p>The NSW Government is developing a strategic customer centric roadmap to uplift its current climate data and information service. The roadmap will leverage contemporary and international best practices for presenting, accessing, and building capacity in the use of climate data information.</p> <p>Under the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy Action 8, a communications and engagement strategy will be developed. This will complement the mini program logics and mini-MERI, and ensure that all stakeholders can access, analyse and act on the adaptation tools and information provided.</p> <p>The NSW Government has also developed a specific communications plan, for the release of the latest climate projections (under the *NARClIM 2.0 project). This specific plan defines targeted communications activities to disseminating and making climate projections readily accessible.</p> <p>A team of Knowledge Brokers has been appointed to help translate climate science into accessible information and resources for people with exposure to climate change risks and all NSW stakeholders.</p> <p>* NSW and Australian Regional Climate Modelling (NARClIM) is a NSW Government led initiative that generates detailed climate projections and data for NSW</p>	<p>Director Climate Adaptation, Land Sector Opportunities</p> <p>Director Climate and Atmospheric Science</p>	Program teams working on climate data and information services	end 2024 calendar year

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response	Action/Explanation	Responsible party (proposed)	Action contributors	Timing
5.	<p>Expand training and capability building initiatives to engage target end-users with different levels of skill and climate risk management maturity.</p> <p>The evaluation found the training and capability initiatives were integral to supporting the uptake of the tools and information generated through the Program. Expanding these initiatives to engage a range of end-users with different levels of skill and maturity in climate risk management (informed by active engagement of end-users as outlined in Recommendation 1) would enhance the impact of both these initiatives and the tools and information products they support.</p>	Accepted	<p>Since the release of the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, each NSW Government cluster has appointed a Climate Change Risk Officer (CCRO). The CCROs are tasked with embedding climate change risk management into government decision-making for their cluster, which includes building capacity and capability of cluster staff.</p> <p>Under pillar 4 of the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, senior executives across all government portfolios participated in Executive Climate Masterclasses held in November 2022 (59 participants) and October 2023 (72 participants). Cohort 5 and 6 of the Climate Risk Ready Course is currently progressing with approximately 60 participants. The Office of Environment and Climate Change (OECC) offered subsidised places to each cluster (i.e. CCRO and nominated staff). OECC, in partnership with NSW Treasury, are developing capability building initiatives to support the requirement for NSW public sector entities to provide climate-related financial disclosures in their annual reports from the 2023-24 financial year.</p>	Director Climate Adaptation, Land Sector Opportunities	Program teams and knowledge brokers working on capacity building activities to embed climate change risk and adaptation across Government	2023/2024

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response	Action/Explanation	Responsible party (proposed)	Action contributors	Timing
6.	<p>Seek opportunities to further leverage the Enabling Regional Adaptation reports.</p> <p>The evaluation found the Enabling Regional Adaptation reports to be robust products for identifying priorities for climate risk adaption within target NSW regions, but there was limited evidence that these had been implemented. Further work should be undertaken to understand how these products can be further leveraged to facilitate regional climate adaption activities and outcomes.</p>	Accepted	The Enabling Adaptation Reports will be used to inform management/adaptation options that address the climate risks identified by the Climate Change Risk and Opportunity Assessment, and help prioritise actions and pathways for adaptation under the Adaptation Action Plans of the NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.	Director Climate Adaptation, Land Sector Opportunities	Program Leads	2023/2024 2029/2030 to align with reporting cycles
7.	<p>Deliver strategic funding programs for climate risk adaptation across NSW.</p> <p>The achievements of the IRCC grant program demonstrated a continued need for funding support for councils and communities to support climate risk adaption, and an opportunity for funding mechanisms to be more strategic and aligned to stakeholder needs. The design of the climate adaptation funding mechanisms should accommodate lower-capability councils and communities to respond to climate change risks, and be informed by the staff, resource and capability barriers of these councils and communities, as well as their climate adaption needs (informed by active engagement with end-users as outlined in Recommendation 1).</p>	Noted	<p>The NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy requires the NSW Government to publish an Adaptation Action Plan at least every 5 years. Consideration will be given to including support for councils and communities to continue climate risk adaptation, and acceleration through grants, in the Plan.</p> <p>The Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 (Bill) establishes an adaptation objective that NSW is more resilient to a changing climate. The Bill also establishes the Net Zero Commission which will provide advice to the Minister of the implementation of the adaptation objective. It is expected that the Net Zero Commission will provide advice on strategic funding across Government for climate adaptation programs across NSW.</p>	Climate Change Adaptation Steering Committee	Program Leads	2023/2024 2029/2030 to align with release of Adaptation Action Plan