

CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY — RELEASE

Statement by Minister for Climate Action

MRR.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Climate Action) [1.21 pm]: On 25 July 2023, I announced the release of Western Australia’s comprehensive climate adaptation strategy. The strategy underscores this government’s commitment to ensuring Western Australia’s communities, along with the environment and the economy, are resilient and adapt to climate change. Western Australia is already experiencing the impacts of climate change, with vulnerable communities most affected. The south west of our state is becoming hotter and dryer with increased heatwaves and bushfire risk. At the same time, we are witnessing extreme weather events, such as record flooding in the Kimberley and cyclones making landfall in the midwest.

The Cook government is committed to working with all sectors of the economy to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. We have set ambitious targets for reducing state government emissions and have made substantial investments in green energy infrastructure to achieve this goal, as well as investing in streamlined approvals. Reducing emissions is only part of the story. The latest climate science demonstrates that even with decisive global action to reduce emissions, further climate change impacts are unavoidable.

Western Australia’s first climate adaptation strategy was developed in consultation with Aboriginal organisations, state and local governments, business peak bodies, community organisations and researchers. The strategy identifies four directions to support and accelerate climate adaptation across the state. These include, firstly, produce and communicate credible climate information and resources; secondly, build public sector climate capability and strengthen accountability; thirdly, enhance sector-wide and community partnerships to unite and coordinate action; and, fourthly, empower and support the climate resilience of Aboriginal people. To achieve these directions, the government has committed to 37 priority actions, supported by almost \$40 million allocated in the 2023–24 state budget. This includes expanding the climate science initiative, developing adaptation plans for key sectors of the economy and designing a new fund to empower Aboriginal communities to become more climate resilient.

The state government’s climate change legislation, to be introduced to Parliament this year, will create statutory requirements for adaptation planning, further ensuring the state’s climate resilience into the future. Through this strategy and the new legislation, the government will continue to work closely with communities, businesses and local government to support decision-making that strengthens resilience. We all have a part to play in climate adaptation. Through strong government leadership and collaboration, we will ensure that our state is well prepared for the challenges ahead and will continue to thrive in the face of a changing climate.