



Defending Sydney



Sydney is at a crossroads. We're facing a housing crisis and climate crisis. Successfully solving the housing crisis will be judged on whether more or less people are at risk of natural disasters and their financial impacts.

- Sam Kernaghan, Director, Resilience Program at Committee for Sydney

Key challenges

- Sydney's population and temperatures are rising concurrently, raising climate-related risk.
- More frequent flooding is raising insurance premiums and recovery costs.
- Land use planning is disconnected from rapidly changing natural hazard and climate risk data.
- Assets and infrastructure are not designed or funded to withstand future hazard risk.
- Current risk transparency and governance arrangements are unfit for a changing climate.

To confront these challenges, and meet the urgency of the housing crisis, we must strengthen our capacity to act before climate risk becomes a disaster. Solutions include:



Place-based adaptive planning

We propose a Dutch approach, adopted by various countries to help policymakers and communities understand risk tolerance across the community, infrastructure providers, and with insurers and banks.



Climate responsive land use planning

We propose following examples from cities such as New York (climate risk zones), and Norfolk, Virginia (Vision 2100 Land Use Plan). These worked with communities to create land use planning tools, signal changing risk and enable relocation.



Collaborative decision making

This is essential to ensure business and community continuity amidst natural disasters. It engages communities in decision making about the future of their place, and tests their willingness to live with those risks against other available options.



Recommendations

This report proposes 11 recommendations and 38 specific actions for government and businesses to proactively build adaptive capacity with the community. They aim to:



Empower the Six Cities Region Plan and City Plans

By embedding a high and medium climate overlay that considers projected future climate risk and focuses future urban growth in infill areas, close to transport and social infrastructure.



Anchor the State Disaster Mitigation Plan

By enabling a consistent risk tolerance methodology across communities, service providers and Government; and convening infrastructure providers to prioritise investment.



Enable the sub-regional Disaster Adaption Plans

By funding the delivery of deep community engagement across Greater Sydney to inform adaptive pathways and manage risk in the short and long term.



Drive risk transparency

By requiring and funding mandatory climate risk assessments in flood modelling updates and update quarterly rates notifications to include all hazard exposure.



Convene the financial services sector

Particularly insurers and banks to share data and insights in planning for climate and natural hazard risk.

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