

Hunter and Central Coast Councils Resilience and Climate Change IP&R Review 2025



What is IP&R?

The [Integrated Planning and Reporting \(IP&R\)](#) framework sets the long-term strategic direction for councils, as well as identifying medium- and short-term programs and projects to achieve strategic aspirations. The main components of the IP&R framework are the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Delivery Program (DP), Operational Plan (OP), Resourcing Strategy and Annual Report. All councils in NSW use the IP&R framework for Local Government to guide their planning and reporting activities.

Why should resilience be included in IP&R?

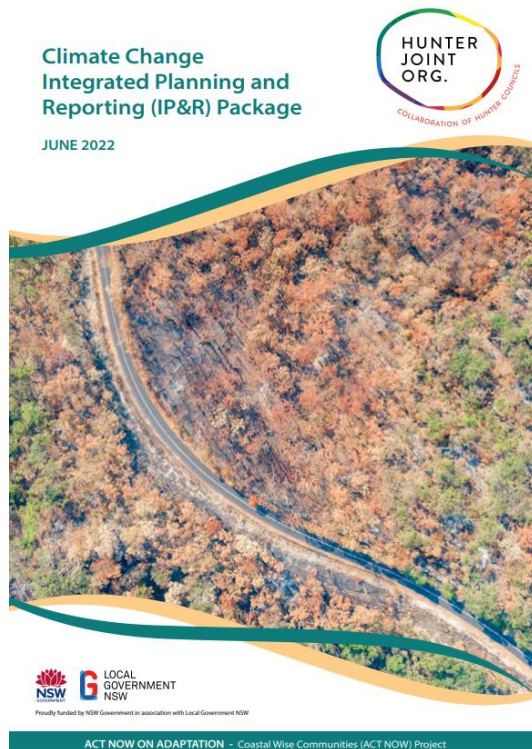
While building resilience is the responsibility of all levels of government, councils in particular have a key role in reducing risk from natural hazards. Communities rely on council assets and services and are impacted when critical infrastructure is damaged or disrupted by extreme weather events. As the first point of contact for the community, councils play a key role in advocating to higher levels of government and representing their communities. Local government also has the ability to adapt planning, asset management and operations to natural hazard risk. It is essential that resilience is appropriately considered in councils' strategic planning and IP&R documents and in the context of councils' overall commitments, enabling prioritisation and allocation of resources. By ensuring important topics such as resilience are included in the key IP&R documents it is expected that key themes will also flow through to Asset Management Plans, Resourcing Strategies, Community Engagement Plans and other relevant documents as needed.

Hunter JO's Climate Change and Resilience IP&R Support Packages

Hunter JO's [Climate Change](#) and [Resilience](#) IP&R Support Packages aim to support Councils' and their communities' climate change and resilience journeys by providing user friendly, practical tools and templates to embed adaptation and resilience as business as usual through the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) process and the development of their Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The two IP&R Packages are intended to be used concurrently – the Resilience IP&R Support Package takes a more holistic approach to overall resilience, while the Climate Change IP&R Package focuses on specific strategies and actions councils can use on their climate change journey.

Councils were encouraged to adapt the templates from both IP&R packages to suit their individual LGA needs, so it can be difficult to determine explicitly where and how they are being utilised across the region.



Council IP&R Review - Methodology

To assess how councils are addressing climate adaptation and resilience in their IP&R using the Climate Change and Resilience IP&R resources, Hunter JO completed a review and comparative assessment of the 2022-2026 and 2025-2029 IP&R documentation for the 11 member councils including Central Coast Council as listed below:

- Cessnock City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Maitland City Council
- MidCoast Council
- Muswellbrook Shire Council
- City of Newcastle
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council
- Central Coast Council

The review was based around the six focus areas of councils' shared role in resilience and the commitment level framework as outlined in the Resilience and Climate Change IP&R Packages.

 Organisational Resilience This relates to resilience considerations in organisational culture, governance structure, leadership models, evidence-based decision making, risk management frameworks, resilience assessments, partnerships and collaborations, strategy alignment, investment / resourcing models, and business continuity planning.	 Resilience through Land Use Planning Councils have responsibilities as a planning authority to build disaster resilience and wellbeing for communities, and minimise losses due to disasters in areas of new development. This area relates specifically to Council's land use planning section and how resilience is considered and incorporated into planning and development of land.	 Infrastructure Resilience Councils are responsible for assets, including critical infrastructure, providing communities with roads, buildings, water supply, sewer networks and stormwater drains. This area relates to resilient infrastructure, supporting resilience in the community.
 Emergency Management Council has defined roles and responsibilities in emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery operations under the State Emergency and Rescue Management Act 1989 (SERM Act) and associated Emergency Management Plans (EMPLANS).	 Resilience in Services Councils provide services, including critical services, to meet the needs and priorities of local communities. These vary between Councils and can include waste collection, recycling, water supply, wastewater management, road maintenance, and residential care. This area relates to resilience in the services provided, supporting a resilient community.	 Community Resilience This area relates to Councils' role in building resilience with and through the community it serves.

	LEADING	MOTIVATED	COMMITTED	INFORMED*
DESCRIPTORS	Thought Leaders Innovators Influencers Active Drivers Change Agents	Best Practice Early Adopters Contributors Collaborators Active Participants	Opportunistic Participants Supporters Complying	Observers Compliance-based Participants *Informed commitment level created for the purpose of this review

Councils shared role in resilience and Commitment level framework, Climate Change and Resilience IP&R Packages

The council IP&R documents analysed and reviewed were:

- Community Strategic Plan (CSP)
- Delivery Program (DP)
- Operational Plan (OP)

Each of the councils' documents for 2022-2026 and 2025-2029 were analysed looking at specific language, actions and deliverables to correlate to the six focus areas. Upon completion, each council was assessed to determine their commitment level; informed, committed, motivated or leading. It should be noted that this was a qualitative assessment of councils' commitment level of resilience.

By comparing the 2022-2026 documents (completed prior to the release of the Resilience IP&R Package) to the 2025-2029 documents (completed after the release of the Resilience IP&R Package), progress and improvements can be identified in how disaster resilience and adaptation actions have been embedded and how councils' may have used and integrated concepts from the IP&R support packages.

Council IP&R Review - Results

2022-2026

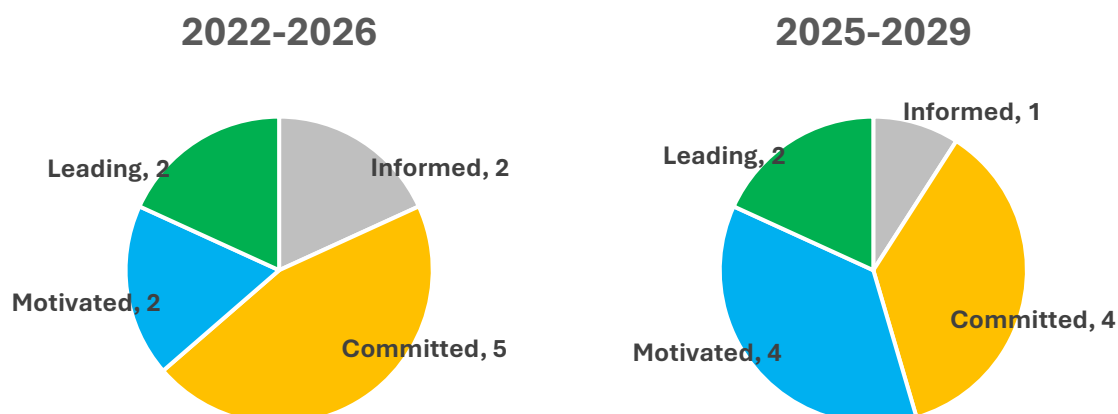
A review of the 2022-2026 IP&R documents identified 2 out of 11 (18%) councils were ranked as informed, 5 out of 11 as committed (46%), 2 out of 11 councils motivated (18%) and 2 out of 11 councils leading (18%).

2025-2029

A review of the 2025-2029 IP&R documents identified 1 out of 11 (9%) councils were ranked as informed, 4 out of 11 as committed (37%), 4 out of 11 councils motivated (36%) and 2 out of 11 councils leading (18%).

Comparison

The review identified that 6 out of 11 councils (55%) improved their integration of climate change and resilience between 2022-2026 and 2025-2029, and all councils in the region either maintained or increased their commitment level.



Additional use of the IP&R Packages

Anecdotally, Hunter JO has been made aware of a range of instances where the Climate Change and Resilience IP&R Packages have been used beyond the Hunter Region. Examples of this include:

- Community groups using objectives and strategies from the IP&R Packages to lobby councils to include climate change and net zero objectives
- Comments from councils suggesting that because the IP&R Packages are developed by a third party, they are more influential and effective evidence towards driving change within council
- Councils using concepts from the IP&R Packages to inform development of their Climate Strategy
- Other Joint Organisations across NSW using the IP&R Packages as a basis for building IP&R capacity among their councils
- Office of Local Government referring NSW councils to the IP&R Packages
- Federal government agency adopting the commitment level approach based on feedback from councils who had used the IP&R Package