

Engaging with communities for climate change adaptation

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From the **Climate-Adaptive Communities** project
Deep South National Science Challenge

THE DEEP SOUTH

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Climate-Adaptive Communities research

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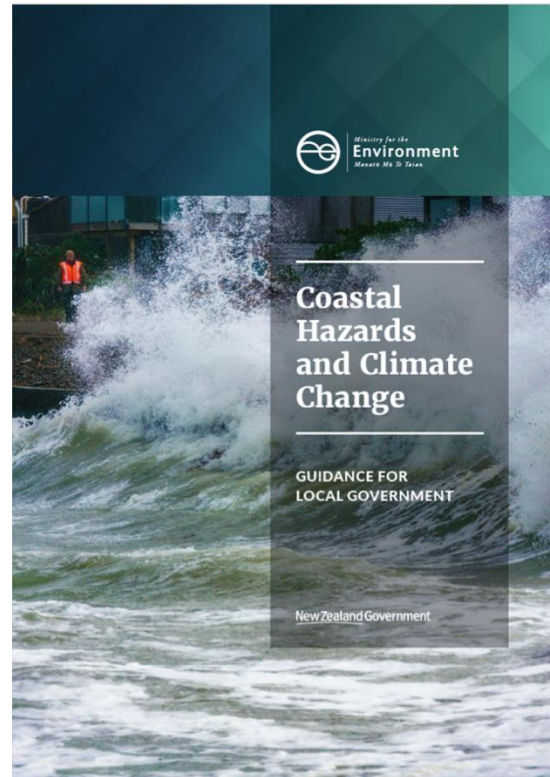
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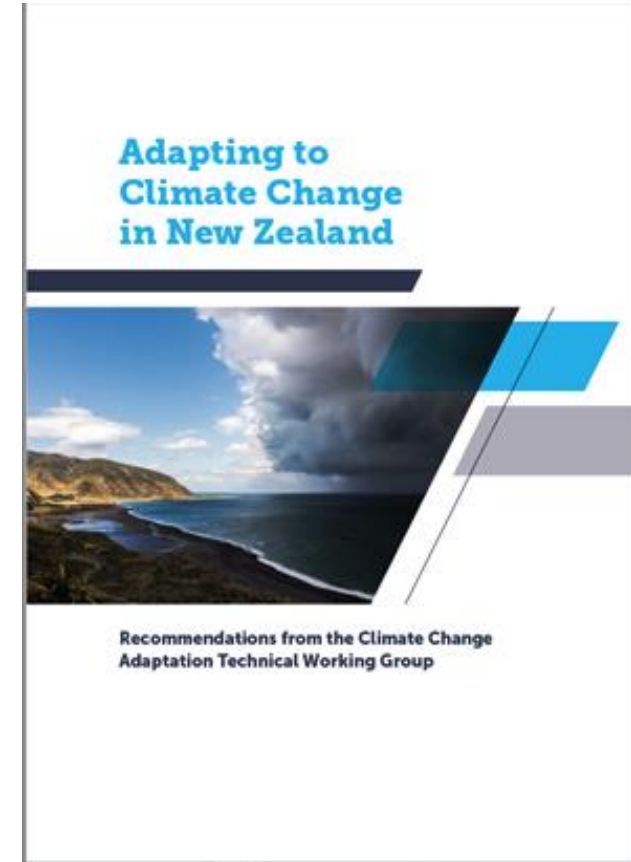
National guidance for local authorities



2017



2017



2018

Our research

What's happening 'on the ground'?

- How councils are thinking about and engaging with communities on adaptation
- How iwi and community groups are thinking about adaptation and taking action
- What might be needed to minimise the impacts on those most susceptible to harm
- *Focal areas: Dunedin, Lower Hutt, Canterbury, and also a national survey of councils.*



What we'll cover

Janet: Why councils are hesitant to engage with communities

Gradon: Community perspectives

Sophie: A community development approach to adaptation



Hesitant to engage

“That is work yet to be started. It’s work that’s even yet to be committed to.” Council staff member

Not sure of council's role

Perceived barriers to engagement

- Lack of clarity about central vs local government roles



Ways forward

- Councils will continue to have an important role in adaptation
- Councils can build on their existing responsibilities
- Engagement with communities can help identify issues that need to be addressed nationally vs locally

Internal confusion

Perceived barriers to engagement

- Different council departments are responsible for different aspects
- Not sure who should lead



Ways forward

- Cross-cutting units that bring together staff from all relevant departments
- Develop a collective understanding of the implications
- Take an integrated approach to engaging with the community so people don't get mixed messages

Engaging under uncertainty is new

Perceived barriers to engagement

- Uncertain about timing of impacts
- Uncertain about scale of impacts
- Uncertain about solutions



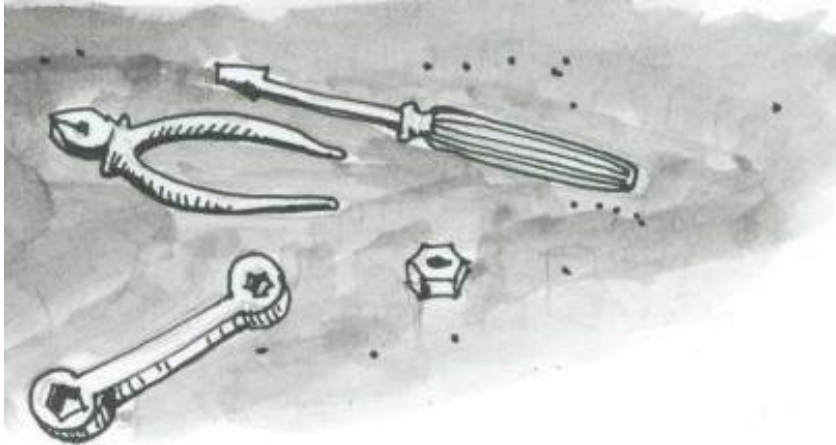
Ways forward

- Engaging under uncertainty is an essential new skill for a climate-impacted future
- Being honest about uncertainty can help engender trust
- But communities need to understand the scope of uncertainty

Unsure what the solutions are

Perceived barriers to engagement

- Don't yet know what the options might be
- Nervous to engage without appearing to have the answers



Ways forward

- Coming to the table with a pre-determined solution is not always helpful in engaging communities
- Community members hold knowledge and experience which can help with solutions
- Involving communities in co-developing ideas can lead to creative solutions that address a range of needs

Afraid of pushback from the public

Perceived barriers to engagement

- Stories of community opposition from other councils
- Fear of litigation

Ways forward

- Early and ongoing engagement builds trust
- If communities have been involved in developing solutions they are less likely to push back



Financial implications of engagement

Perceived barriers to engagement

- Resourcing costs now and into the future



Ways forward

- The costs of climate responses are inescapable – not just financial costs
- Social costs could be considerable
- Supportive action from an early stage can assist communities to become more resilient, reducing cost of impacts

Unsure of how to engage

Perceived barriers to engagement

- Staff are accustomed to consulting on annual plans, district plans etc
- Adaptation is far more complex and involves social wellbeing
- Narrow range of known engagement methods

Ways forward

- Community development approach (next speakers)





Community perspectives

Engagement from a community perspective

- People already have lots of commitments and concerns
- Health impacts – dampness, stress, physical and mental health
- Emotional connection = protectiveness of family, community, place
- Potential for very different impacts on people
- Communities are not just ‘ratepayers’ - youth, elderly, renters, clubs, businesses etc
- Some communities are already aware of and taking action on adaptation



Community push back - Kapiti



Adaptation initiatives



Adaptation initiatives

POWER TO THE
PEOPLE



**BLUESKIN
ENERGY
LTD**



BRCT



Community development for adaptation

CD4A

First principles: CD4A

→ Fairness and justice – “making things better than they are” (DCC Officer)

“Local authorities often talk about ‘community’ as if it is some strange beast that we don’t understand” (DCC Officer)

Community engagement to build trust, understanding and knowledge

→ Goes both ways

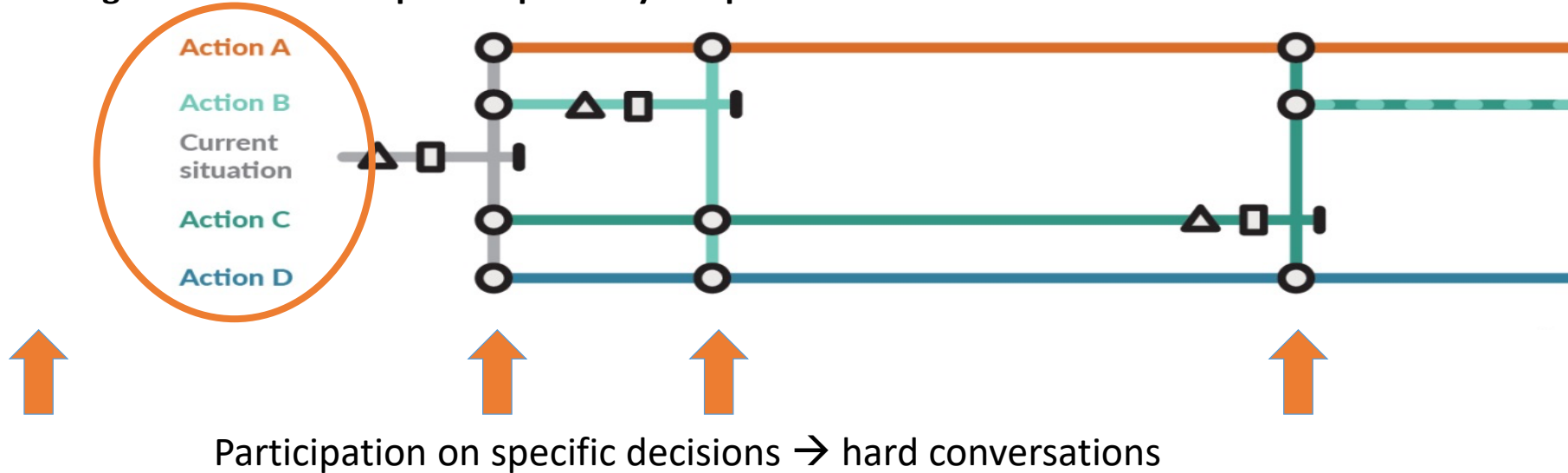
→ Building relationships

“public participation refers to ‘episodic’ relationships between civil society and government authorities as opposed to public engagement where relationships are ongoing and active”

(Serrao-Neumann, Harman, Leitch, & Low Choy, 2015, p1196)

Participation v Engagement

Figure 66: An adaptation pathways map



Community engagement → ongoing relationship building

- Create 'readiness' for engagement and adaptation planning
- Building trust, respect support, safe spaces, building capacity to engage

The slow-onset of CC impacts means...

- Both participation and engagement are crucial
- Episodic participation for discreet moments where significant decisions are made through adaptive planning

AND

- Engagement is constant and ongoing: to build trust for effective participation

CREATE SPACES TO SAFELY AND PRODUCTIVELY ADDRESS:

- Emotion: defensiveness, anger, grief, frustration, helplessness

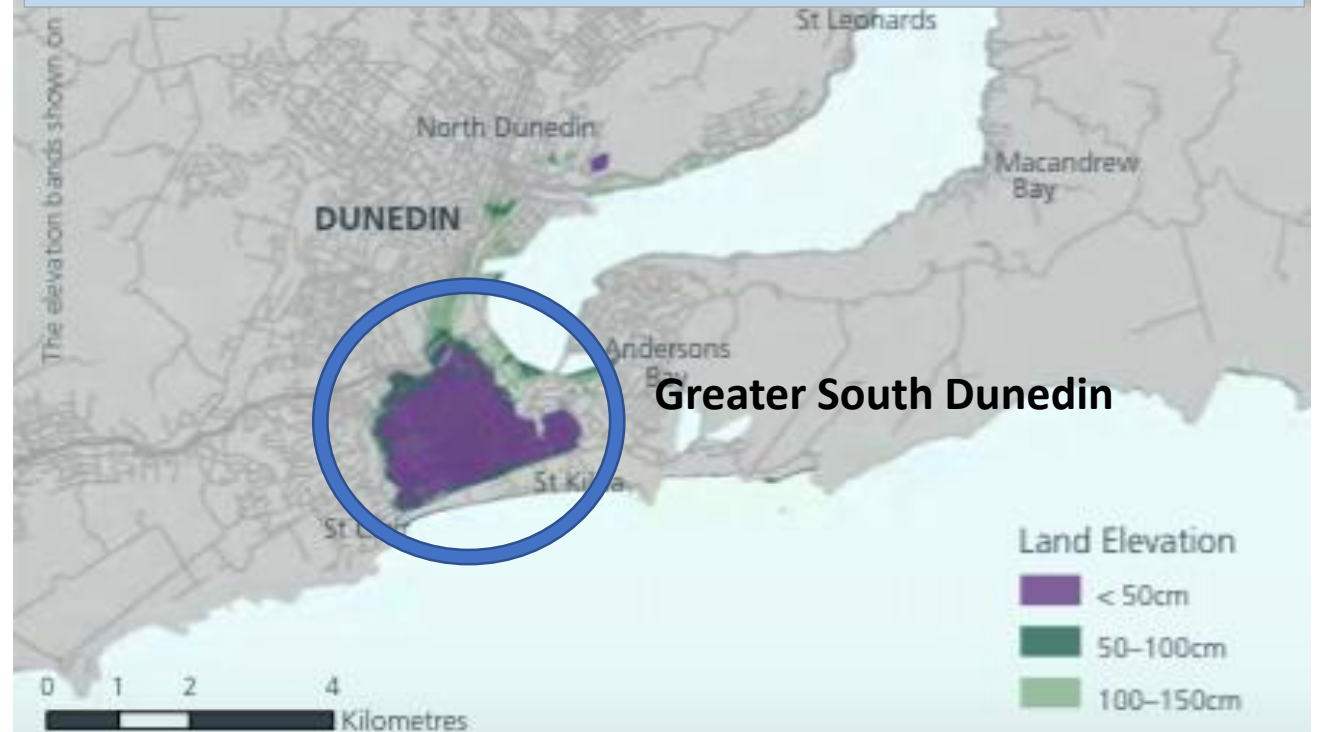
THROUGH

- Care and empathy: respect, collective support and action, agency

Stories from Dunedin ...

- Dunedin popn: 120000
- Greater South Dunedin area with:
 - 13000 properties
 - 27000 people
 - 2683 homes, 116 businesses, and 35km roads at or less than 50cm above spring high tide mark
 - Schools, care homes, etc
 - 2x national ave popn are over 65 years
 - Average income is 2/3 of the national average
 - High water table (0.6m above sea level in some areas)
- Floods in 2015: 142mm of rain over 24 hrs
 - “2405 payouts by insurance companies” (NZ Herald, Mar 2016)

Interviewees from the local government, and similar stakeholders said the floods
“[were] a catalyst”
“[an]eye-opening event... [that] could indicate what our future might look like”
“made it [climate change] real”
“opened up conversations that would not have occurred in the same way prior”



Stories from South Dunedin -

Council

- Post June 2015 floods: defensive; distant and removed:
- Mayor Cull reportedly referred to 'managed retreat' on several occasions within days of the floods
- Mid 2016: apology from Mayor to South Dunedin
- Mid 2017: Council ran the first Hui; Community development led "Plan and Plate Night"

Community and media

- Floods caused by infrastructure failure
- Floods caused by failure to maintain infrastructure
- Part of an ongoing story of neglect for South Dunedin
- Beginning of a shift from blame to draw on existing strengths and passion in South Dunedin Communities

Parallel Processes: The Hui

- Two key individuals took up 'the hui' as a biannual event
- First community led Hui in early 2018 comprised mostly agencies providing support for different groups living in South Dunedin
- Most recent Hui (February this year) with over 100 people, including many residents
- Council officers are invited to speak and share information and engage in discussion, ask questions, answer questions
- Goals:
 - Create space for connection, conversation and developing visions
 - Allow South Dunedin communities to gain voice and engage with Council on their own terms
- Developed a Community Network Rōpū as a steering group, sought funding for Community Facilitator

Parallel Processes: The Hui ...

Supper at the Hui provided by locals from a support agency that cook social lunch every week

- April 2018 Hui: stayed in the kitchen and just did the job
- September 2018 Hui: came out after and stood around edges listening
- Feb 2019 Hui: fully engaged, spoke up, asked questions, sat at a table



And a Council Shift

- Post June 2015 floods: defensive; distant and removed
- Mid 2016: apology from Mayor to South Dunedin
- Mid 2017: Council ran the first Hui; Community development led; passed onto community
- Now: Fronting meetings and being humble: 'we don't know what we're doing yet' but we're 'just starting to have conversations' and 'we desperately don't want to reinforce privilege' (DCC Officer, Hui)
- Talking hopefully; about opportunity to 'make things better than they are' (DCC Officer, Hui)



Community Development for Adaptation

Holistic

- Committed to engagement as relationship building over long-term
- Strong community voice
- All needs
- Wider community aspirations

Supportive

- Support developing connections within community and between community & council
- Accessible information
- Build readiness and collective understanding
- Enable communities to share their knowledge
- Engage in a variety of ways

Inclusive

- Engaging with a wide range of affected people asap, especially those who struggle or are harder to reach
- Recognise unevenness of impacts especially on those who already struggle
- Go to people, engage on their terms

Delivery focused

- Involve communities in identifying options and in key decisions
- Keep community updated regularly
- Look for positive opportunities that will address existing inequities
- Deliver on agreed solutions



Open for questions

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