

<b>ORDINARY MEETING</b> <b>26 APRIL 2012</b>	<b>8</b>
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## COASTAL COUNCILS ADAPTATION TASKFORCE (C-CAT) MEMBERSHIP 2012/13

M Grenfell: #3557214

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That Council note the update on the status of the Queensland Coastal Councils Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT) and will consider the commitment to funding membership as part of the 2012/13 budget deliberations.**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

Council has been assisting the development of the Coastal Councils Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT) by participating on the Establishment Committee since Council endorsed their support of the Taskforce in April 2011. C-CAT will be a dedicated local government led and managed alliance, supported by the LGAQ, to collectively prepare, plan and adapt for sea level rise and other coastal impacts of climate change.

The C-CAT will also provide the State and Commonwealth with a single point of contact to engage and work with Queensland local government. Council members of the C-CAT can expect strong linkages and information flows from these spheres of government coupled with a real opportunity to make their collective voices heard and influence the broader policy agenda.

The LGAQ have requested Council indicate their financial commitment (membership) to the Taskforce for the 2012/13 financial year.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Council resolved to participate in the development of C-CAT and commit to C-CAT membership in April 2011. Membership to date has not required a financial commitment. An Establishment Committee was formed in June 2011, comprising representatives from 21 Queensland coastal councils. This committee developed and circulated a survey to identify issues, needs and barriers experienced by coastal councils in Queensland in relation to adaptation. Deliverables so far from the committee include a Draft Action Plan 2012 – 2014 and operating model/role for C-CAT.

**COMMENT:**

The C-CAT Climate Change Adaptation Government Survey found that in Queensland there is a high recognition of the need to undertake adaptation activities. However, the results of the survey point to a number of significant barriers resulting in low levels of confidence by local government to take action.

The survey found priority needs to enable further progress in the short and medium term are:

- Appropriately scaled data (only 25% have Sea Level Rise/Inundation data and 50% have flood data);
- Appropriate methodologies and guidelines (across most activity areas, but especially with regard to understanding vulnerability);
- Access to technical information (particularly about cost effective adaptation responses);
- Improved organisational prioritisation;
- Legislative framework (clarity of roles and responsibilities); and
- Activation of funding streams.

Until these needs are substantially met, local governments are likely to remain reluctant to act, in the event they inadvertently expose themselves to legal and organisational risks.

Participation in C-CAT provides a collaborative approach to shared issues and provides Council with a greater ability to advocate for its needs with regards to climate adaptation.

Council is a member of the National Sea Change Taskforce (NSCT). It has been noted that these two Taskforces may have the same role and that the formation of C-CAT is unnecessary. In the last C-CAT meeting, LGAQ resolved to gain written support from NSCT in recognition of the different roles and importance of both taskforces to local governments. The NSCT primary role as a national body is to represent the interests of coastal councils and communities experiencing the effects of rapid growth and development. The primary role of C-CAT is to act as a focus and forum for the discussion of issues, identify needs and share legal, technical, environmental, social and economic information and identify actions to assist coastal councils in the effective adaptation to coastal climate change adaptation challenges. There is a difference of intent between these groups and the area of climate adaption is a complex arena with many repercussions for council and the community now and in the future.

It is estimated that an annual membership fee based on a minimum membership of 12 councils and assuming an even mix of large, medium and small councils to be between \$12,000 and \$17,000. The LGAQ is providing all office and HR on-costs.

## **CONSIDERATIONS:**

### Corporate and Operational Plans:

The participation and membership in the C-CAT is supported by the Corporate Plan:

#### **Goal 1 – Caring for the environment**

- 1.7 - Deliver more environmentally sustainable Council operations and facilities.
- 1.8 - Actively reduce Council's greenhouse gas emissions.

#### **Goal 3 – Deliver integrated Planning**

- 3.5 - Plan for the impacts of climate change including mitigation and adaptation measures

#### **Goal 6 – Striving for organisational excellence**

- 6.7 - Consistently perform better, deliver on our objectives and operate sustainably

### Statutory:

In the future it is very likely that Council will be required to comply with certain legislation regarding climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Queensland Coastal Plan requires local governments to build climate change variables into the new Planning Scheme and develop coastal adaptation strategies for high risk areas within five years.

Given the current uncertainty surrounding the legal obligations of Councils in responding to climate change, establishing partnerships, building capacity and being better informed is in the best interest of Council as well as the community.

### Policy:

The recommendation is supported by Council's Carbon Emissions Reduction Policy and Corporate Sustainability Policy.

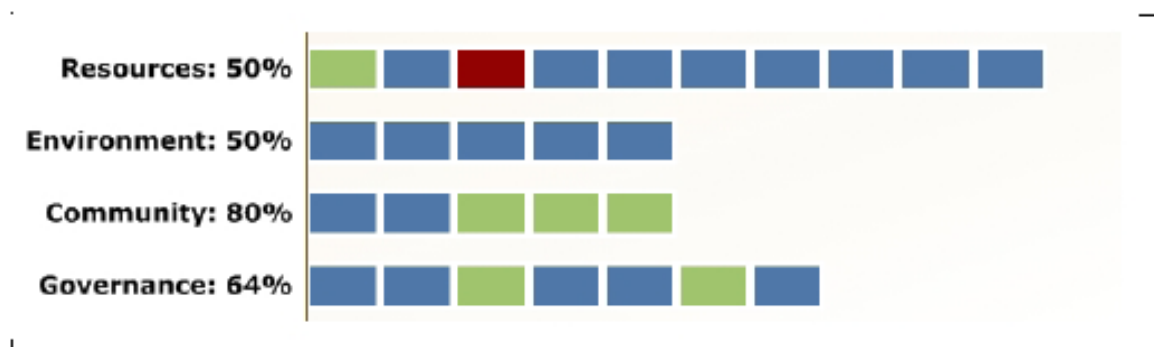
### Financial and Risk:

There is financial risk to Council of not taking action on climate change issues given the direction of litigation claims regarding land use.

The Taskforce offers an opportunity for Council to reduce climate change impacts on both Council and the community by taking strategic and collaborative steps.

There is a cost for Taskforce membership which will be determined by the cost of maintaining the secretariat, less LGAQ's contribution, divided by the number of councils that formally commit. LGAQ will apply its sliding scale membership formula to determine the exact amount to be paid by each council.

As an indication, Council would be expected to pay around \$13,000 p.a. depending on the rate of subscription. Based on the level of interest received to date by LGAQ, a high level of subscription is anticipated which may reduce the annual contribution.

Sustainability:Improving Resource Efficiency

Membership on C-CAT will promote the reduction of Council's GHG emissions however participation may contribute to an increase in travel related GHG emissions depending on how much air travel is required.

Conserving Biodiversity

Participation on C-CAT will not directly impact on the natural environment however may result in an overall improvement on the natural environment due to the consideration of climate change adaptation.

Enhancing Community Health and Wellbeing

The advantages of membership will promote and encourage the resilience of the entire community with regards to natural disaster.

Delivering Sound Governance and Economic Management

The participation on the Taskforce will be via Council staff. The Taskforce will increase efficiency of staff working in the climate change area given the access to consolidated and influential networks. The outputs align with Council's Corporate and Operational Plan and can be budgeted for.

**CONSULTATION:**

Principal Advisor Natural Asset Management NRM – Climate Change LGAQ  
 C-CAT Establishment Committee  
 Reef Guardian Council Project Manager  
 Manager Planning Strategies

**OPTIONS:**

1. That Council note the update on the status of the Queensland Coastal Councils Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT) and will consider the commitment to funding membership as part of the 2012/13 budget deliberations.

**CONCLUSION:**

Participation on C-CAT will provide an opportunity for Council to network and collaborate with the three tiers of government and contribute to the climate adaptation needs of the Cairns region and across Queensland.

Given the vulnerability of the Cairns region it would be advantageous for Council to be confident in its climate adaptation responses with the support of other LGA's. Participation on the C-CAT Establishment Committee has provided Council with greater understanding of local government issues, barriers and needs around climate change adaptation. The Establishment Committee has assisted Council with understanding climate change requirements of the Queensland Coastal Plan and has provided the opportunity to participate on a Steering Committee of a related pilot project.

Overall participation and membership on the C-CAT will benefit Council in building internal capacity and confidence relating to climate adaptation issues facing the Cairns region.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

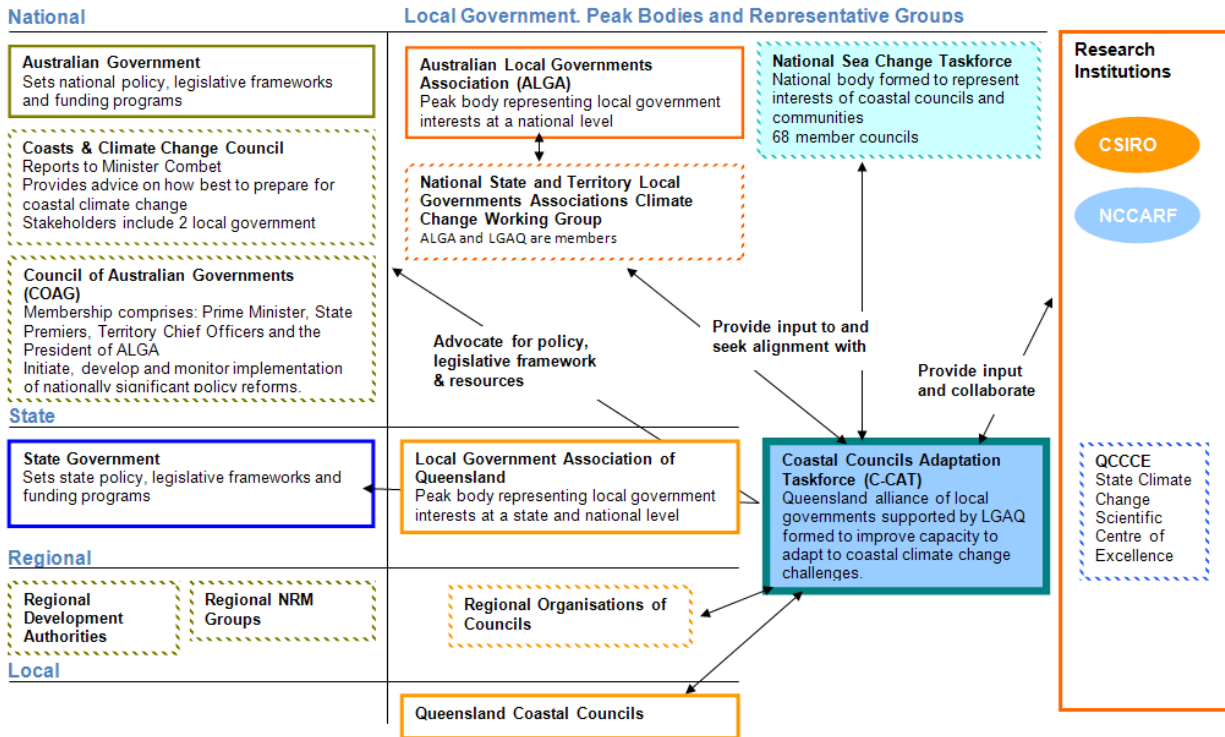
1. C-CAT Operating Model
2. Role of C-CAT

Maree Grenfell  
**Coordinator Sustainability & Climate Change**

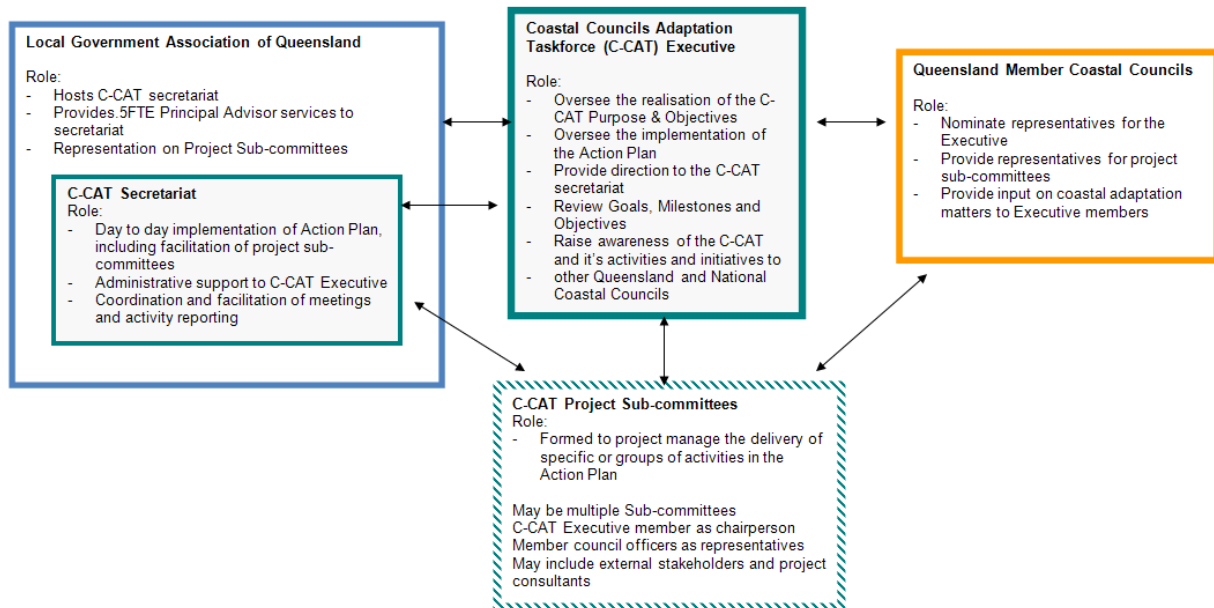
Peter Boyd  
**Manager Planning Strategies**

# Attachment 1 Operational Model for C-CAT

## Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Context for C-CAT



## C-CAT Operating Model



## Attachment 2 Role of the C-CAT



### Role of the Coastal Councils Adaptation Taskforce (C-CAT)

The general role of the C-CAT (the Taskforce) is to act as a focus and forum for the discussion of issues, identify needs and share legal, technical, environmental, social and economic information and identify actions to assist coastal councils in the effective adaptation to coastal climate change adaptation challenges.

#### Purpose

To collectively improve capacity to adapt to coastal climate change challenges through an alliance of Queensland coastal local governments.

#### Objectives

1. Improve the individual and collective capacity of Queensland coastal local governments to adapt to coastal climate change challenges through:
  - a. the sharing of information and experiences relevant to coastal climate change adaptation including:
    - i. the use and application of common statutory and non-statutory instruments; and
    - ii. innovative and purpose built tools, approaches, and policies specifically tailored by local governments to coastal climate change adaptation challenges; and
    - iii. local, national and international 'best practice' obtained by Taskforce members from research and environmental scanning.
  - b. the identification of common training and professional development needs that will assist key Queensland coastal local government roles to understand and respond to the challenges of coastal climate change adaptation.
2. Identify, prioritise and initiate collaborative research into common coastal climate change adaptation challenges.
3. Identify, prioritise and initiate, in collaboration with key partner organisations, projects that will assist in delivering a common approach to coastal climate change adaptation by coastal local governments.
4. Engage the State and Federal Government agencies and provide advice to LGAQ on policies, programs and initiatives related to coastal climate change adaptation.