



Implementing Climate Change Adaptation in the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre

VCCCAR Implementing Adaptation project

CASE STUDY REPORT



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Images

Courtesy of the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre Inc.

Disclaimer

The views expressed herein do not represent those of the Victorian Government or VCCCAR. They are the views of the report authors.

This case study report is a co-developed research output of the Implementing Adaptation project, funded by the Victorian Government through VCCCAR. The report was co-written by researchers and key individuals at the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre (DPMC). Chapter 5 of this report draws heavily on interviews held with DPMC as part of an evaluation meeting. The report captures the views of the partner organisation and the researchers involved.

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1 About us

The *Dame Pattie Menzies Centre Inc. (DPMC)* is a non-profit, community based organisation that provides a support service for people with disabilities. The rural based centre supports the people of Alexandra and the surrounding areas. Our organisation provides individualised support to adults with a disability and their families. Both Day Services and Choice in Living Support are available which provides community access, social inclusion, skills programs and an opportunity for people with a disability to live independently. The centre is currently supporting 24 adults with a range of ages and disabilities.

The property, pictured below was purchased in 1979 and accommodation and adult education started to be made available in 1980. By 1985, day services were made available and today the centre consists of a small dedicated team of staff and volunteers (See the DPMC timeline (pg14) for more information).



FIGURE 1 THE MOUNT, OF DAME PATTIE MENZIES CENTRE, ALEXANDRA

2 The VCCCAR Implementing Adaptation project

2.1 The project

Our organisation has been involved in a project funded by the Victorian government through the *Victorian Centre for Climate Change Adaptation Research (VCCCAR)*. The project entitled '*Implementing tools to increase adaptive capacity in the community and natural resources management sectors*' (*Implementing Adaptation* in the following) has been conducted to gain a better understanding of the adaptation capabilities and needs of three types of government service providers and funded agencies. These were catchment management authorities (CMAs), community service organisations (CSOs), and primary care partnerships (PCPs) and the purpose of the project was to facilitate the implementation and testing of tools and methodologies for climate change adaptation planning.

Five CSOs and PCPs participated in the tools-testing phase of the project. The Dame Pattie Menzies Centre was one of the five organisations which aimed to gain a better understanding of how identified climate change adaptation needs can best be met using existing decision-support tools.

2.2 The process

The Implementing Adaptation research involved four meetings facilitated by the research team over the course of a six month period, with associated work carried out between each meeting. The meeting process is shown below.

- 1: Scoping – Organisational context, needs and capabilities
- 2: Tool Selection – Introducing and selecting an adaptation tool
- 3: Tool Implementation – Progressing the tool use
- 4: Evaluation – Reflection on project process and usefulness of tool.

3 Getting started

3.1 Why we wanted to participate

Our organisation experienced the consequences of the 2009 bush fires whilst out on a day trip with our clients. Between trying to get everyone home safely and losing contact with a member of staff for 2 days, staff realised they needed to be better prepared. Reviewing and planning for extreme weather events and emergencies was therefore a very high priority for DPMC. This priority was emphasised with the requirement for a plan for 'persons at risk' as part of the new state wide response for planning for emergencies¹.

"Seeing first-hand the last major event and seeing that someone could have died made me passionate about doing something about it. I realised that we needed to increase the capacity to deal with that situation."

At the time of expressing an interest in the project, work had been carried out to better prepare the business for change and to minimise the risks associated with the increasing cost of energy. This work inspired the staff to take a broader view of other aspects of the business especially as the extremes of the recent summer had challenged us to rethink what a 'normal' day might be in the future. In addition, one of the issues the organisation was exploring was the capacity and capability of the business to effectively provide services when the workforce was remote from the client and the business centre, such as the scenario under extreme conditions.

¹Victorian Government's Vulnerable Persons in Emergency Policy (2013)

4 The tool

4.1 Our chosen tool

The *UKCIP Adaptation Wizard* is a generic decision-support tool that includes two vulnerability assessments, along with methods and resources for identifying and implementing adaptation options. The Wizard is framed around 5 key steps (Figure 2) and acts as both a repository for a number of tools and a methodology for conducting adaptation in its own right. Each step includes a checklist and useful resources to guide the user through the process. DPMC have used the Local Climate Impacts Profile tool (LCLIP) and the Adaptation Wizard Notepad to complete steps 1 through to 4 of the Adaptation Wizard process.

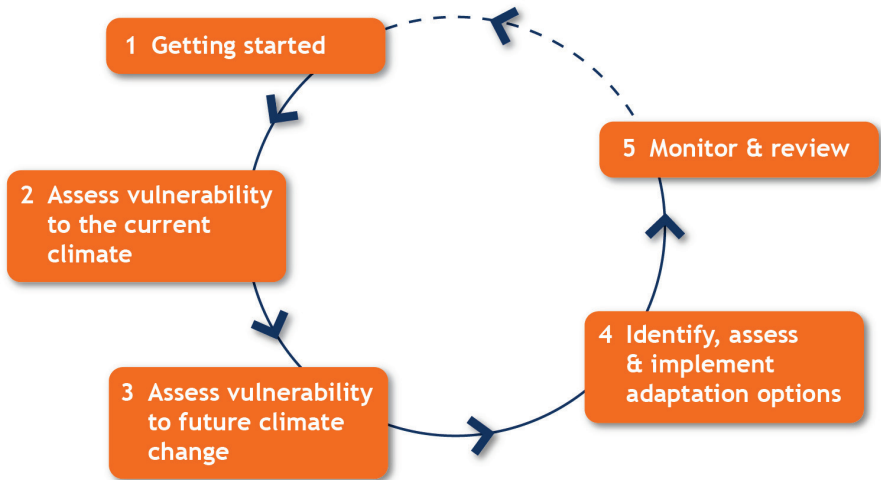


FIGURE 2. THE ADAPTATION WIZARD

4.2 How the tool was selected

After the first meeting, the Implementing Adaptation research team identified five 'adaptation needs' of DPMC (listed below).

1. Increase knowledge on current vulnerability to extreme weather events

2. Develop an action plan for emergency events
3. Enable conversations with other agencies about the DPMC journey/ goals
4. Increase resilience to long-term climate change
5. Develop a business case for climate change adaptation

With these adaptation needs in mind, the research team searched through an *Adaptation Product Database*² consisting of approximately 300 international and Australian products and tools. The research team then identified a short list of adaptation tools that were considered suitable and presented them to DPMC, highlighting why it would be useful, what would be required and the outputs that could be produced.

From this selection, the UKCIP Adaptation Wizard was deemed most suitable because of the:

- Visual appeal
- Comprehensiveness of the adaptation planning process
- Simplicity of the tool
- Wealth of example outputs provided
- Trustworthiness of the tool
- Language used
- Researchers expertise around the tool

"We liked the succinctness of the tool with the sequential questions. It was clear why the questions were being asked and the lack of academic language made it more appropriate."

DPMC felt that the Wizard would most closely be able to address its adaptation needs, but in particular it would assist with understanding its current and future vulnerability to climate change.

²Webb, R, and Beh, J. 2013 Leading adaptation practices and support strategies for Australia: An international and Australian review of products and tools, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast, 106pp.

4.3 How the tool was implemented

The Adaptation Wizard was used internally with staff at DPMC and also with input from committee members. We also used additional tools and resources for each of the steps to assist us through the process.

The **Adaptation Wizard Notepad** (Figure 3), which contains a set of questions, was used to capture answers as we worked through the steps of the Wizard. For Step 1 – *Getting Started*, we highlighted what we wanted to get out of the tool, who would be involved in the process and the potential difficulties we could face as well as how we could overcome them. The Notepad was then used continuously to document our work as we worked through the Wizard.

STEP 1: Getting started	
Task 1.1: Put the building blocks in place a) Assemble your team: who needs to be involved and why? b) Have you secured support for the process?	
Task 1.2: What is your particular motivation for considering adapting to climate change?	
Task 1.3: What do you want to achieve by using the Wizard? a) What is the problem that needs to be addressed? b) What do you want to achieve? c) What is the chosen scope and scale of the assessment, and why?	

FIGURE 3. THE ADAPTATION WIZARD NOTEPAD

A **Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP)** was a tool used to support us with Step 2 – *Assessing our Current Vulnerability to Climate Change*. The table-style resource was used to fill in recent extreme weather events, the impact they caused, the actions that we took to address the impact and the effectiveness of those actions. From a group discussion we identified four climate variables: heatwaves, drought, extended cold snaps and

bushfires as having the biggest impact on our organisation. The LCLIP therefore focused on these four variables. On completion of the table, we were able to clearly identify the impacts these extreme weather events have had on our organisation in the past and what possible actions we could take to address those impacts if the event were repeated.

For Step 3 - *Assessing our Future Vulnerability to Climate Change*, we used the [Victorian Governments Regional Climate Change report \(2008\)](#)³, which for our area was the Goulburn Broken region. We used projected climate information from the report together with the Notepad to document how our regions' climate is expected to change, what the expected climate impacts will be on our area of responsibility as well as considering the indirect climate impacts. From this research we were able to identify the highest priority risks that required an adaptation response.

For Step 4 – *Identifying, assessing and implementing our adaptation options*, we held a meeting with interested stakeholders to agree on a methodology for this step of the process. The [GROW Model](#)⁴ was chosen to identify adaptation options, evaluate the options and prepare and take action on a plan. GROW stands for:

- **G**oal.
- Current **R**eality.
- **O**ptions (or Obstacles).
- **W**ill (or Way Forward).

We are currently using the GROW model to help us work through this step of the Wizard.

³The Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment, Climate Change in the Goulburn Broken region (2008), Melbourne, ©The State of Victoria Department of Sustainability and Environment.

⁴The GROW Model. Available from Mind Tools at:
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_89.htm

5 Outcomes of the process

5.1 What did we learn?

- Writing down our reflections after every meeting was useful to recollect what we had done and help us focus our thoughts.
- We learnt to use the practical implications of past extreme weather conditions as a forecast.
- It was great to be part of a multi-disciplinary team working on common issues and sharing experience and expertise.
- From working through the LCLIP process, we found that in past extreme weather events the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre Inc. has responded well.
- We learnt that the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre Inc. has the capability to build adaptive capacity.

5.2 What was challenging?

- The amount of time that was required, both attending the four meetings and working through the tool in between meetings was very challenging. Despite being a step by step process it was hard to find time to do the work.
- It was difficult to make time in the day-to-day necessities and give planning a priority.
- The terminology. Trying to understand what it all meant, what we were actually doing and what was meant by the concept of 'tools'.
- Choosing a tool. Having limited background knowledge about each of the tools presented made it challenging to make a decision purely on the researcher's presentation. We would have been happy to go with a tool suggestion rather than choosing one.

- Having different numbers of people attending each meeting was difficult. It would have been good to have the same people attend and be involved to keep the momentum and gain and increase organisational knowledge.
- To realise the extreme vulnerability of the business and its clients to extreme weather events when support may not be able to be provided.

5.3 What has changed during this process?

- We've learnt soft systems methodology techniques from the project process which we've since used to run an engaging process with our clients. This has enabled us to look at the business from a client's perspective.
- It is now more common practice in our organisation to think about climate impacts as it allows us to plan our operations better. As an example, we now have a calendar system to know where everyone is at all times.
- In terms of our responsibility and duty of care, we have made many improvements. We now have a much more proactive way of bringing clients to the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre and our service agreement for newcomers now considers extreme weather events and how to plan for an emergency. This has been refined directly through engagement with this project.
- We've gained a greater awareness of practical strategic planning processes, not only from the tool we worked with, but from the Implementing Adaptation team. Fundamental value was added from the external facilitation and also involving a diverse group from the business who worked together on a common issue.
- We now have practiced dialogue on a very complex issue where the outputs are diverse and cover a wide range of plausible possibilities,

some of which only became apparent through the project process. We are committed to planning for climate variability and change and do not engage in practices that contradict this. This is now reflected in the other parts of our business as we seek the best action rather than the right action.

5.4 What was most important for us?

- The reflections were important to us because it made us put aside time to discuss the meetings and the process.
- To be able to have a tangible, professional plan that links up with other communities, businesses, councils will be incredibly valuable. It's been good to be proactive with this.
- To work on something that's important for our future, as well as developing a better understanding of our past.
- It was great that the researchers held every meeting in Alexandra and came to us as opposed to us having to go to Melbourne.
- To share our experience and expertise with others because of the profound difference the process has made to the way we conduct our business, working with adult persons with a disability. Person centred plans and business action plans now reflect a complex environment of change that brings new opportunities.
- Capturing and developing the organisational history and identifying our stakeholders was useful as it laid the foundation for a better and more widely informed revision of our business plan including a communication and stakeholder management plan/action.
- Taking time out to work on the business under a 'new' set of drivers (extreme weather and climate change) exposed us to the challenge and opportunity of looking critically at a wide range of forces, beyond our control, that could shape our business in the future.

6 What next? Moving forward.

Since the last meeting in early August, we have completed step 3 of the Adaptation Wizard. We are now using the GROW model to work through step 4 and hope to put in place actions to continually monitor and review our adaptation plan.

We will incorporate the learning from this project, including the use of the tool, into our strategic business planning and action plans before the start of the 2013 summer.

We will share our experiences of the project with the members of the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre Inc. association at the annual meeting on 23 September 2013.



FIGURE 4. STAFF AND CLIENTS AT THE DAME PATTIE MENZIES CENTRE INC.

DPMC Timeline Activity

Key

- Internal
- External
- Climate Events

2009 – DHS moved clients to an unknown region without anyone they knew for 6 weeks. Since then clients have experienced post-traumatic stress in smoke or flood events.

2009 – Partnership with rural access worker

2009 – On-going funding support and choice

2009 – Supported living residence under threat – direct action

2008 – Bailey st unit constructed

2008 – Evaluation of innovation project

2007 – Contract with housing choice

2002 – Innovation project

2002 - Having a say conference in Geelong

2000 – tri-state games

2012 – New CEO

2011 – Tri-state games. Client drowning in Ararat (helping another service)

2011 – FRRR Grant: solar power hot water

2010 – Breakdown on spur in winter

2010 – Facilitator co-ordination to support and choice

2010 – Community networker on staff

1980s – Accommodation, holiday, respite, adult education (CEACA)

1979 – “The Mount” property was purchased

1978 – Community meeting as need for disability support. Lions club backing and fundraising. Dame Pattie approached to be the patron.

1985 – Day services started

1996 - Accredited community bus for the centre

1983 – Dust storm/ Ash Wednesday fires

1984 - Change in govt service

1986 - I.D.P.S. Act implemented

1988 - Financial crash, massive change in demographics

1990s - Privatisation of power and water

1992 - Closure of Caloola, formerly the Stumbury Hospital for the Insane.

1993 - Closure of Janefield training centre

1996 - Floods

1996 – Fire at Kew Cottages resulted in change in legislation

1987 – 2010 Drought

2000 – Increased sightings of snakes in the summer

2001 – Closure of Kew Cottages

2003 – High country fire – NE/Gippsland

2004 – Mt Torbreed fire

2005 – (July) No allocation of water in G.V.

2006 – Mansfield fire

2006 – Disability Act Implemented

2009 - Bushfires & Heatwaves

2008 – 2012 State Disability Plan

2012 – Mill Closed

2013 – Access and inclusion committee

2013 – Summer heat wave

2010 – 2015 State Disability Plan

2011 - Floods

2011 – New hospital opening in Alexandra

2011 – New SRU



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