



Implementing Climate Change Adaptation for Women's Health in the North (WHIN)

VCCCAR Implementing Adaptation project

CASE STUDY REPORT

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Images

Courtesy of Women's Health in the North.

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 from the Women's Health in the North (WHIN). Chapter 5 of this report draws heavily on interviews held with WHIN 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

Women’s Health in the North (WHIN) is the women’s health service for Melbourne’s Northern metropolitan region, covering the municipalities of Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra. WHIN aims to strengthen the health, safety, wellbeing and lives of women, including those from a culturally diverse background. We focus on four priority areas: prevention of violence against women, sexual and reproductive rights, economic participation and environmental justice. Our work involves a range of programs, training and health promotion as well as research and advocacy, focusing on the needs of the most marginalised women.



FIGURE 1 MEMBERS AT CERES COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT PARK, BRUNSWICK

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. Women's Health in the North 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

We wanted to participate in this research to become more aware of existing tools for increasing our organisation's capacity to respond to climate change. The tools testing process could provide:

- Knowledge on what tools and guidelines existed and being involved in testing their effectiveness would further our understanding.
- The ability to link climate change with our broader commitment to improving women's health outcomes, particularly promoting the recognition that women are a highly disadvantaged group with respect to climate change adaptation, and more broadly to emphasise structural inequalities in policy initiatives relating to adaptation rather than a focus individuals.
- The capacity to continue to improve our organisation's response to climate change, and facilitate connections with other researchers and organisations.
- The potential to influence large numbers of different groups using existing links with other organisations in the region and in the areas of women's health, other community organisations and community members.

4 The tool

4.1 Our chosen tool

Climate Q' "*Climate Change Risk Management Matrix: a process for assessing impacts, adaptation, risk and vulnerability*" (Figure 1) is a workbook based on the Australian *Climate Change Impacts and Risk Management: A Guide for Business and Government*¹. It assists organisations with a structured process to identify:

- Impacts of climate change in the context of the organisation
- The level of risk or opportunity presented by those climate change impacts
- Possible adaptation responses
- How vulnerable the organisation or clients are to risks presented by climate change
- How to communicate the key risks and vulnerabilities to others
- How to develop an action plan to respond to those identified risks and vulnerabilities.

Step 1 Define area of interest and timescale boundaries

What physical area do you wish to cover in your risk assessment? E.g. your property/region/state.

What timescale do you wish to address in your risk assessment? E.g. 2030/2050/2070/2100.

FIGURE 2 STEP 1 OF THE CLIMATE Q WORKBOOK

¹Australian Government, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Australian Greenhouse Office 2006 *Climate Change Impacts & Risk Management: A Guide for Business and Government*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra ACT.

4.2 Why the tool was selected

After the first meeting, the Implementing Adaptation research team identified four 'adaptation needs' of WHIN, shown below.

1. Raise awareness about the implications of climate change for women's health
2. Build the capacity of partner agencies in adaptation planning
3. Develop a case study or two on the incorporation of climate change into partner agency strategies, programs and activities
4. Identify key focal points for WHIN's advocacy activities

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 GPPCP, highlighting why it would be useful, what would be required and the outputs that could be produced.

From the selection, the Climate Q workbook was chosen because it was clear, it had easy to follow steps, was presented with a good use of colours, wasn't too text heavy and the matrices appeared practical to use.

In response to the researchers' survey we highlighted the following categories as the most important factors:

- Its visual appeal
- The templates and matrices within the workbook
- Its ease of use
- The language used
- Its simplicity to understand

4.3 How the tool was implemented

We used the Climate Q workbook as a guide to run two workshops with two regional women's health services. The aim of using the tool was to build the capacity of women's health organisations to adapt to climate change, at the same time as transferring our knowledge about how women are disproportionately affected by climate change to a wider audience.

The first workshop was with staff at Women's Health in the North. We only had two days between choosing the tool and implementing it in the workshop. We held three one-hour meetings to work out how to use the tool and then spent several hours pulling together the presentation, the matrices/tables for the workshop and the vulnerability statement. We chose to remove and combine some steps of the process due to time restraints within the workshops, because some of the steps were more applicable to the agricultural sector than the health sector and because it was difficult to differentiate between other steps. Choosing a future timescale, for example, was left out because we thought our audience would be overwhelmed by looking at scenarios in 2070 when they hadn't considered the current context. We had also undertaken prior research on environmental justice which led to the decision for adding variables to the tool such as peak oil, toxicity and air pollution. After editing the tool to suit our needs, there were 9 steps to work through.

After the first workshop, we spent a few hours reflecting on how the first workshop went and subsequently amending the process for the second workshop which was run with Women's Health in the Goulburn North East (WHGNE) in Wangaratta. In both workshops we used an adapted version of the likelihood matrix on a whiteboard and then used colours to mark events as highly likely, likely, moderate, unlikely and negligible. The next step focused on the consequences matrix where we used colours to assign consequences ratings to each cell; catastrophic, severe, major,

moderate and minor. Then we compared the likelihood and consequence matrices to identify areas for urgent action and complete a vulnerability statement.

5 Outcomes of the process

5.1 What did we learn?

- We found doing the presentations at the workshops stimulating because they provoked rich discussion. Adapting the process during the workshop revealed the different levels of knowledge between the two groups.
- It was valuable to learn more about how other people undertake this process and to gain more knowledge about climate change adaptation, such as the regional climate information with the map that shows what's going to happen in various parts of Victoria.
- It was useful to learn about all the different tools.

5.2 What was challenging?

- It was challenging choosing the tool at the outset. They were all similar but different at the same time and none of them seemed to be quite right. There were aspects of each of the tools that we liked. It was almost an arbitrary choice in the end as there weren't huge advantages from choosing one tool over another.
- The practical application of the tool was confusing initially, such as deciding on the best methods to make it work around the table (workshop application), whether to use a whiteboard or powerpoint, etc. We had to work through what steps would be useful, what we would get out of each step, how would we do each step and how much we could get through in the time available. A lot of the steps were quite similar so it was necessary to work out a logical order and

clarify what each was aiming to achieve. It was only when we did our first workshop with WHIN that it confirmed the process could work.


- Arranging the workshops was difficult because it was hard to get enough of the organisation to commit the time due to limited resources.
- During the workshops, it was challenging trying to get through all the steps and do them properly within the time frame. It was also difficult dealing with disruptions during the WHIN workshop and keeping the discussions on track.
- It was challenging compromising what the researchers wanted to do with what WHIN wanted to do. For example the 2070 timescale was very hard to get our heads around but for the VCCCAR research it was very relevant. It was difficult trying to meet those needs whilst keeping our audience engaged.

5.3 What has changed during this process?

- We now have a tool and our own method of working through a climate adaptation process that could be applied to each of the 12 women's health organisations in the state and we could also help other organisations, outside of women's health. We have things that we can argue to be included in our strategic planning in both organisations which would not have been as clear without this process.
- The process has given us new momentum after all the research we had done on environmental justice.

5.4 What was most important for us?

- It was important to make the tool make sense to the women's health sector and other workers. We'd already had conversations at various levels through the environmental justice work so we understood



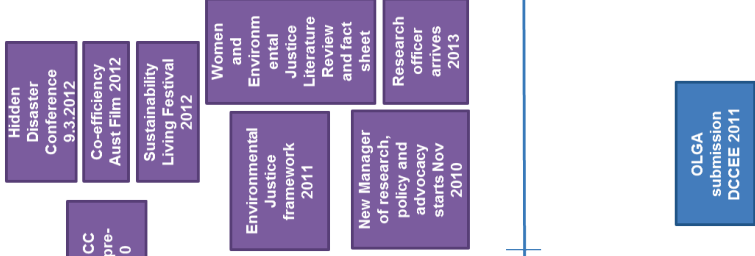
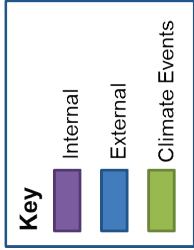
what some of those effects might be and were able to interweave those into the tool.

6 What next? Moving forward.

We have run and organised two workshops using an adapted version of the Climate Q workbook. Both WHIN and WHGNE are now refining an adaptation action plan as a result of the process, the tool and the workshops.

We are now using our adaptation action plan within WHIN to inform our strategic plan which will be presented at our next board meeting.

WHIN Timeline Activity





Partner Universities



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