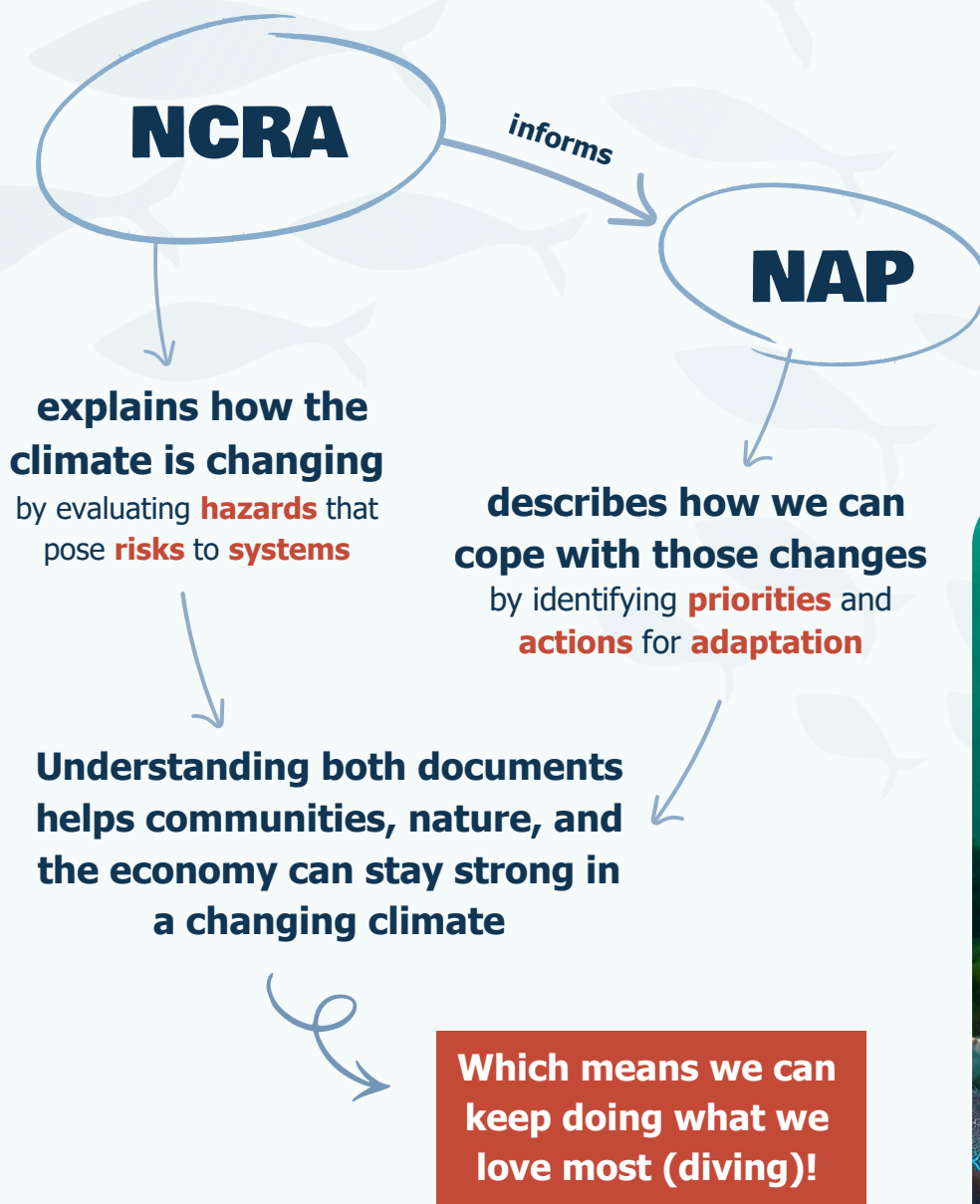


FACT SHEET

THE DIVE COMMUNITY'S CLIMATE RISKS



The **National Climate Risk Assessment (NCRA)** and **National Adaptation Plan (NAP)** are policy documents, written by the Australian Government together with scientists and other experts to provide clear information on the biggest climate risks we are facing, and to help us plan for the future. **For divers**, these documents can help us to understand how climate risks like extreme weather, coastal changes, and ecosystem degradation could affect dive sites, tourism operations and recreational diving, and guides actions to help protect the natural environments and infrastructure that keep diving safe and enjoyable.



USEFUL WORDS

Hazards

Changes to the climate including sea level rise, marine heatwaves, extreme weather events, etc

Risks

The consequences of hazards, like physical damage or health and wellbeing impacts

Systems

The things we value - nature, the economy, communities, health, and so on - and how they work

Priorities

Areas where the biggest positive impact on society, nature, and the economy will probably be experienced if we take steps to protect them from climate change

Actions

The things we can do to reduce the level of risk

Adaptation

The process of adjusting to climate change by reducing negative impacts and taking advantage of new opportunities



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR DIVERS?

1. DIVE SITES ARE AT RISK.

1 Marine heatwaves are already causing widespread coral bleaching and threatening the survival of seagrass and kelp, and this will worsen in future. This may lead to **changes in the three-dimensional structure of dive sites**, reducing the availability of crevices and services that provide habitat for the species we are visiting. Although some resilient areas will survive, it is likely that some sections of coral reef, seagrass, and kelp forest will disappear entirely.

2 Changing marine conditions are altering the distribution and abundance of many marine species. There will likely be a **shift in the species present at dive sites**, with some areas losing key organisms that contribute to the site's character and ecological balance. This can change the composition of entire underwater communities at specific locations.

3 Sea level rise and stronger storms are eroding coastlines, damaging critical habitats, and causing influxes of freshwater runoff. This is likely to increase the amount of sediment in the water, which might **reduce water quality, visibility and the health of dive sites**.

THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON AUSTRALIA'S BIODIVERSITY CAN BE REDUCED IF WE ACT NOW.

- National Adaptation Plan



Have you spotted an **invasive or unusual species**, or something that seems out of place, on one of your dives? Can you think of a **species that defines the character of a dive site**, and if so how would its loss change your diving experience?

2. DIVE EXPERIENCES ARE AT RISK.

1 Storm damage, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events might **restrict physical access to shore dive sites**. Some may become unsafe to reach or might require new entry points, limiting where and when divers can explore.

2 Shifts in weather patterns, stronger currents, and changes in species' seasonal activities might affect **when and where we dive**. Divers might experience disruptions or permanent changes to their traditional dive planning in order to avoid extreme conditions or observe a particular species.

3 Some of our favourite dive sites are likely to experience significant changes which may impact our **mental health and wellbeing**. Reduced biodiversity, degraded sites, and challenging conditions can reduce the recreational and restorative benefits of diving.



Do any of your favourite dive sites have **entry points that might be damaged** by extreme weather? Have you ever felt sad, anxious, or stressed when a **favourite site looks different** from past visits?

3. DIVE BUSINESSES ARE AT RISK.



Have you experienced any **unexpected repair or maintenance costs** after extreme weather?

1 **Economic pressure and financial uncertainty** may be created through the combination of rising costs of equipment and services, increased insurance premiums, changes in tourist numbers or preferences that impact demand, changes in revenue continuity, and potential damage. Operational costs may also increase if infrastructure or equipment upgrades - such as additional shading or flood barriers - are required in order to protect staff and facilities from climate impacts.

2 Higher temperatures and extreme weather events can pose **health and safety risks to customers and staff**, requiring dive businesses to implement additional safety measures, training, equipment, or infrastructure to mitigate these risks.

3 Storm damage, coastal erosion, rising sea levels and extreme weather events threaten the physical integrity of dive facilities and infrastructure. **Boats, dive shops, equipment, moorings and marinas might be damaged or lost**, resulting in increasing repair maintenance costs and longer periods of downtime.

"BUSINESSES ARE USUALLY BEST PLACED TO MANAGE RISKS TO THEIR OWN ASSETS AND ACTIVITIES FROM CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS."

- National Adaptation Plan



BUT IT'S NOT ALL BAD NEWS...

The reports also say:

The future isn't set in stone.

Decisions made today will shape how climate change affects communities, ecosystems, and the diving industry. Every fraction of a degree of warming that we can prevent will influence the kind of future we will have, and the choices made by governments, businesses, and individuals today all influence this.

Communities can shape a resilient future through actions like telling stories, sharing knowledge, and collaborating on solutions. Collective effort to anticipate risks and adapt practices are essential to protecting dive sites and marine life, and to making sure divers are supported when we experience climate change impacts.

WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

INDIVIDUAL DIVERS

Prepare to deal with changes in the dive sites you love by developing strategies to protect your mental health and building community with fellow divers to support each other as you face climate challenges. Check up on each other as you face climate-related challenges.

Advocate for stronger action from the government. Write an email to your local MP to share your experience of climate change on your favourite dive site, and include a short, clear message about why it is important to you that the ocean be protected from climate change.

Ask your local dive shop how they are adapting to climate risks and encouraging climate-ready practices such as updating safety protocols for extreme weather, improving their infrastructure and equipment, or training staff on communicating climate impacts and adaptation strategies.



DIVE OPERATORS

Identify which aspects of your dive site or business are most vulnerable to climate impacts, and develop an adaptation plan that helps to reduce vulnerability. Look into options such as updating safety protocols, strengthening or relocating infrastructure, training staff, and diversifying services.

Advocate for stronger climate actions by engaging with certifying agencies, industry networks, and government representatives to promote policies that support a climate safe future, including business adaptation and resilience.

Invest in climate change communication training to make sure your staff understands how climate change impacts local dive sites, and can effectively, and positively, engage visitors with climate solutions.

DIVE PROFESSIONALS

Strengthen your understanding of how climate change might impact your dive sites. Learn about local impacts like shifting species populations, changes in currents or visibility, or increased frequency of extreme weather events. Use reputable sources like scientific journals, government agencies including the Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO to stay up to date.

Prepare to have open conversations with customers about how climate change is affecting the ocean. Encourage curiosity by asking open-ended questions about how they are feeling, and share your own experiences and observations. You don't have to have all the answers: the goal is to help your customers feel comfortable reflecting on the changes happening and have a talk about possible solutions.



Divers for Climate is here to help the dive community to build resilience, share knowledge, and influence climate action, to help protect our oceans - and the livelihoods that rely on them - from the worst impacts of climate change. To learn more, including actions you can take, visit www.diversforclimate.com