

Regional Climate Change Risk Screening FAQ, August 2020

What does the interim risk screening tell us about climate change in Canterbury?

The screening helps us to understand the existing and future climate change risks and opportunities for Canterbury. For the risks in the built environment, natural environment, and economy, over 180 risks were identified. Of these, 55% were assessed as moderate, major or extreme risks. Within those three value domains, 46% of risks were identified as priority risks having a big impact on the region. The report also discusses some opportunities from climate change, as well as information gaps that need to be filled.

How do these risks impact Māori?

Priority risks from climate change identified in a workshop with representatives from Ngāi Tahu include marae access and infrastructure, māhinga kai, cultural landscapes, freshwater availability, tāonga species, Ngāi Tahu investments, rangatiratanga and governance.

How was the risk screening developed?

There were workshops and meetings with Environment Canterbury, Canterbury councils, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu representatives as treaty partners. We also had experts from Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research and NIWA add their knowledge. During these meetings, we looked at five “value domains”: the built environment, economy, natural environment, human domain, and governance. Risks were measured based on the climate hazards that affect them, and the impact that the risk is likely to have on the region.

Why isn't the risk screening addressing local risks?

A risk screening provides an initial stocktake so future work can be structured and prioritised. While there is a drive to understand the climate change impacts at a highly-local level, that level of detail will only emerge later in the risk assessment process.

A risk screening is broad to reduce the chances of missing things out. Risks were also assessed using a high emissions scenario not because we think that is the most likely scenario of future climate, but because we need to know how bad the risks could get in order to plan for them.

What's next?

There's still a lot of work to do. The next step is a more detailed risk assessment. This will give us an improved understanding of the priority climate risks, and will help us to create a region that is more prepared for climate change. Canterbury is closely following and contributing to central government's climate change response. The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) released the first [national climate change risk assessment](#) in August, 2020. Risk assessments provide the evidence base for adaptation plans.

When releasing the National Climate Change Risk Assessment, the Government said it would work with local government to develop a system of subnational risk assessments and adaptation plans.

Where can I find out more about what climate change means for Canterbury?

Our understanding of the changing climate and the consequences will continue to evolve. Environment Canterbury in 2020 commissioned research from NIWA about what might happen in our region between now and 2100. You can find the projections here: <https://ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/climate-change/climate-change-in-canterbury/>