



Enabling best practice adaptation

A project to understand Australia's progress on climate change adaptation

Australia has now seen over a decade of work on adaptation to address our future climate risk. Despite this, there has been no comprehensive national effort to quantify how much adaptation planning or action is underway, or any systematic attempts to learn from these processes to inform better practices.

Stakeholders at all levels of government, community, and industry are asking:

- How is adaptation progressing in Australia?
- What does best practice adaptation look like?
- How can we move beyond planning to enable implementation?

The National Environmental Science Program (NESP) Project Enabling best practice adaptation has set out to answer these important questions about the uptake of adaptation in Australia. Commencing at the beginning of 2023, the project is a three year investment to develop guiding principles to help governments, civil society and communities undertake best practice, and a framework which can be used to measure these adaptation best practices.

To achieve the aims set out above, this project has several concurrent pieces of work:

1. Adaptation database and stocktake

With the intention of being able to conduct Australia's first adaptation stocktake, and understand the extent of adaptation activities in Australia, the project has begun collating a database to investigate the types, spread and progress of adaptation across Australia. Data collection began through a survey and engagement with key people and organisations. Information will be collected on an ongoing basis throughout the life of the project.

It is intended that the data collected in this adaptation database will be used to create a publicly available, searchable data platform available to decision-makers and stakeholders across Australia.

1. ADAPTATION STOCKTAKE

Development of an adaptation database to inform Australia's first adaptation stocktake.



2. ENABLING ADAPTATION

Understanding factors that can enable climate change adaptation in human systems.



3. BEST PRACTICE ADAPTATION

Understanding climate change adaptation best practice and how this might be measured.



4. AN EVIDENCE-BASED FRAMEWORK

In-depth case studies of adaptation best practice across Australia



2023

2025

2. Enablers of adaptation

Building on the proliferation of literature seeking to understand the barriers to climate change adaptation, this project is seeking to understand more about factors that can enable adaptation to occur. The project began by undertaking a systematic literature review to understand current knowledge of factors that enable climate change adaptation. Our review focussed on summarising findings from evidence-based case studies of adaptation in human systems and identified several factors which can readily help promote adaptation. This review also highlighted a number of gaps in the literature for further investigation.

3. Best practice adaptation

In order to build a clearer understanding of what is 'best practice' adaptation, the project will also look at both theory-based thinking on best practice adaptation, and a range of examples of adaptation planning and practice undertaken in Australia. We expect our analysis will bring together existing ideas to inform how enabling factors might be used to promote best practice adaptation.

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Do you have an example of adaptation you would like to go in the database?

Complete the survey here:



Next steps

In 2024 we will be looking to partner with organisations to test our theoretical understanding of enabling factors and best practice with several case studies.

These case studies will be distributed across a range of different actors, from different geographical locations who are implementing different scales of work and responding to varying climate risks.

Building on current knowledge in the literature, we will use these case studies to develop a framework for enabling best practice climate change adaptation.

