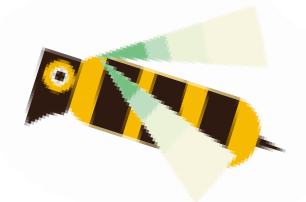


A National Strategy for Just Adaptation



Existing climate adaptation strategies often identify the additional barriers and impacts faced by 'vulnerable peoples' but rarely acknowledge the structural inequities that produce and maintain the uneven distribution of adaptive capacities in society. **This strategy understands adaptation beyond the ability to cope with climatic hazards, and addresses the uneven capacities, power dynamics, and persistent inequities that cause and sustain vulnerabilities**, which are structurally exacerbated by colonialism, patriarchy, and economic rationalism. Vulnerabilities are dynamic and do not exist in isolation, highlighting the need to better understand and respond to these concerns.

A National Strategy for Just Adaptations provides a **comprehensive framework for addressing inequities that impact the ability for 'vulnerable' community members to adapt to climate change**. This strategy was developed in a highly consultative and interdisciplinary manner to address some of the **complex, intersecting ways that marginalisation, discrimination, neglect, and other structural disadvantages affect the resilience and adaptive capacity of individuals and groups**. Just adaptation policies and practices recognise the diverse types of knowledge, needs, capabilities, aspirations and obstacles of Australian society, to implement transformational thinking and actions, and **strive for a more sustainable and more equitable future for all**.

This strategy meaningfully **engages with the diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and challenges that influence peoples capacity to adapt** to climate change and the degree that impacts are felt. A persons ability to adapt is informed by a complex range of contributing factors and historical contexts that are important to consider when working to facilitate positive transformational change. **This strategy aims to actively address injustices and inequalities within Australian society using five building blocks that underpin the strategy (Fig. 1)**. These building blocks act as a framework that can be applied to a range of areas and disciplines to encourage positive change, such as government, policy, research, education and private industry. Using these building blocks, **five priority reform areas were identified to address inequalities and encourage just adaptation for all**.

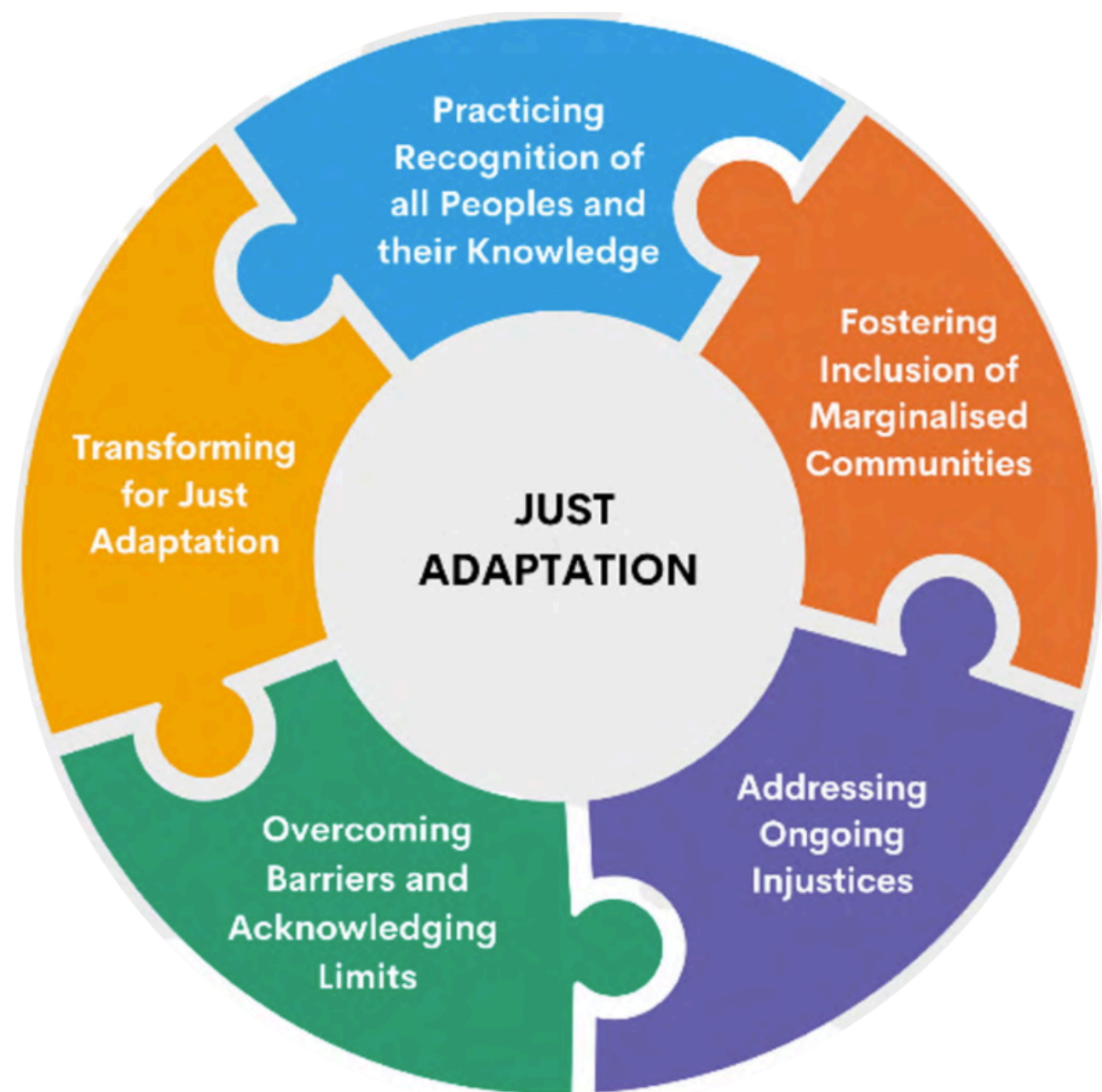


Figure. 1: Five Building Blocks of the National Just Adaptations Strategy



Understanding Just Adaptation

In order to engage meaningfully with the strategy, it is important to understand the key concepts, terms and theories that inform the report.

Decolonisation

Decolonisation is an active term that can be understood as “a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power” (Smith, 2021) and an increased critique of colonial and colonial settler powers and other oppressive structures (Neale et al. 2019). The process of decolonising societal systems, structures and ways of thinking and being, requires unlearning and rethinking the dominant power dynamics and discourses perpetuated by a given society. Decolonising climate change adaptation, discourse and responses is important and necessary to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on disadvantaged communities in a just manner.

Justice

Justice is understood within the strategy as a juxtaposition to the multitude of complex injustices that undermine people’s ability to adapt to climate change. The strategy incorporates theories of economic, social, climate, intergenerational, non-human and systematic justice that are founded on concepts of fairness and equity.

Resilience

Resilience can be defined as “The capacity of communities, environments and economies to cope with a hazardous event or disturbance, while maintaining their essential functions and structure” (DAWE, 2021). Resilience is often mistaken as the opposite of vulnerability, however many communities with increased vulnerability to climate change demonstrate high levels of resilience and adaptive capacity. This highlights the need to separate structural, historical and institutional barriers that create vulnerability from resilience and recognise the strength, knowledge and experience of many disadvantaged communities.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the concept that addresses how the “interconnected aspects of social difference, including gender, race, caste, and class, co-constitutively shape individual experiences in complex and shifting ways” (Garcia & Tschakert, 2020). The term highlights the ways in which societal power dynamics interact to greater expose someone to discrimination and marginalisation due to intersecting aspects of their identity (Crenshaw, 1989).

Adaptation

Adaptation to climate change has become an increasingly important global priority since the 2015 Paris Agreement and the results from the 2022 IPCC report which demonstrated that society-wide adaptation is essential to increasing community resilience and reducing the negative consequences due to a changing climate (IPCC, 2022). Adaptation is defined by the IPCC (2022) as “as the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects in order to moderate harm or take advantage of beneficial opportunities”.



Priority Reform Areas & Recommendations

1 EMPOWERING INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Recognise, support, and learn from the unique experiences and knowledges of Indigenous Peoples.

2 EMBEDDING A JUST ADAPTATION FRAMEWORK ACROSS GOVERNMENTS AND SECTORS

Conventional approaches to adaptation need to change in all levels of government, sectoral bodies, industry, community organisations, and in research, including reframing perceptions of 'vulnerability' to better recognise structural disadvantage.

3 INCLUDING THE VOICES AND EXPERIENCES OF DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS ACROSS AREAS OF MARGINALISATION IN JUST ADAPTATION PROCESSES

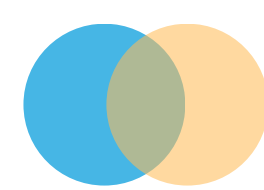
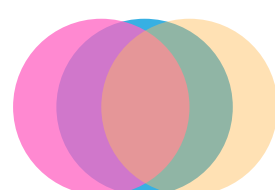
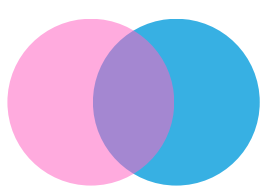
Public, private, and community resources can be used to support diverse groups to grow their capabilities to become actively involved in decision-making, increasing community recognition, inclusion and countering injustices.

4 SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS TO DRIVE TRANSFORMATION

Local communities and community groups must be given agency and trust to create their own relevant pathways in just adaptation.

5 ADVANCE RESEARCH AGENDAS THAT PROMOTE JUST ADAPTATION

Decision-makers should be supported by the research community and other knowledge sources to foster cross- and trans-disciplinary methods of innovation, establish data demonstrating the benefits of just approaches, identify drivers of disadvantage, and support just, sustainable and transformative outcomes for future generations.



Using the Just Adaptations Strategy

Due to the complex and intersectional nature of just adaptation, the strategy addresses a range of important topics, that are applicable to various disciplines. The below guide can be used to identify relevant areas of interest within the strategy, to encourage further understanding and engagement.

Researchers

Gender Transformative Adaptation pg. 49

Colonialism pg. 22

Inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and the Rights of Self-Determination pg. 26

Addressing Injustices to Non-human Species pg. 38

Barriers to Engaging with Indigenous Peoples pg. 41

Addressing Intergenerational Injustices pg. 37

Economic barriers and normative alternatives for economics pg. 45

Policy and Decision Makers

Addressing Injustices to Indigenous Peoples pg. 34

Decision Makers and Leaders pg. 43

Sectoral Barriers and Limits pg. 42

Deliberative Pathways Toward Just Transformation pg. 50

Decision-support Tools and Processes for Just Adaptation and Transformation pg. 52

Incorporating Justice into Policy and Institutional Settings pg. 56

Supporting Indigenous Knowledges to Transform Adaptation Practices pg. 50

Community and NGO's

Everyday Limits pg. 41

Country pg. 20

Communities pg.23

Including Diverse Communities pg. 27

Addressing Injustices in Urban Settings pg. 36

Policy Barriers to Climate Change Adaptation in Australia's Housing Sector pg. 44

Community-based Adaptation Pathway Mapping Toward Desirable and Just Climate Futures pg. 53

Relevant Recommendations

5. Advance research agendas that promote just adaptation pg. 7

2. Embedding a just adaptation framework across governments and sectors pg. 4

4. Supporting communities and community groups to drive transformation pg. 6

3. Including the voices and experiences of diverse stakeholders across areas of marginalisation in just adaptation processes pg. 5

1. Empowering indigenous leadership pg. 3

Acknowledgements and Further Reading

- [Download the full report](#): Future Earth Australia (2022). A National Strategy for Just Adaptation. Australian Academy of Science, Canberra, Australia.
- A special thank you to the contribution of our [Just Adaptations Expert Working Group](#)
- Also read Future Earth Australia's [Sustainable Oceans and Coasts National Strategy 2021-2030](#) and [Sustainable Cities and Regions: 2024 Update National Strategy](#)

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Relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals



BELMONT FORUM

Opportunities for Australia in the Belmont Forum

Established in 2009, the [Belmont Forum](#) is a partnership of funding organisations, international science councils, and regional consortia committed to the advancement of transdisciplinary science. **The Belmont Forum is one of the globe's largest and most influential research networks, membership of which is a tremendous opportunity for Australia.** As the member for Australia, **Future Earth Australia (FEA) is the vehicle through which Australian Government Departments, agencies and scientists can access and be awarded funding for projects from the Belmont Forum.**

[Future Earth Australia](#) is the Australian arm of Future Earth, a global sustainability, research, and innovation network. Future Earth Australia connects, convenes, and coproduces solutions to the sustainability challenges facing Australia, our region, and the globe. We achieve this by coordinating, enabling, performing, and promoting research and practice to address our most pressing sustainability challenges.