Resilient Newtown

Community Climate Change & Earthquake Resilience Action Plan
Practical, Affordable 12-Month Action Plan (2026–2027)
SUMMARY for Discussion - 15 June 2026

Vision

Te whakapūmau i te mahi āhuarangi
Embedding climate action

Te mahi tahi me ngā hapori
Collaborating with communities

Wāhanga mahi: Mahi āhuarangi a te hapori
Action area: Community climate action

Create a safer, more affordable, low-carbon, and climate-resilient Newtown community by reducing flood risks, lowering household energy costs, increasing renewable energy generation, improving public transport use, and strengthening earthquake preparedness.

Community Context

Newtown is one of Wellington's most diverse and densely populated suburbs. The suburb faces increasing risks from severe rainfall events, flash flooding, rising energy costs, transport emissions, and Wellington's significant earthquake hazard.

This plan focuses on practical actions that can be delivered within 12 months using community partnerships, volunteers, local businesses, schools, and support from Wellington City Council, Greater Wellington Regional Council, local residents, businesses and community organisations.

Encourage use of the various available resources. For example, Wellington City Council Climate Action Support Team Email:climateaction@wcc.govt.nz

https://wellington.govt.nz/climate-change-sustainability-environment/climate-change/five-ways-to-take-climate-action

https://wellington.govt.nz/-/media/environment-and-sustainability/climate-change/files/climate-adaptations-options.pdf?la=en&hash=DF3E49E8E200FCBD61D69296D0B5429C7968BDEA

https://wellington.govt.nz/community-support-and-resources/community-support/funding/council-funds/climate-and-sustainability-fund

Suggested Action Ideas for Newtown – for Discussion:

Priority 1: Reduce Flash Flooding Risks

Objective: Reduce the impacts of intense rainfall and flash flooding on streets, homes, businesses, and community facilities.

1. Community Stormwater Clean-Up Programme

- Improved stormwater flow during heavy rain events.

2. Rain Garden and Green Infrastructure Programme

- Rain gardens – localised wetland areas; Kerbside planting; Landscaped overland flood flow paths; Small pocket green spaces

3. Household Rainwater Storage Initiative

Encourage installation of: Rainwater tanks – capturing roof rainwater for later use in the garden and Garden water storage systems. Benefits: Reduced pressure on drainage systems & Water available during emergencies.

4. Community Flood Response Network

Create a volunteer flood response team linked in with WREMO, MetService & Earth Sciences NZ to: Share warnings – help set up local rain gauges, maps & systems; Help organise communications resources to handle numerous calls for help; Assist vulnerable residents; Check drainage hotspots; Support clean-up efforts

Priority 2: Reduce Household Electricity Costs Through Local Renewable Energy

Objective: Lower energy costs and improve energy security through solar energy and efficiency improvements.

1. Community Solar Bulk-Buy Scheme

Establish a Newtown Community Solar Group to negotiate discounted installations.

Benefits: Lower installation costs; Reduced electricity bills; Increased local renewable generation.

2. Community Buildings Solar Demonstration Projects

Install solar systems on key buildings such as: Community centres; Sports facilities; Schools. Display real-time generation data to promote encouraging wider adoption.

3. Home Energy Efficiency Programme

Provide workshops covering: Insulation; Draught stopping; Heat pumps; LED lighting; Smart energy use. Expected savings: 10–30% reduction in household energy use.

4. Community Battery Feasibility Study

Investigate shared battery storage options for: Community facilities; Apartment complexes; Businesses; Local resilience hubs. Eg Power Melbourne Community Batteries Project. Benefits: Backup power during outages; Better use of solar generation.

Priority 3: Increase Public Transport and Active Transport Use

Objective: Reduce transport costs, congestion, and emissions while improving mobility.

1. Public Transport Promotion Campaign

Partner with regional transport agencies to promote. Target: 10% increase in regular public transport use by participating households.

2. Walking and Cycling Connections

Identify and advocate for: Safer crossings; Better footpaths; Additional bike parking; Improved cycling links – building on initiatives already happening.

3. Community Travel Challenge

Run a six-week challenge encouraging residents to: Walk; Cycle; Bus; Carpool; Ensure disabilities access. Offer community recognition awards and local business incentives.

4. Local Car-Share Expansion

Encourage additional shared vehicles in Newtown. Benefits: Reduced vehicle ownership costs; Less parking pressure; Lower emissions

Priority 4: Improve Earthquake Resilience

Objective: Strengthen community preparedness and reduce earthquake risks to people and buildings.

1. Community Building Safety Assessments

Identify priority community buildings requiring: Structural review; Seismic assessment; Structural health monitoring systems; Emergency planning upgrades.

2. Household Earthquake Preparedness Campaign

Promote practical actions: Secure furniture; Fasten hot water cylinders; Secure televisions and shelving; Prepare emergency kits; Secure chimneys; Assess and strengthen foundations (hillside houses).

3. Neighbourhood Emergency Hubs

Review local resilience hubs with WREMO & Massey Joint Centre for Disaster Research - to ensure equipped/have access to: Water; First aid supplies; Emergency communications (eg Starlink via a local business); Backup power generators; Solar-powered charging capability; Database lists of key organisations and individuals (eg trades/medical); Promotion so everyone knows about these Hubs.

Eg DIRT (Disaster, Innovation, Research & Teaching Network) at Vogelmorn Bowling Club; and Resilient ORCA (Onslow) https://onslow.myn.nz/

4. Community Emergency Response Training

Conduct training on: First aid; Light rescue; Emergency communications; Welfare support. Target: 100 trained community volunteers

Implementation Schedule

Months 1–3	Establish steering group, flood mapping, solar bulk-buy planning, preparedness campaign launch
Months 4–6	Drainage clean-ups, rain garden installations, energy workshops, emergency hub planning
Months 7–9	Solar installations, public transport campaign, community drills, resilience hub setup

Months 10–12	Evaluation, additional installations, volunteer training, next-year planning

Success Measures After 12 Months – possible examples:

Stormwater Flood Resilience: 4 community clean-up events completed; 100 households using rainwater storage; 10–15 rain gardens installed; Community early warning system in place

Energy Affordability: 100 homes with new solar systems; 5 community buildings with solar generation; 300 households participating in efficiency programmes

Transport: 10% increase in public transport use among participants; Increased cycling and walking participation; Expansion of local car-sharing options

Earthquake Preparedness: 500 households completing preparedness actions; 100 trained volunteers; 3–5 resilience hubs fit for purpose; Safety assessments completed for priority community facilities; Structural health monitoring systems in place for key buildings.

Conclusion

- Over the next 12 months, Newtown can take practical and affordable steps to become more resilient to climate change and natural hazards.
- By combining flood-risk reduction, local renewable energy generation, sustainable transport, and earthquake preparedness, the community can lower costs, improve safety, strengthen social connections, and build long-term resilience for future generations.
- This proposed plan emphasises community-led action supported by local government, schools, businesses, and residents working together to create a safer and more sustainable Newtown.
- Making the most of social media and other media communications vital.
- Plus furthering the development and leveraging of partnerships with a range of businesses and other organisations including WCC, WREMO, Massey and VUW universities.

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www.naturalhazards.co.nz

Other useful reference sites:

Global Seismic Data www.gsdhq.io

Resilient River Communities www.resilientrivers.nz

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