

Climate-Adaptive Communities

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OERC Symposium 22 Nov 2018

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THE DEEP SOUTH

Te Kōmata o
Te Tonga

National
SCIENCE
Challenges



Centre for Sustainability
Kā Rakahau o Te Ao Tūroa



Climate-Adaptive Communities research

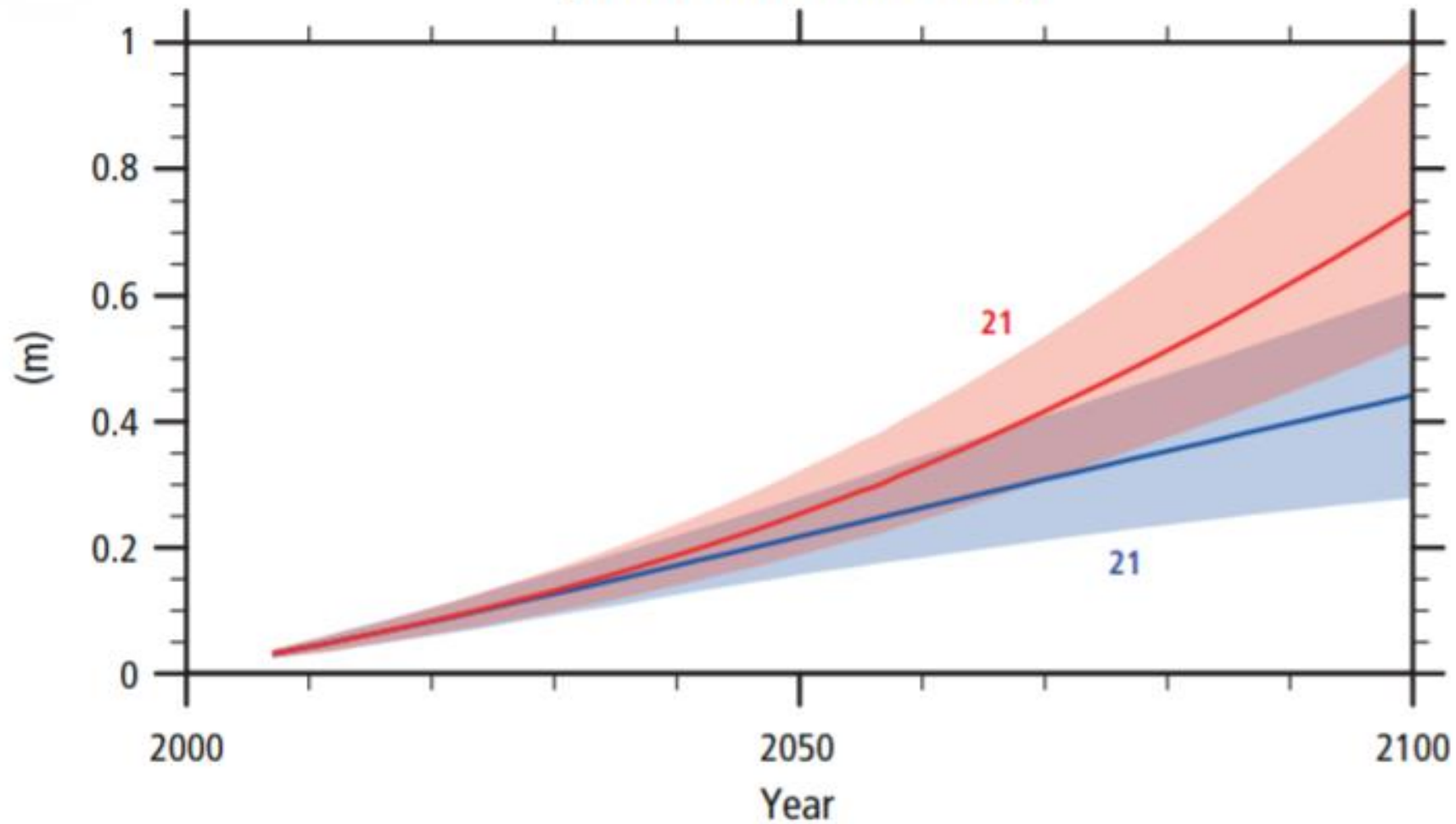


- 1. How councils are engaging with communities & iwi**
- 2. Emergence of community and iwi action**
3. Experiences and needs of those more susceptible to harm

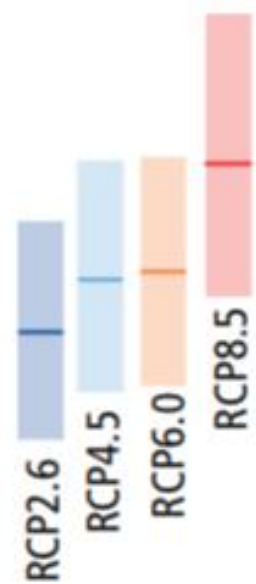
Full findings from first quarter 2019

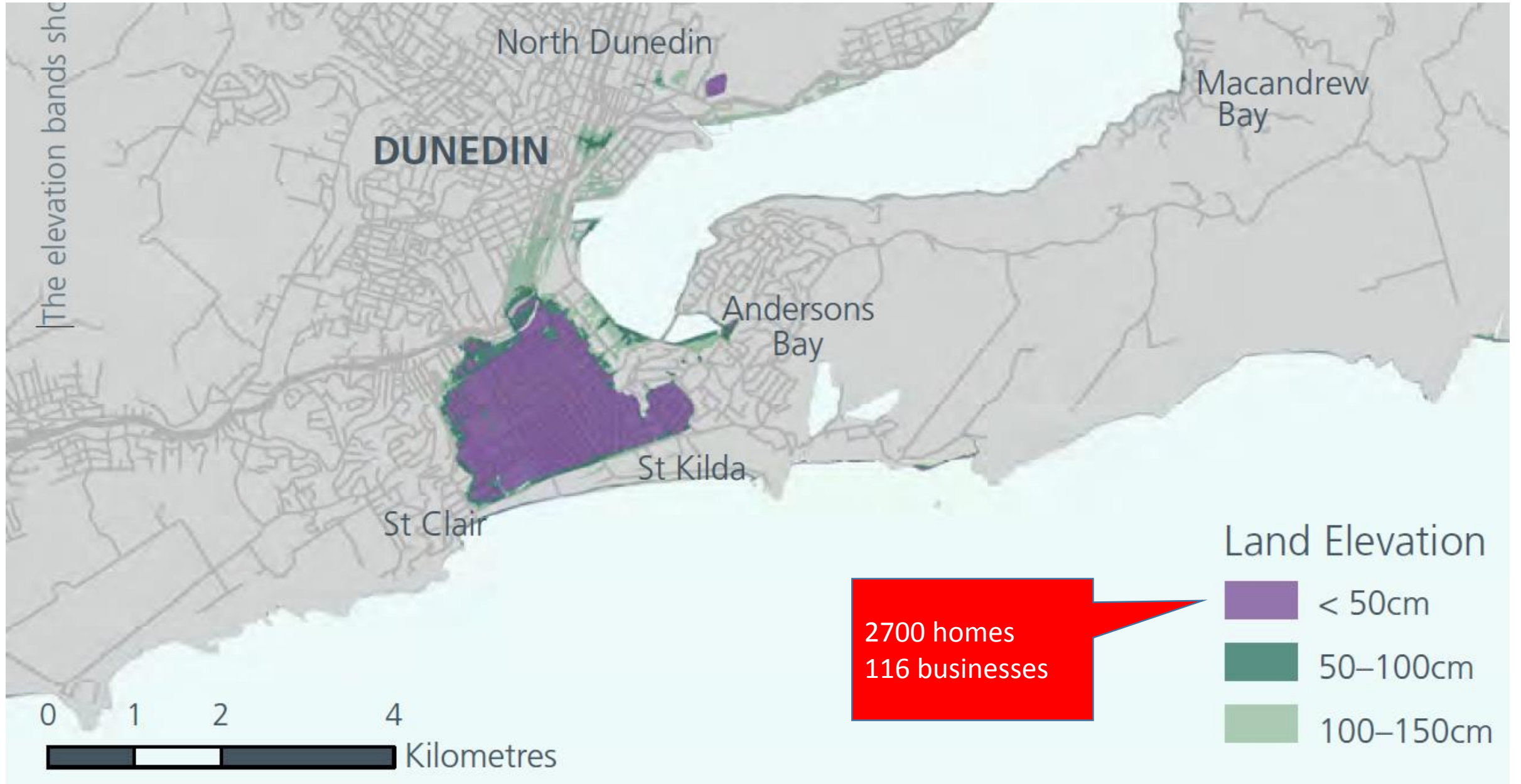
What does climate change
feel like?

Global mean sea level rise (relative to 1986–2005)

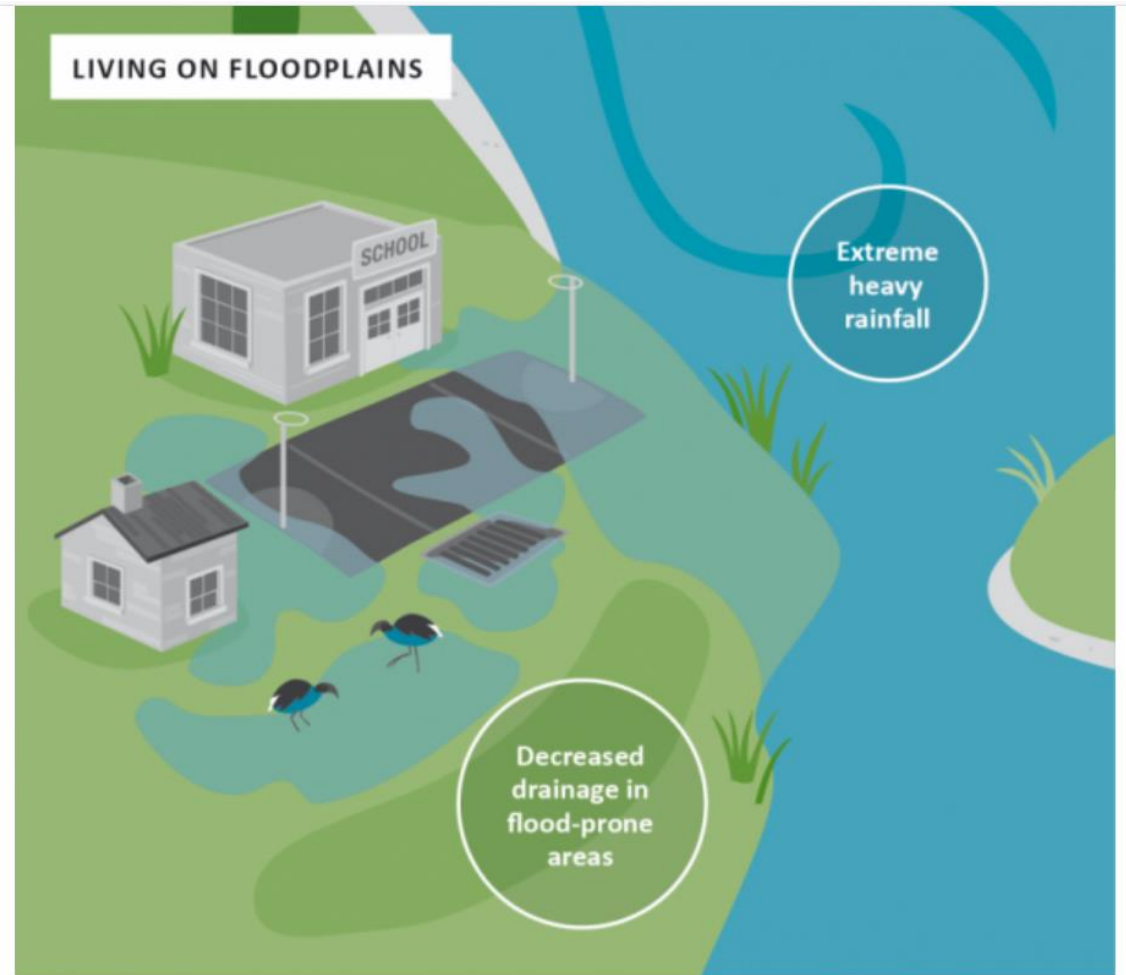
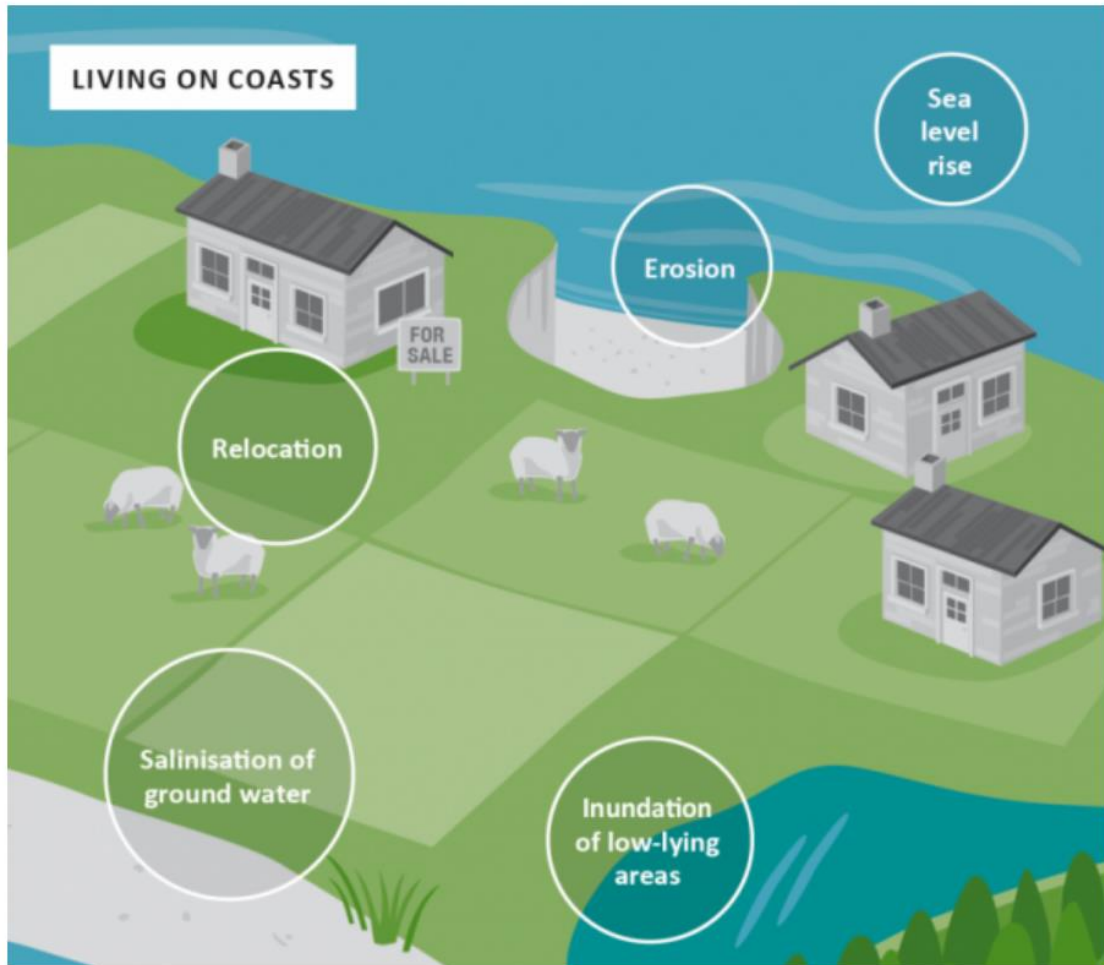


Mean over
2081–2100





Low-lying coastal land in Dunedin. Preparing NZ for Rising Seas, Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (2015), p55



Royal Society of NZ (2016) Climate Change Implications for New Zealand





Adaptation involves ...

1. More frequent & severe hazards – so need to be ready to respond to and recover from immediate events
2. The need for long-term planning – so need to be working on the long term adjustments

Expecting communities to be involved in both, while living their usual lives, is asking a lot.

A few findings

Survey of 13/20 councils highly exposed to sea level rise and increased flooding

In-depth interviews with ~20 council staff in 6 councils

In-depth interviews with members of 6 community groups so far

Cusp of change?



Councils see a big change in community awareness in past couple of years

BUT

- Not sure where to start to engage, and concerned about cost
- Engagement very patchy, under-resourced, unsure of process.

“Where we’re struggling is that we haven’t gone into any outreach into our community to help ground where they need to be...”

- All grappling with how to spread the burden of climate impacts equitably.

Councils can be hamstrung by uncertainty

“So, first job is ... to map and have clear and accurate information.”



- Uncertainty about location, scale, timeframes of impact.
- Uncertainty about roles and responsibilities.
- Fear of litigation and pushback from communities if they don't get it 'right' ... but there is no 'right' with climate change impacts.

Fixation on certainty is unhelpful

=> Develop strong relationships with communities well BEFORE thinking of putting lines on maps

New forms of community engagement needed

“We need to educate people regardless of whether they want to hear it or not”

- Councils are used to consulting on projects and plans – short term.
- Climate impacts are here to stay – and slowly get worse – over decades, centuries.
- ‘Planned retreat’ terminology seen by communities as abandonment.

=> Primary focus on building trust & resilience



Iwi and communities are developing their own responses to climate change

- Existing groups and new groups/networks
- Focus is usually much wider than just adaptation
- Building resilience – relationships, local economy, food, practical skills, transport, energy, etc
- Ngai Tahu: ‘Climate response’ – both adaptation and mitigation
- Seeing opportunities as well as threats



“Everyone’s in it together, that’s my view. We all have a role to play in it. So supporting each other would be useful.”

Questions?

“I mean, a district plan is actually the easy part.”