

BLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

ADVERSE EVENT PLAN
September 2020



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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to establish a framework to provide guidance and establish mechanisms to mitigate and prepare for periods of adverse conditions within Bland Shire Council. The document has been created with reference to similar publications from other jurisdictions and in collaboration with other Councils within the Riverina Joint Organisation.

The Plan aims to build local leadership and community capacity to adapt and cope with chronic stresses and acute shocks. The plan should look to improve preparation, management and recovery from those events. Planning for drought should consider water supply and quality, projects to buoy the local economy and maintain community cohesion and drought support coordination.

The Adverse Event Plan is not designed to replace existing Council plans or policies but work in conjunction with those existing documents to inform the strategies which are adopted.

Principles

The guiding principles for this plan are consistent with the National Principles for Disaster Recovery¹:

- 1. Understanding the context
- 2. Recognising complexity
- 3. Using community-led approaches
- 4. Ensuring coordination of all activities
- 5. Employing effective communication
- 6. Acknowledging and building capacity
- 7. Recovery assistance should be considered in the context of relevant national principles and complement existing ongoing assistance measures
- 8. In the case of recovery support, assistance will be considered in the context of ongoing State and Federal Government services that assist communities, primary producers and businesses prepare for adverse events

Definitions

Adverse Event: Adverse events may include events such as fire, flood, severe weather and disease or other adverse events such as drought and/or sudden and unforeseen trade restrictions resulting from an adverse event, such as disease outbreak.

¹ Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience

Catastrophic Disaster²: A catastrophic disaster is what is beyond our current arrangements, thinking, experience and imagination (i.e. that has overwhelmed our technical, non-technical and social systems and resources, and has degraded or disabled governance structures and strategic and operational decision-making functions). It should be noted that severe to catastrophic disasters differ from emergencies in that they exceed business as usual emergency management systems and capability design parameters.

Community: A social group with a commonality of association and generally defined by location, shared experience or function, and with a number of things in common such as culture, heritage, language, ethnicity, pastimes, occupation or workplace.

Community-led recovery: Recovery from disaster is best led by the affected community where it takes responsibility for and drives recovery efforts, with all three tiers of Government supporting the approach. Recovery needs vary according to the scope of the adverse event and will change and evolve over time. Therefore, recovery activities will be directed by ongoing needs assessment with the community and supporting agencies.

Disaster: A serious disruption to community life which threatens or causes death or injury in that community and/or damage to property which is beyond the day-to-day capacity of the prescribed statutory authorities and which requires special mobilisation and organisation of resources other than those normally available to those authorities.

Emergency: An emergency is an unexpected, unpredictable and difficult or dangerous situation, especially and accident, which happens suddenly and requires quick action to deal with it.

Natural Disaster (COAG definition): Serious disruption to a community or region, rapid onset, threatens or causes death, injury or damage to property/ environment, requires significant and coordinated multi-agency and community response. (Examples of Natural Disasters: bushfire, earthquake, flood, storm, cyclone, storm surge, landslide, tsunami, meteorite strike, tornado).

Shared responsibility: When governments from all tiers, communities, business and individuals take an active approach to prevention, preparation, response and recovery.

Recovery: The coordinated process of supporting affected communities in reconstruction of the physical and social infrastructure and restoration of emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing.

Resilience: The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate, adapt to, transform and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions through risk management.

Response: Actions taken in anticipation of, during, and immediately after an adverse event to ensure that its effects are minimised, and that people affected are given immediate relief and support.

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² Australian Disaster Preparedness framework

Key Stakeholders and Consultation Points

Council has a number of key consultation points that it will utilise in the event of an adverse event. These points assist council to co-ordinate and communicate responses to adverse event, allowing for better response outcomes.

The following have been identified:

- Emergency Services Committee
- NSW Police
- Red Cross
- Salvation Army
- Vinnies
- NSW Health
- Churches
- Education facilities
- Rural Financial Counselling Service
- Interagency
- Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network
- Murrumbidgee Local Health District
- Local Land Service

Supporting Documents for the Plan

The preparation of an Adverse Event Plan is consistent with the guiding principles for councils set out in the Local Government Act 1993. The guiding principles contained in Section 8A of the Act include: -

• "Section 8A (1) (a) - Councils should provide strong and effective representation, leadership, planning and decision-making."

Section 8C of the Act sets out the integrated planning and reporting principles that apply to councils including the following: -

- "Section 8C (h) Councils should manage risks to the local community or area or to the council effectively and proactively.
- Section 8C (i) Councils should make appropriate evidence-based adaptations to meet changing needs and circumstances."

The Bland Shire Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 (CSP) sits above all other council plans and policies in the planning hierarchy. The CSP was developed in consultation with the community and identifies the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future, and strategies to achieve them. The CSP has four broad themes or key directions as follows: -

- A. Our People A strong, healthy, connected and inclusive community
- B. Our Places Maintain & improve the Shire's assets & infrastructure

- C. Our Leadership A well run Council acting as the voice of the community
- D. Our Prosperity Growing our population and jobs

While the preparation of an Adverse Event Plan aligns with each of these themes, the most relevant would be the aspiration of "a strong, healthy, connected and inclusive community" and the strategies contained therein.

As well as the CSP, the following Council documents support this Plan (NB. This is not an exhaustive list of Council documents and can be updated as required):

- Local Emergency Management Plan
- Business Assistance Policy
- Business Continuity Plan
- Communication Policy
- · Community Grants Donations Policy
- Financial Hardship Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Guide to Management of Roadside Vegetation
- Sewer Management Plan
- Stormwater Management Plan

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Local Government

The role of councils within the community has been stipulated by the Local Government Act which sets out the guiding principles for councils³. These principles are designed to guide a Council to exercise its functions, make decisions and engage with the community. Some of the key principles for exercising a Council's function include:

- providing strong and effective representation, leadership, planning and decisionmaking
- providing the best possible value for residents and ratepayers
- provision of effective and efficient services and regulation to meet the diverse needs of the local community
- working co-operatively with other councils and the State government to achieve desired outcomes for the local community
- managing assets so that current and future local community needs can be met
- working with others to secure appropriate services for local community needs
- acting fairly, ethically and without bias

In the context of an Adverse Event, such as extended periods of drought, Council's role will be on of coordination and facilitation of specific activities and events as identified through the implementation of the Adverse Event Plan.

Role of the Australian Government 4

The Australian Government is responsible for:

- funding and delivering a time-limited household support payment based on individual and farming family needs including:
 - reciprocal obligations that encourage resilience

³ LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993 - SECT 8A

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⁴ Australian Government Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan

- case management to support reciprocal obligation requirements
- establishing and operating a Future Drought Fund, to enhance drought preparedness and resilience
- providing continued access to incentives that support farming businesses' risk management, including taxation concessions, the Farm Management Deposits Scheme and concessional loans
- improving and maintaining national, regional and local predictive and real-time drought indicator information, drawing on the Bureau of Meteorology's observation network and forecasting.

Shared roles and responsibilities

The Commonwealth, states and territories are responsible for:

- developing, designing, implementing and funding drought preparedness, response and recovery programs that are consistent with the NDA, encourage robust risk management and seek to avoid market distortions
- developing capability-building programs, tools and technologies to inform and improve farming businesses' decision-making and promote resilience
- provision of rural financial counselling services
- support to mitigate the effects of drought on the health and wellbeing of farming families and farming communities
- encouraging the delivery and uptake of capability-building programs to improve farming businesses' skills and decision-making that are flexible and tailored to farming businesses' needs
- ensuring animal welfare and land management issues are managed during drought.
- sharing, coordinating, collaborating and communicating information on drought preparedness, response and recovery policies and programs being developed and implemented
- ensuring information on assistance for drought preparedness, response and recovery is accessible and readily available
- ensuring consistency of drought policy and reform objectives and complementarity of drought preparedness, response and recovery programs
- contributing to the development of quality, publicly available data, including but not limited to – weather, seasonal and climate forecasts
 - regional and local predictive real-time drought indicator information
 - a consistent early warning system for drought
 - an improved understanding of fodder crops and holdings across Australia.

Role of industry & farm businesses

Industry organisations and leaders are responsible for:

- providing information to farmers and rural and regional communities, on and increasing awareness of
 - farm management practices for drought preparedness, management and recovery
 - business literacy and skill development opportunities, including peer review boards or similar
 - drought support measures provided by government and non-government bodies

- working with governments to assess the effectiveness of government drought programs.

Farm businesses are responsible for:

- preparing their businesses for drought
- preparing family and employees for drought
- developing and maintaining a drought plan
- informing themselves of new measures and approaches that may be available to build resilience.

Role of the community

Members of the community, while not having a specific role during periods of drought, can provide support to others within drought affected communities by supporting local businesses and organisations such as the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Rural Financial Counselling Service as well as charitable organisations such as Vinnies, Red Cross and Salvation Army.

Managing an Adverse Event

Each adverse event will vary in terms of:

- Seriousness of the event
- Numbers of people involved
- Risk exposure
- Financial impacts
- Media interest
- Need to involve other stakeholders

Therefore, the response to each adverse event should be proportionate to its scale, scope and complexity. Each event will be assessed using Bland Shire Council's Risk Management Framework (in development).

The framework sets out the steps of the risk management process;

Step 1	Hazard Identification
Step 2	Risk Assessment
Step 3	Identification and Control/Elimination of the Risk
Step 4	Allocation of Responsibilities
Step 5	Monitoring and Review

Where a Project Management Plan is required, reference should be made to the following resources;

- Project Management Plan (template in development)
- Risk Management Plan (template in development)

These will assist in providing staff, when required, with a template to manage an Adverse Event where contracts are needed to be put in place to manage necessary works.

Adverse Event Risk Areas and Mitigation Strategies

The requirements for an Adverse Event Plan under the Drought Communities Programme – Extension guidelines (section 6.1) are that Eligible Councils must develop an Adverse Event Plan which meets the needs of their community, and give consideration to the following:

- natural resource management (i.e. managing water supply, ground cover, trees, erosion, biodiversity)
- economic diversification and community resilience (i.e. infrastructure planning, tourism investment, diversifying local industries, capacity building for local leadership), and
- communication and coordination (i.e. how to let people know what's available now, and in the future; how do you communicate in hard times and for recovery)

These elements have been individually addressed in the following table.

Natural Resource Management

Area of Concern	Risks	Mitigation Strategy
Water Supply and availability	1. Drought	Water restrictions brought in
	Dam water used to Fight Fires	Dam water replaced on request by RFS
	Urban water used to fight fires	3. Communication protocols established between RFS and water utilities to choose the best source of water
	Contamination of Water Supplies	4a. Additional water testing for contamination in line with Drinking Water Management Plan
		4b. Alternative sources for drinking water identified
		4c. Liaise with NSW Health on water testing and health
Ground Cover, trees and soil erosion	Floods wash away ground cover	Implement Stormwater Management Plan
	Erosion undermines loses ground cover	Implement Flood Mitigation Strategy

Area of Concern	Risks	Mitigation Strategy
	Stability of trees are undermined	Work with LLS to control Roadside Grazing Permits
Biodiversity Impacts	Movement of equipment and machinery in response to adverse event increases risk of spread of pests, disease and weeds	Work with LLS to raise awareness of the issue Community education on the importance of maintaining biodiversity
	Loss of biodiversity as an outcome of the adverse event such as fire or drought	Implement Council's Biodiversity Plan Work with wildlife rescue organisations on relocation of threatened animals in an adverse event

Economic Diversification and Community Resilience

Area of Concern	Risks	Mitigation Strategy
Infrastructure planning	Unable to complete projects or activities	Outsource to labour hire or contractors to address lost time.
	Workforce availability constraints	2a. Support campaigns to encourage a better population mix
		2b. Implement a "Grow your Own" workforce
Tourism investment	Visitor economy collapses as a result of adverse event	1a. Implement Tourism Development Strategy
		1b. Implement Economic Development Strategy
		1c. Work with Regional Tourism groups to build and promote product post the event e.g. Rediscover your Backyard
Diversifying local industries	Lack of diversity impacts on ability to recover	1a. Identify alternative providers of services
		1b. Implement Council's Economic Strategy to build business growth
		1c. Support <i>Buy from the Bush</i> campaigns

Area of Concern	Risks	Mitigation Strategy
Capacity building for local leadership	Lack of capacity to provide leadership	1a. Utilise Communications team to help construct messaging
		1b. Training for senior management and leaders re communication in crisis.
Public Health	Mental Health issues arise in response to event	1a. Liaise with Murrumbidgee LHD and Primary Health Network on programs to address mental health.
		1b. Council runs community events that bring people affected together.
		1c. Liaising with health
	Impacts to sanitation and hygiene services	2a. Provision of water for personal use.
	and nygione connect	2b. Alternative power sources to run sanitation and water services
		2c. Implementing strategies for "safe fails" to minimise impacts.
Economic Impacts	Loss of Household/Farm /Business Income	1a. Councils look for opportunities for part-time/casual work for residents
		1b. Advocacy to State and Federal
		1c. Council promotes "Buy Local" to keep money in the local economy
		1d. Raise awareness of income support opportunities

Communication and Coordination

Area of Concern	Risks	Mitigation Strategy
Communicating adverse events	Residents not aware of where to obtain information	Communications strategy that runs all year around advising residents of where to find information in an adverse event.

Area of Concern	Risks	Mitigation Strategy
	Non-English-speaking residents may not understand communications	Communications are delivered in other languages
Communicating emergencies	Residents not aware of where to obtain information	Communications strategy that runs all year around advising residents of where to find information in an adverse event.
	Non-English-speaking residents may not understand communications	Communications are delivered in other languages
Community recovery	Community slow to recover	1a. Council works with Recovery Officer where one has been appointed.
		1b. Council works in partnership with State and Federal agencies to support community recovery.
Telecommunications	Telecommunication services are lost during an event	1a. Satellite phones purchased in case of emergency.
		1b. Satellite wifi is made available
		1c. Create a regional pool of satellite phones that could be accessed by councils during an event.
	Telecommunications services not integrated RFS used different Communications to everyone else	Utilise radio networks to provide communication

Review and Evaluation

The Bland Shire Council and its Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) will review this Plan every four (4) years, or following any:

activation of the Plan in response to an adverse event; or

• legislative changes affecting the Plan.

Literature Review

To support the development of this Adverse Event Plan, a review of existing documentation from a range of organisations was undertaken. This review provided insight into some additional elements which may be incorporated into an Adverse Event Plan depending on local conditions. The following provides a summary of each of the documents reviewed during this process:

Document	Document	Summary
Owner	Title	
Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience	National Principles For Disaster Recovery	The Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience maintains that \working with communities recovering from disasters is complex and challenging. The National Principles for Disaster Recovery provide a way to guide efforts, approaches, planning and decision-making. The relationship between the principles: While all the principles are equally critical to ensure effective recovery, understanding the local and broader context and recognising complexity are foundational. The descriptions included within the document provide further guidance for working with communities in disaster recovery.
Commonwealth of Australia	Agricultural Competitiveness White Paper - Stronger Farmers Stronger Economy	Through the White Paper the Federal Government's aim was to further to set the environment needed to drive better returns for farmers. Better returns will see increased investment, job creation, stronger regional communities and economic growth. The vision was to build a more profitable, more resilient and more sustainable agriculture sector to help drive a stronger Australian economy. The Government is focused on agricultural policies with the Government committing to five key priorities: 1) A fairer go for farm businesses, to keep families on the farm as the cornerstone of agriculture, by creating a stronger business environment with better regulation, healthier market competition, more competitive supply chains and an improved tax system. 2) Building 21st century water, transport and communications infrastructure that supports efficient movement of our produce, access to suppliers and markets, and production growth. 3) Strengthening our approach to drought and risk management, including providing the tools to facilitate more effective risk management by farmers and a long-term approach to drought that

Document Owner	Document Title	Summary
		incorporates provision of enhanced social and community support for farming families and rural communities, and business initiatives for preparedness and in-drought support. 4) A smarter approach to farming based on a strong research and development system that underpins future productivity growth; and effective natural resource policy that achieves a cleaner environment as part of a stronger Australia.
		5) Access to premium markets through the availability of a large number of premium export markets open to our produce and a strong biosecurity system that maintains our favourable plant and animal health status.
Commonwealth of Australia	Drought in Australia - Australian Government Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness Plan	This document provides a list of Government measures and programs to support resilience and preparedness for drought as well as an overview of water infrastructure and the commitments which have been made for capital programs. The plan encompasses immediate actions, what support is available for the wider communities affected by the drought and long-term resilience and preparedness strategies.
Commonwealth of Australia	Drought in Australia - Coordinator- General for Drought's advice on a Strategy for Drought Preparedness and Resilience	Providing a number of recommendations to learn from the lessons of previous droughts, academic research, and advice from farmers' representative groups tell us that preparing for drought rather than responding to it is the best approach. The Coordinator-General for Drought outlines the strategy which has five priority areas being: 1. Stewardship of important natural resources 2. Incentives for good practice 3. Improving planning and decision making 4. Building community resilience 5. Information farmers, communities and governments Each of these priority areas are enhanced with further recommendations and actions to "give direction to the 2018 National Drought Agreement's objectives. It should draw on lessons from the current drought and support the transition that is underway. It should acknowledge the impact of the changing climate. No significant shifts in the Australian Government's approach are needed. Rather a strategy should refine existing settings and programs. It would help to prepare Australia's agricultural sector and rural communities for what is ahead. It should emphasise the importance of information to underpin preparation

Document Owner	Document Title	Summary
		and risk management. It should seek to avoid reactive, often late, crisis responses."
Commonwealth of Australia	National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy	The Strategy sets out how Australia is managing the risks of a variable and changing climate. It identifies a set of principles to guide effective adaptation practice and resilience-building, and outlines the Australian Government's vision for a climate-resilient future. The principles of the strategy include: 1. Shared responsibilities 2. Factoring climate risk into decisions 3. Assistance to the vulnerable 4. Evidence-based risk management approach 5. Collaborative values-based choices 6. Revisiting decisions and outcomes over time.
Commonwealth of Australia	National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework	The Framework is a multi-sector collaboration led by the National Resilience Taskforce within the Department of Home Affairs. While the drivers for action are geared primarily for rapid onset disaster situations, the purpose of the document is to guide a whole-of-society approach to risk reduction in order to minimise loss and suffering caused by disasters. The Risk Reduction Goals articulated within the document transcend disaster or adverse event classifications and could easily be adopted to prepare and manage drought as they would a natural disaster.
Council of Australian Governments	Intergovernmental Agreement On A National Water Initiative	The Agreement established a nationally-compatible, market, regulatory and planning based system of managing surface and groundwater resources for rural and urban use that optimised economic, social and environmental outcomes. It was signed by all CoAG members.
Council of Australian Governments	National Strategy for Disaster Resilience	This strategy stipulates the role of Government, Business, Individuals and non-government organisations as a collective responsibility for resilience. It outlines the need for changes, what a resilient community looks like and what actions can be taken to achieve the desired outcome.
Emergency Management Australia.	AUSTRALIAN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FRAMEWORK - A guideline to develop the capabilities required to manage severe to	The Australian Disaster Preparedness Framework (the Framework) will support Australia to develop the required capability to effectively prepare for and manage severe to catastrophic disasters. Such disasters could be the result of a single event or the cumulative effect of a number of events. Severe to catastrophic disasters do not accord to jurisdictional boundaries and, because of their scale and consequences, require the ability to draw on capabilities that exist nationally and internationally.

Document Owner	Document Title	Summary
	catastrophic disasters	These capabilities are not necessarily confined to those owned by governments and include capabilities that could be drawn from the private, non-government and community sectors.
Government of South Australia - Primary Industries and Regions SA	Adverse Events Recovery Framework for Primary Production - A Guide to preparing for and recovering from adverse events	The Adverse Events Recovery Framework (the framework) guides the Primary Industries and Regions SA (PIRSA) approach to preparing for and implementing recovery activities in response to adverse events that severely affect primary production, viability and profitability. This document is perhaps the closest guide to the required Adverse Events Plan by establishing a community-led process to determine the recovery needs for primary production and associated communities as a result of a given event. It suggests the approach to be taken in partnership and collaboration with primary producers, industries and other agencies to return primary industry businesses to normal operations as quickly as possible, noting the new normal may be different.
National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility	National Climate Change Adaptation Research Plan - Primary Industries	The purpose of a NARP is to identify priority needs over the next few years in developing knowledge on how governments, businesses and communities can best adapt to climate change risks. They provide a national blueprint for research investment by research organisations and knowledge user stakeholders. The 2013 document provides an overview of research which has been undertaken to understand and expand the adaptive capacity of primary industry.
National Services Scotland	Adverse Events Management Policy	While specifically for the management of health related adverse events, this policy does provide detail including six stages for adverse events management being: 1. Risk assessment and prevention 2. Identification and immediate actions following an adverse event 3. Initial reporting and notification 4. Analysis, risk assessment and categorisation 5. Review 6. Improvement planning and monitoring
Republic of Sudan	National Adaptation Plan	The Sudanese National Adaptation Plan is a blueprint for the nation to prepare itself to exist into a future impacted by changing climate. As a result of the threat posed by climate change, the need for effective adaptation is increasingly becoming a recurring theme in long-term policy dialogues in Sudan. As one of the world's Least Developed Countries (as classified by the United Nations), long-term planning was undertaken by the Sudanese Government to contextualise the challenges faced and identify partners and activities to meet these challenges in a country which has direct dependence on the natural environment for survival. The framework adopts the

Document Owner	Document Title	Summary
		integration of climate risks into all national development planning processes to ensure effective mainstreaming of adaptation strategies.
United Nations	NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS - Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process -	Developed for those countries identified as Least Developed, the guidelines provide a step by step process for addressing climate change challenges to create clearly designed adaptation programs for their nations.
United Nations	Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	The 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets of the United Nations General Assembly resolution were developed to stimulate action over the next 15 years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.
World Economic Forum	The Global Risks Report 2018	The report lists Extreme Weather Events and Natural Disasters as the top two in terms of likelihood and the top three in terms of impact. Failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation was in the top five for both likelihood and impact. The report discusses many themes however the risks associated with the prevalence of monoculture production and change weather patterns further highlight the need for increased diversity within the agricultural sector.

External Reference documents

Investments Commission companies Commonwealth of Australia Drought in Australia - Australian Government Drought Response, Resilience and Preparedness	2015 2019
Plan	2019
Commonwealth of Australia - Coordinator-General for Drought's advice on a Strategy for Drought Preparedness and Resilience	
Commonwealth of Australia National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy	2015
Commonwealth of National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework Australia	2018
Commonwealth of Australia's Fourth Biennial Report Australia -	2019
Council of Australian Intergovernmental Agreement On A National Water Initiative	2004
Council of Australian National Strategy for Disaster Resilience Governments	2011
Emergency Management Australia. Australia. AUSTRALIAN DISASTER PREPAREDNESS FRAMEWORK - A guideline to develop the capabilities required to manage severe to catastrophic disasters	2018
Government of South Adverse Events Recovery Framework for Primary Production - A Guide to preparing for and recovering from adverse events	2018
International Council on Adapting to a Changing Climate - Building resilience in the mining and metals industry	2019
National Services Adverse Events Management Policy Scotland	2015
Republic of Sudan National Adaptation Plan	2016
United Nations UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) Secretariat Evaluation - Final Report	2010
United Nations NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS - Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process	2012
United Nations Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	2015
United Nations United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change	1992
World Economic Forum The Global Risks Report 2018	2018