



Australian Community Frontline Actions

## Abstract

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**Presentation Title:** How Should we cope with the Risk of Sea-Level Rise?

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Sea-level rise, in common with many other aspects of climate change, entails significant future risks which are ideally addressed using a formal risk assessment process. However, in cases where there is meagre understanding of the processes involved and where the consequences of inappropriate action are dire, an adaptation strategy is often based on a worst-case scenario, derived from "expert advice". This option (the precautionary principle), which involves minimal risk assessment, will in most cases lead to costly over-adaptation.

It is unfortunate that this approach, which is effectively a "one size fits all" solution, is sometimes adopted even where there is significant data with which to support formal risk assessment. It will be argued that this is indeed the way in which the problem of sea-level rise is being addressed by governments around Australia. While being a simple solution, it will undoubtedly involve unnecessary expenditure of resources - resources which could be better spent by society on more effective adaptation or on mitigation. A web-based tool, which provides estimates of the likelihood of future flooding from the ocean around Australia, will be described. On the road to adaptation and mitigation, and vice versa, will be presented.