



The Climate Reality Project

AUSTRALIA & PACIFIC

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS AND SOLUTIONS

The Pacific region, encompassing 165 million square kilometres and covering one-third of the Earth's surface, is facing some of the most severe climate impacts anywhere on earth. With over 25,000 islands, many of which are low-lying, Pacific communities are facing an existential threat from the impacts of climate change. These include more frequent and intense cyclones, rising sea levels, reduced crop yields and supplies of freshwater.

CLIMATE CHANGE TRENDS ACROSS AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND THE PACIFIC



Globally, temperatures have risen by 1.1°C between ~1910 and 2020, and in Australia by 1.4°C.



Heat extremes are increasing and cold extremes are decreasing.



Marine heatwaves and ocean acidity are increasing.



Sea levels are rising faster here than in other parts of the world.



Frequency, intensity and duration of extreme weather is increasing, causing more floods, storms, fires and droughts.

Changes in climatic impact drivers and biodiversity loss will be amplified by every fraction of a degree. And as the IPCC's landmark research has demonstrated, global heating of even 1.5°C would be especially catastrophic for Pacific Island Countries. Rapidly warming oceans have already resulted in more intense tropical hurricanes, devastating low-lying communities most severely.



SOLUTIONS



Despite this, our story is one of resilience amid crisis. New Zealand and Pacific Island Countries have strongly committed to reducing emissions and moving to renewable energy as part of their Paris commitments, and this goes a long way towards a unified regional contribution to urgent climate action. Pacific Island communities are also paving the way for a secure future by creating just and equitable climate solutions centred in traditional and indigenous knowledge.



Australia's commitments currently fall within the UN's 'Insufficient' category, which means that its level of ambition would lock in between 2 and 3 degrees of heating when extrapolated across all nations. As a nation with significant interests across the region, Australia has a particular responsibility. Ambitious emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2050 should be accompanied by clear policies on how they will be met, including an enhanced commitment to the Green Climate Fund.

It is not too late for the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand to avoid the worst effects of climate change, especially if strong commitments for action are made by countries like Australia that sit in the top 15 list of global emitters.

It's not too late. We can still meet the overarching goals of the Paris Agreement if every country puts forward their own ambitious targets and plans at the crucial Glasgow COP in November 2021.



THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW.

“High emitting countries hold the levers for change. They have outsized control over our collective fate. They must take responsibility or live with the consequences of inaction. I call on all Forum members to work as a collective and use every possible avenue to demand global action. This is not the time for polite Pacific diplomacy. We should not quietly sit by and watch our islands lost to the seas. We should not meekly accept the loss of our livelihoods and the lives of our loved ones. This is not the time for speeches or green-washed commitments. We need action — real action with reliable measures of accountability. This cannot be a moment of concern, it must become a transformative movement..”

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HON. JOSAIA V. BAINIMARAMA
Chair, Pacific Islands Forum & Prime Minister of Fiji