



Watermark.

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LEADERS NEEDED:

WHO WILL TAKE ACTION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE?



This issue of Watermark will focus on the need for leadership in communities - from local to global - on the challenge of climate change. Here in Australia, we are at a stage where the majority accept the reality of climate change and its consequences for our environment and livelihood. Yet we are too slow to take measures that would lessen these consequences, and we are even dismantling legislation that helps us tackle climate change head-on! Today, we are calling for leaders on every level who have the courage to raise the issues and to make policy that protects our nation in the long-run - not just the government at the next election.



WE NEED LEADERS TO TELL THE STORY OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND INSPIRE COMMUNITIES EVERYWHERE TO TAKE ACTION.

Where are we at?



Human-induced climate change is the most pressing issue facing humanity today. This is confirmed by the scientific community.



Some of the effects of climate change are:

- Rising sea levels
- More extreme weather patterns, with storms, floods, drought and heatwaves
- Economic loss



Some countries are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change due to the financial and logistical abilities they face in combating challenges; their geography; and the sensitivity of their populations to health and food crises.



Small Pacific Island states are among the most vulnerable nations in the world to the effects of climate change, and have some of the most pro-active voices in the global arena.



As a large nation in the Pacific area with great wealth and resources, Australia has both the ability and the responsibility to take a key role in minimising the potential impact of global warming - for our own people and our closest neighbours.



We can make a real difference to the effect that climate change has on our lives, but we need to act fast.

“Climate change is the greatest challenge facing humanity. I worry about about our ability to meet that challenge. There will be a time when we no longer use fossil fuels. The question is how fast we move.”

- Professor Ian Young, Vice Chancellor of the Australian National University



On a Global Scale...

AUSTRALIA NEEDS TO BE A LEADER

We are a small country, but a major player in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Not only do Australians use a lot of energy at home, but we export an enormous amount of fossil fuels abroad. In fact, the coal and gas emissions of our exports are more than double our domestic emissions. But, being a major exporter, we are in a privileged position. **Australia can use its leverage in the global market to send a strong message.** If Australia strengthens and renews its efforts to phase out fossil fuels, then the world will sit up and take notice.

As things stand, Australia doesn't look much like a leader. Other countries are taking much stronger action:

- Earlier this year, our neighbours in **Indonesia pledged \$US20 million to Pacific Island nations** to help combat climate change, and to promote a "green economy" in the region.
- **China is taking serious action**, getting carbon trading schemes off the ground and making long-term plans toward reducing the emissions intensity of their economy. **China installed more solar panels in 2013 than any other country ever has.**
- Meanwhile, the Prime Minister of Fiji accused Australia of being "selfish" in the lack of commitment we have shown to address the crisis presented by climate change.

THE ADVANTAGES ADD UP.

Creating jobs

Clean energy employed

21,000

Australians in 2013.



Fewer damages costs

Climate change is already costing the world

\$1.2 TRILLION

per year, according to a 2012 study by European scientists.



Better health

More renewable energy means that global health costs could fall annually by

\$200 BILLION



"Business needs policy leadership. Legally binding targets on CO2 reduction, renewable energy and energy efficiency will unlock the innovation and investment needed to build a low-carbon economy."

Statement from IKEA group, highlighting the need for leaders in climate policy.

Additional statistics from International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), New York.

In Your Own Backyard...

YOU CAN SHAPE THE CONVERSATION

To improve the projected impact of climate change, we need strong world leaders who are brave enough to make unpopular decisions. But there also needs to be a shift in perception which can only happen on a local, individual level.

Be informed: it helps know the facts.

Scientists agree that man-made climate change is happening. Moreover, the world is expected to warm **at least 2 degrees** this century, but many scientists believe that even this target (which, at our current rate, we will surpass) is enough to cause "irreparable harm" (climate scientist James Hansen, 2013).

...But actions speak louder than words.

Having solar panels or a rainwater tank installed in your home will get your neighbours thinking about doing it themselves. Establishing a community garden, or a garage sale/swap day in your area will start conversations and can transform a neighbourhood into a strong, active community of leaders.

5 things you can do RIGHT NOW:

Commit to one meat-free day per week.
Turn off all your lights, chargers, and appliances at the wall. Make this a habit.

Research solar energy for your home.
Do your next grocery shop at a farmer's market - your food will be fresher, tastier and have less mileage.

Start a conversation about climate change.

Growing Leaders



Pacific Climate Warriors.

350.org Pacific, a regional, youth-led climate change network, is growing a team of courageous young people to be leaders in their community and set a global example. The climax of their campaign will be a **canoe voyage to Australia later this year to protest our fossil fuel industry and the careless use of non-renewable energy**, led by a group young Pacific Warriors (pictured on page 1). The group have undergone training in leadership and climate change awareness, and have learned to build the traditional canoes of their cultures. "In Australia, they will use the canoes to communicate their message on climate change," said Aaron Packard, 350 Oceania Regional Coordinator. **"They will stand up peacefully but powerfully to the fossil fuel industry, in order to protect their islands in the face of climate change."**

Island Voices, Growing Choices: The UN Conference on Small Island Developing States.

The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (www.sids2014.org) was held from 1-4 September 2014 in Apia, Samoa. The overarching theme of the conference was **"the sustainable**



development of small island developing states through genuine and durable partnerships." Those attending the Conference worked together to achieve the following objectives:

- assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation;
- seek a renewed political commitment by focusing on practical and pragmatic actions for further implementation;
- identify new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of SIDS and means of addressing them;
- identify priorities for the sustainable development of SIDS to be considered

in the elaboration of the post-2015 UN development agenda.

“It’s time for us to form the greatest climate change alliance the world has ever seen.”

**- Christopher Loeak,
President of the Marshall
Islands, at SIDS 2014**

→ Corporate leaders to invest in Small Island Developing States

On the eve of the SIDS 2014 Conference, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon urged sustainable investment in small islands. The challenges facing small island developing States, such as scarce resources, population pressures and climate change, also affect businesses, he said, and corporate leaders have an interest in rising to these challenges. **"You are part of this exciting chance to address risks, seize opportunities, and make history by moving our planet to sustainability,"** he urged.

Top PR companies rule out working with Climate Change Deniers.

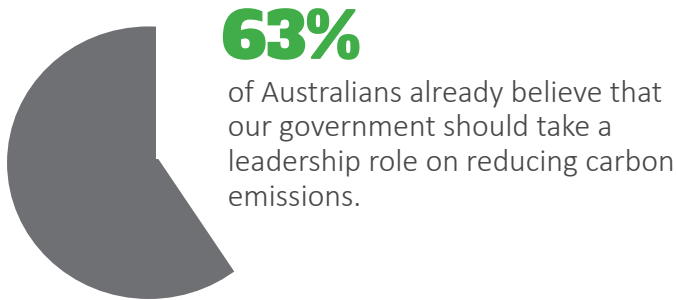
In August 2014, ten of the world's top public relations firms released a joint statement announcing that they would rule out working with clients who deny the existence of climate change. This marks the beginning of a fundamental shift in the corporate landscape when it comes to the environment.

Public relations plays a critical role in framing people's perception of climate change and its solutions, as well as disinformation campaigns or those seeking to block regulation of fossil fuels. **"We would not support a campaign that denies the existence and the threat posed by climate change**, or efforts to obstruct regulations cutting greenhouse gas emissions and/or renewable energy standards," said Michelle Selesky, a spokeswoman for one of the firms.

This move is a fantastic example of how organisations can use their corporate power to take a leadership role on solving climate change. The PR industry has recognised its ability to influence this issue and has decided to make its influence a positive one.

LOWY INSTITUTE POLL: Australians want Government to take a leadership role on climate change.

According to the Lowy Institute's latest poll, climate change might yet emerge as a real challenge for the Abbott government. Australians' concern for climate change has risen for the first time since 2006.



The number of people who agree with the statement, **"Global warming is a serious and pressing problem. We should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs"**

has risen by 5%

Figures from the Lowy Institute Poll released June 2014.

Ask your MP to be a leader

Politicians are there to represent you, their constituents, in parliament. If you want to see stronger action on climate change, then it's your right - and even your duty - to communicate this to your MP.

Right now, Australia is allowing some of the world's poorest countries to be responsible for more than their fair share when it comes to preventing climate change. For Australia to lift its weight, we will need stronger emissions reduction targets and a more solid commitment to achieving these goals. You can let your local member know that you want to see more action on climate change and ask them to be outspoken in parliament. Here are some points to get you started:

- **Individuals and families in [your electorate] are doing what we can to preserve and conserve the environment and to curb global warming, but we need your leadership to really make a difference.**
- According to the most recent Lowy Poll, the proportion of Australians who want the Australian government to take a lead role on climate change action is rising.
- **It is very important to me and many others in the community that you and your party make serious, specific commitments to reduce the emissions for which Australia is responsible.**

REFLECTION

Lord Jesus,

We lift up to you our nation's leaders who have a God-given duty to exact justice, defend the rights of the poor and needy, and give the land the rest that it so desperately needs.

Almighty God, strengthen them with integrity and character to act righteously and not out of selfish ambition.

Grant them abundant wisdom so that they may know your ways – to labor for the good of Creation and all of us who depend on it for life and health.

Amen.

Watermark is an occasional publication of the Conference of Leaders in Religious Institutes in NSW.

TO-DO LIST

- **Follow** the Social Justice Committee of CLRI (NSW) on Twitter: www.twitter.com/clrinsw
- **Look out for our video to accompany this issue of Watermark**, which will be on our website and YouTube channel in coming weeks.
- **Write to Environment Minister Greg Hunt or your local member about your concerns for Australia's role in climate change.** Use our prompts above to get you started. For MP contact information, visit www.australia.gov.au/directories/contact-parliament