



WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

Climate change is a big problem. It's caused by humans burning fossil fuels and changing the landscape. But scientists say if we take action now we can avoid the worst impacts, as well as creating hundreds of thousands of good jobs in clean, green industries.

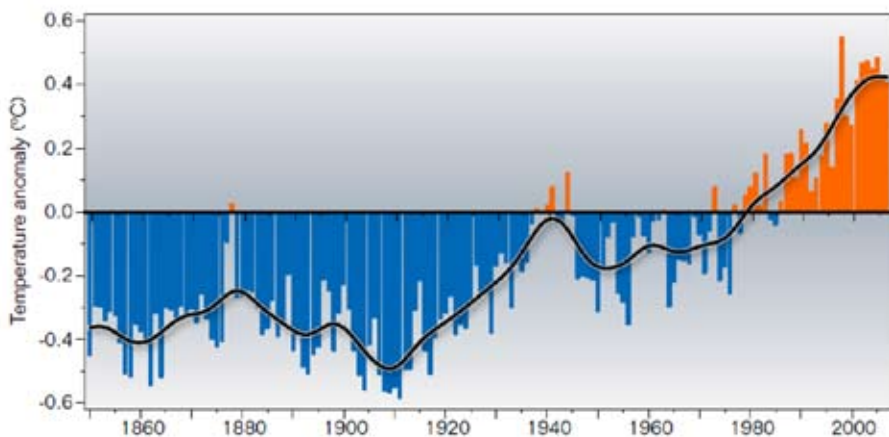
HOW WILL CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECT AUSTRALIA?

Climate change means less water, more wild weather and bushfires.

- Less water in our rivers and dams
- More droughts and drying
- Less rainfall in many regions
- More severe and longer bushfire season
- Rising temperatures – more than most other countries
- More heatwaves
- Rising sea levels – bad for coastal cities and towns

- More intense cyclones and storms
- Negative effects on human health due to spreading diseases, extreme temperature and weather.
- High risk of species extinction and loss of biodiversity
- Negative economic impacts, especially in industries such as farming and tourism

Rising global temperatures ¹

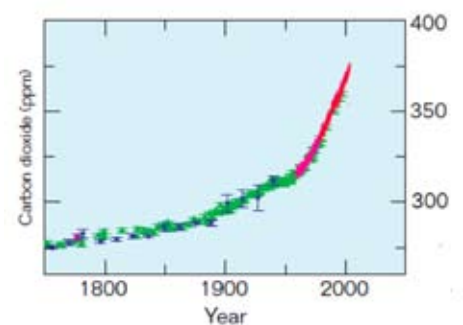


WHAT CAUSES CLIMATE CHANGE?

Humans cause climate change by making pollution and cutting down forests.

- The earth's atmosphere acts like the roof of a greenhouse
- The sun's energy gets trapped inside this greenhouse
- More greenhouse gasses (such as carbon dioxide and methane) make it harder for the sun's energy to escape from the atmosphere. This increases the temperature.
- Humans have increased greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere, mainly through burning fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas), cutting down forests, and farming methane-producing animals
- Global temperatures have increased over the last 150 years and particularly steeply in the last 30-50 years
- Rising temperatures are causing major shifts in the earth's climate

Rising carbon dioxide levels ²



Get
active at

lhmu.org.au/campaigns/climate-justice
and climateconnectors.org

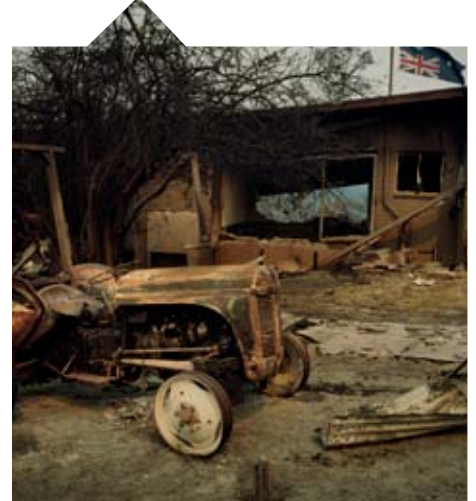


WHAT IS GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION?

Greenhouse gas pollution comes from burning fuels like coal, oil and gas.

- Carbon dioxide is the most significant greenhouse gas, but other gasses are also damaging, in particular methane from cows and sheep.
- Carbon dioxide is produced when coal is burnt for electricity, and petrol is burnt for transport.
- The huge majority of greenhouse gas emissions that have caused global warming have come (and still come from) rich countries. The 20 most polluting countries (of which Australia is one) are responsible for more than 80% of global emissions.
- Australia's per capita emissions are the highest in the developed world. They are four times the world average. This is mainly because we get the majority of our energy from burning coal.

The aftermath of the Victorian Bushfires. Climate change means a more severe and longer bushfire season Photos ©Greenpeace/Sewell



WHERE DOES AUSTRALIA'S GREENHOUSE POLLUTION COME FROM?

- Over a third of Australia's emissions come from burning coal to create electricity. In the graph below these emissions from electricity generation have been allocated to the sector that consumed the electricity – based on information from the Department of Climate Change National Greenhouse Accounts.
- After electricity, the next largest source of emissions is from the agricultural sector: cutting down forests, and methane emissions from cattle and sheep.

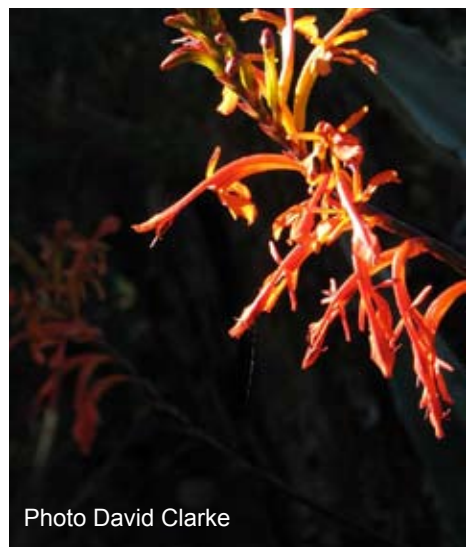
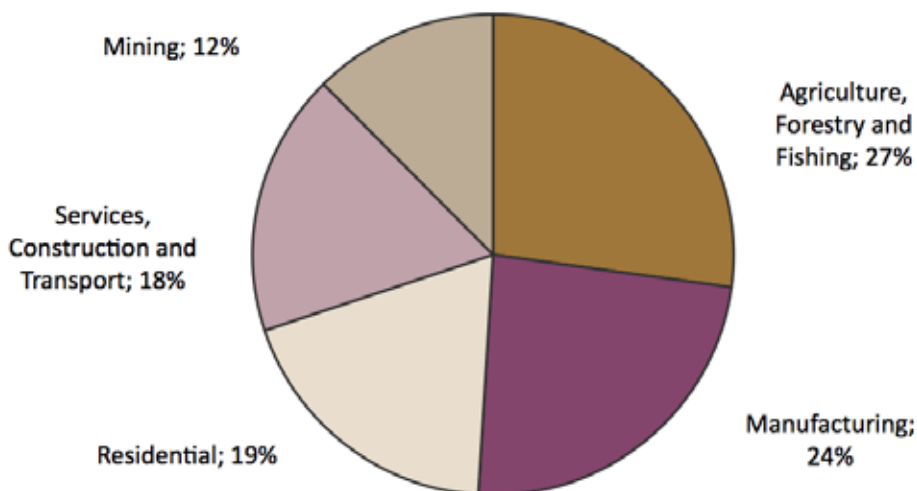


Photo David Clarke



WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

Get active at work, at home and in the community!

- Sign up to be a Union Climate Connector. You'll get emails and free information packs helping you to learn more and get active.
- Check out all the LHMU Climate Justice Factsheets at www.lhmu.org.au/campaigns/climate-justice:

Political solutions to climate change.

Australians need a government that will take real action on climate change.

Take action at work.

Form a Green Team with other LHMU members.

Take action at home.

Save energy and money with these tips.

Climate change sceptics.

Separate the scientific fact from the fiction.

At the coal face.

Australia needs to stop burning coal – the dirtiest fuel. At the same time, workers need a just transition to good green jobs

Clean renewable energy – the future now.

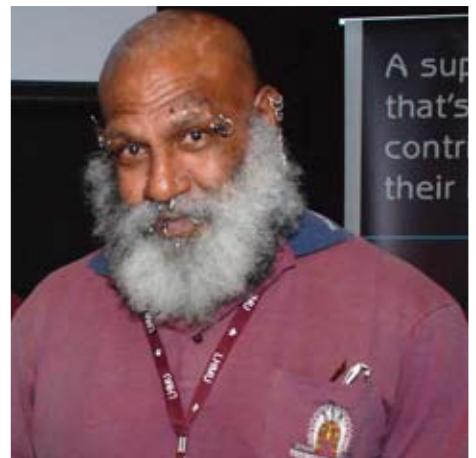
Join the community campaign for clean energy jobs in solar and wind.

- Check out the Australian Conservation Foundation www.acfonline.org.au and Greenpeace www.greenpeace.org/australia for more ideas on getting active to stop climate change.



Sign up to be a
**Union Climate
Connector at**

www.climateconnectors.org



“This is the proper way to do things. Don't waste anything. Respect all things, including people and the environment around you. This is what the world needs to learn to solve climate change.”
LHMU delegate and Torres Strait Islander Michael Bon.



LHMU Delegate Michael Bon (back left) with fellow Teacher's Aides

LHMU delegate Michael Bon is a Torres Strait Islander and has worked as a teacher's aide and school cleaner for many years. The Torres Strait Islands have unique ecosystems and animals like the Dugong, and a vibrant and ancient Indigenous culture. All this is under threat because of climate change.

“I love helping kids do hands-on work – building everything from gardens and boats, to websites and DVDs. I've worked with kids who couldn't cope in a normal classroom, and so we taught them under a mango tree.”

Climate Justice Factsheet



“Our Islands are already starting to experience big problems because of climate change. Each year the winds, storms and cyclones get worse. The king tides push the sea water up further than ever before. On some islands the big tides flood the whole community. Mainly at Christmas time, the tides come over the road, and over the waterfront. The rain goes down the drains and then comes back up – banking over the footpaths and into the shops. People’s homes get flooded.

“This is what rising seas look like. It causes problems with our fresh water – dams are flooded and wells are contaminated. It also affects our special places. Cemeteries are affected – the waters weaken the foundations of the head stones and they fall over.

“Coral bleaching is happening too. This is also something we haven’t seen before and we don’t feel too good about. A lot of Island people who work here make their living from fishing. Now they can’t free dive as much and have to go much further down. We also have new diseases coming into our communities because of the hot weather and mosquitoes coming in.

“Of course people are worried about the threat to culture and history. We don’t want to leave these Islands – they are our homes and were our ancestors’ homes.

“Torres Strait Islanders have been around for a long time and we’re still here. We know a lot about sustainability. Our tradition is to teach young people all the skills of life – how to garden, how to hunt, how to be assertive and also respectful of everything around you, including the environment. Conservation is part of our traditional laws.

For example, when we hunt dugong we only take certain ones in the group, and leave enough to reproduce. And we share all the parts with everybody. Nobody keeps more than their share for themselves. And everything is eaten. This is the proper way to do things. Don’t waste anything. Respect all things, including people and the environment around you. This is what the world needs to learn to solve climate change.”

The Torres Strait is also an important shipping channel – connecting the Indian and Pacific oceans.

“A lot of ships come through here. They save a lot of time and money going this way, but we get nothing for it. We’re always worried about shipping accidents and oil spills.

“These are our waters. We have proof in our dances that have been passed down. This is why we’re fighting for our Sea Claims. We want our traditional ownership to be recognised, and for those ships to contribute some money to help protect us against climate change.”

Recently, Penny Wong, the Labor Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water visited the Torres Strait Islands, and announced over \$1 million in funding to help communities deal with the effects of climate change.

“It was good that Penny Wong came to have a look at things here first hand. I hope that the Labor government will work closely with the people here in the Torres Strait Islands. We need to find solutions to climate change and it has to happen pretty quick or our Islands won’t survive.”

“The rain goes down the drains and then comes back up – banking over the footpaths and into the shops. People’s homes get flooded. This is what rising seas look like.”



King Tides flood roads and communities in the Torres Strait in 2009. Climate change means more severe floods and wild weather for coastal communities. Photos David Hanslow.

¹ Professor Ross Garnaut (2008), The Garnaut Climate Change Review - Final Report, p 78.

² Rising carbon dioxide levels measured in parts per million – ppm. Professor Ross Garnaut (2008), The Garnaut Climate Change Review - Final Report, p 26.