

MEDIA RELEASE

Australia needs to back Pacific Island nations' call for climate change action

Australia needs to heed the voices of small Pacific Island nations who have today called for action on climate change which is threatening their very survival, according to the peak body for Australia's aid organisations.

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"It is time for Australia to stop making excuses and to start taking effective action to reduce our carbon emissions," said executive director of the Australian Council of International Development, Mr Marc Purcell.

"For our Pacific Island neighbours the equation is clear – the more carbon Australia emits, the more likely their nations will be irreparably damaged by climate-related natural disasters, which have flow on effects on health and economic growth," Mr Purcell said.

"The Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States, Tuvalu Prime Minister Enele Sopoaga, said today small island states are simply seeking 'to survive... We feel our security is compromised; survival of the people of the Pacific is compromised.'

"Meeting as part of the Pacific Islands Forum in Papua New Guinea, the Alliance of Small Island States is calling for a cap on carbon emissions at a level that will stop global average temperatures rising more than 1.5 degrees.

"ACFID is supporting Pacific civil society organisations that have joined together to call on Australia and New Zealand to form a united voice from the Pacific seeking urgent, just and ambitious climate action.

"We call on the Australian Government to lift its carbon emission reduction target and support an ambitious global climate change agreement later this year that includes dedicated support for developing countries.

"ACFID also calls on the Government to develop a climate change strategy for its aid program.

"The Government needs to recognise that those countries most impacted by climate change are the least prepared to respond, and many of them are Australia's neighbours.

"ACFID's policy paper on climate change *Tackling climate change and promoting sustainable development: An action plan for Australia's international engagement* highlights that disaster-related economic losses in Pacific island countries, as a percentage of GDP, are already higher than almost anywhere else in the world.



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ACFID unites Australia's non-government aid and international development organisations to strengthen their collective impact against poverty

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“Climate change will compound these losses by increasing the scale and intensity of disasters as well as causing rising sea levels, ocean acidification, infertile soils, and food and water scarcity.

“The prosperity and stability of our Pacific region is intimately tied to concerted global action on climate change, and Australia must play its role.” Mr Purcell said.

ACFID’s climate change paper can be found [here](#).



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