



Environment Institute
of Australia and
New Zealand Inc.

CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY AND ACTION

EIANZ Position Statement

The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ):

1. Accepts the consensus of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report (IPCC AR6) that:
 - global temperatures have risen more than 1°C since pre-industrial times;
 - human-induced climate change is causing increasingly frequent, intense, and destructive natural events such as droughts, floods, fires, and cyclones;
 - immediate and bold action is required to reduce emissions, develop low emission energy and food production systems, and build adaptive capability so that we limit the increase in global average temperature to no more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels; and
 - a global temperature increment of 2°C above pre-industrial levels would have very high impacts for many important environmental and societal systems and must be avoided.
2. Recognises the challenges of the actions required to mitigate and adapt to climate change particularly for fossil fuel dependent communities and developing economies, and encourages comprehensive planning and action for a just transition, noting that since the formation of the UNFCCC in 1992 emission increases have yet curtailed and immediate increased action is required;
3. Demands that national, state, and local governments, industry, business and environmental practitioners to lead by promoting mitigation, building resilience, and scaling-up the application of technologically, socially, and economically viable low-emissions alternatives.

Context

Climate change affects everyone and everything, but not equally. Its impacts are broad, complex, discriminatory, and cumulative. In 2022, scientific consensus and the [IPCC confirmed](#) that human activities have caused 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels – with a range of 0.8°C to 1.2°C. This change in global temperature is driving a change in sea level and global and regional climates.

Land and ocean ecosystems and the services they provide are being degraded. Species are under threat, components of our cultural heritage¹ are being destroyed and degraded, destructive weather events are increasing in frequency and intensity, and human social and economic systems (especially for disadvantaged groups) are being impacted.

Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2050 if it increases at current rates – and then further increase. The 2022 IPCC synthesis report warns of a need to limit warming to 1.5°C to avoid the more serious impacts on terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems and their services to humans and cultural landscapes².

Limiting temperature rise this century to 1.5°C involves stabilising global emissions now and achieving net zero emissions before 2050 and requires lifestyle changes and technological transformation in our energy, transport, industrial processes, and land management systems. It also requires governments to enact legislation that obliges commerce and industry to drive down emissions and encourages development of low emission alternatives.

Even in achieving this, resilience-building through adaptation to and recovering from residual impacts (loss and damage) will be necessary and, as part of this, governments must listen to and work with custodians and managers of cultural landscapes, including Traditional Custodians and Indigenous Peoples, to manage, protect and conserve cultural heritage under threat or degraded by climate change.

^{1 2} The terms 'cultural heritage' and 'cultural landscape' are defined broadly. They encompass landscapes, seascapes, artefacts and elements of intangible heritage. The UNESCO operational guidelines for the World Heritage Convention also broadly define 'cultural landscape' as 'cultural properties which represent the 'combined works of nature and of man'".



International efforts to understand and manage climate change have been underway through the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) since 1988. The 2015 Paris Agreement set two temperature increase goals ((i) less than 2°C and (ii) well below 2°C and as close to 1.5°C as possible), and introduced a new approach, the “bottom up” Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Up until COP28 (2023), the cumulative NDC pledges were insufficient to limit temperatures to 2°C and national actions to implement these pledges have lagged, raising doubts as to whether the pledges will actually be delivered.

Role of decision makers

Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand are both signatories to the Paris Agreement and have been implementing specific climate related policies for over the past quarter century. Both have stated positions to achieve net zero by 2050. However, their emissions profiles, options, policies, legislated requirements and end of decade (i.e. 2030) targets and ambition differ.

While climate change is a global challenge, solutions require personal, organisational, local, regional, national, and international action in a participatory and integrated manner.

Decision and action to address the causes and impacts of climate change need to occur at multiple levels across a broad range of sectors.

Governments have a key obligation to protect and enhance the environment by providing clear leadership, policy and legal frameworks that achieve the necessary emission reductions and adaptive responses. The business community has an obligation to support and implement these policies and actions and go beyond mere compliance to achieve zero emissions as soon as possible.

EIANZ proposes and advocates for the following broad responses from Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand:

1. **Internationally** – Engage with urgency to achieve effective, fair, and sustained global action and develop NDCs and implement responses that are consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C (or less).
2. **Cooperation** – Collaborate with countries regionally to adapt to impacts of climate change and transition to low carbon economies. Support developing economies in our region, including by sharing technology. This includes Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand meeting all of their NDC obligations to developing economies.
3. **Collaboration** – Engage and support custodians and managers, including Indigenous Peoples and Traditional Custodians, of at-threat cultural landscapes, in work to protect these cultural landscapes from further climate change related degradation or destruction (noting and working with various initiatives that support this work³).
4. **Strategy** – Implement a detailed strategy for delivering net zero by 2050, including short- and medium-term targets (50% by 2030 as a minimum).
5. **Regulation and policy** – Enact legislation that obliges industry and commerce to drive down emissions and encourages development of low emissions technology and adaptive capability.
6. **Whole of society** – Consider climate change impacts and opportunities for emissions reduction in every decision relating to planning, industry, business, finance, health, building, energy, transport, cultural heritage, land and environment policy and law.
7. **Technology and capacity building** – Fund research into mitigation and adaptation; pilot low emissions technologies; and plan for the transition of fossil fuel related jobs to roles within a net zero economy.

³ See: the United Nations Preserving Legacies Program funded by ICOMOS and National Geographic Society; and, Organisations such as Seed, First Nations Clean Energy Network and Our Islands Our Home which advocate and develop initiatives for preserving cultural landscapes at threat by climate change.



8. **Mitigation** – Provide clear, simple, and credible legal and commercial frameworks for the efficient and economic shift to sustainable zero emissions technologies.
9. **Adaptation and impact response** – Build resilience through adaptability, strengthen emergency response capability, and ensure that adaptation strategies are supported by cutting edge research. This should include cooperation with regional neighbours and Indigenous Peoples to ensure capacity to adapt to and manage impacts, including the potential for relocation of Pasifika communities affected by shore erosion and sea level rise.
10. **Consultation** – Engage communities in the transition to a low carbon economy including the provision of clear information to enable informed decisions on investments, insurance, and other activities. Consult and engage with Indigenous Knowledge-holders and Traditional Custodians on this transition.
11. **Equity** – Ensure that socioeconomic capacity does not limit communities' abilities to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Utilise the transition to achieve greater equity nationally and internationally.

Policy into practice

EIANZ has a clear interest in environmental protection, sustainable development and maintaining objective professional standards as we address the risks and opportunities from climate change.

It will continue to:

1. **Educate** – Train and certify environmental and sustainability professionals to drive emissions reduction and climate change adaptation activity. Provide opportunities to custodians and managers of cultural landscapes for climate change specific training that includes Indigenous perspectives.
 2. **Engage** – Work with peer institutes, associations, government, custodians of cultural landscapes, and communities to promote sound outcomes and accelerate climate action.
 3. **Influence** – Actively advocate for necessary change and engage governments and other decision makers at all levels to urgently reduce emissions consistent with IPCC targets and immediately build resilience and adaptive capacity.
- EIANZ encourages environmental policy makers and practitioners to undertake:
1. **Climate risk assessment** – Embed assessment of climate related risk into strategic decision making and long-term planning.
 2. **Informed decision-making** – Remain informed of climate science and policy as well as mitigation and adaptation practice, and to use credible research results as foundations for policies and strategies to respond to and mitigate climate change.
 3. **Resilience building** – Consider the impacts of a changing climate on the current and future needs of human communities, cultural landscapes and values, other species, and ecosystems, and design management plans accordingly.
 4. **Verification** – When monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of policy, ensure strategies and actions account for both direct (e.g. increase in temperature, reduced rainfall) and indirect (e.g. altered fire regimes, shifting seasons) impacts of climate change (as distinct from a narrower process focus on management interventions).
 5. **Advocacy and collaboration** – Be champions for climate action and advocate for necessary change. Co-design and implement strategies with sectors and communities to encourage behaviour change that increases mitigation and adaptation. EIANZ recognises that environmental practitioners will act directly, to increase factual attention to the climate crisis and to affect solutions necessary in government policy and business practice.
 6. **Landscape connectivity** – Protect and reconnect natural landscapes to allow wildlife and plants to migrate and adapt in response to the effects of climate change as well as our understanding of cultural environments and the interconnection of cultural, spiritual, historical and scientific values.



The Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand (EIANZ) is Australasia's peak body for environmental professionals. As part of a global network of more than 100,000 environmental practitioners, we advocate for sound environmental policy and promote ethical and competent practice.

EIANZ represents members and certified practitioners from a diverse range of technical disciplines including environmental scientists, policy makers, engineers, lawyers, and economists. Our members are at the forefront of challenging and complex issues such as climate change, sustainability and preserving biodiversity.

EIANZ has Position Statements on a range of key environmental issues. These are periodically reviewed by our Policy and Standards Committee and re-endorsed by the EIANZ Board. All current Position Statements can be accessed [here](#).