



# National People's Assembly

Sea Level Rise & Population Displacement in the Asia-Pacific

29-30 August 2008

Auditorium One, Level Two, State Library of Queensland  
Cultural Centre, South Brisbane

## Background

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), sea levels are rising faster than predicted with potentially disastrous humanitarian consequences.

Most of this dislocation is predicted to occur in the Asia-Pacific Region.

For Australia, the impact of population displacement in the region is a real and imminent challenge.

The need to prepare for climate adaptation in our region is urgent.

## Format

A panel of 14 everyday Australians plus facilitator will engage in a democratic forum with eminent leaders from science, academic, government, business and community sectors.

This event uses the proven "Consensus Conference" model of participatory democracy which is similar to a citizens' jury which reaches a verdict about what should be done to address the topic.

After deliberation, they Citizens' will present their findings and recommendations to the federal government.

## Outcomes

This event culminates in a tangible set of recommendations from an informal panel of citizens to their federal government.

This set of recommendations will prove a lasting and living document which will be available to government as a source of democratic input into policy development.

## Steering Committee

IAG   Munich Re   Worley Parsons   World Vision   Australian Defence Force   Engineers Without Borders  
Griffith University   University of Melbourne   University of NSW   CSIRO   Ian Lowe   Julian Burnside



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# National People's Assembly

Friday 29 August 2008

## Sea Level Rise & Population Displacement in the Asia-Pacific

Facilitator: Sheena Boughen

Chair: Retired District Court Judge Neil McLauchlan

**8:30 am** Welcome to Country- Maroochy Barambah – Songwoman of the Turrbal People

**8:45 am** Welcome address from Minister Rod Welford

**8:55am** Overview of the Topic – Citizens' Panel

### **9:00-10:15am** SESSION 1: MITIGATION - How can Australia reduce the likelihood of sea level rise in Asia Pacific?

1. What are the economic differences between the Garnaut recommendations and the Green Paper ETS proposed by the Federal Government?  
Expert: *Dr. Lorraine Stephenson, Ernst & Young Partner National Climate Change Leader*
2. What effect will adopting the latter have on addressing emissions reductions in Australia?  
Expert: *Dr. Lorraine Stephenson, Ernst & Young Partner National Climate Change Leader*
3. What are the Government's arguments for watering down the ETS by excluding some sectors in the first round?  
Expert: *Dr. Hugh Saddler, Managing Director Energy Strategies*
4. What is the pathway for transitioning from our current energy model to proposed energy efficient technologies and renewable energies?  
Expert: *Professor Paul Hardisty, Head of Sustainability, Worley Parsons*
5. How will these energy mix changes incorporate, and contribute to the concerns and consequences of sea-level rise in the Asia Pacific region?  
Experts: *this is a follow up question for all experts involved in this session*

**10:15-10:45am** Coffee break

### **10:45-12:15pm** SESSION 2: ADAPTATION - The panel recognises that no matter how much we do to mitigate climate change in Australia, we need to urgently prepare for adaptation in the Asia Pacific region.

1. What legislation and action plans would be appropriate to address the risk and consequences of climate-induced sea level rise to Australia?  
Experts: *Professor Jan McDonald, Interim Director, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Griffith University and Heinrich Eder, Managing Director, Munich Re*
2. What adaptation policies and projects can Australia support to assist communities in the region to adapt to sea level rise and extreme weather impacts?  
Experts: *Dr. Andrew Ash, Director of CSIRO, Climate Adaptation Flagship and Jenny Hayward-Jones, The Myer Foundation Melanesia Program, Lowy Institute and James Hardcastle, Senior Adviser for Asia Pacific External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy*
3. Specifically, how can these be developed in partnership with governments, community organisations and businesses across the region?  
Experts: *Andrew Hewett, CEO Oxfam and Professor Jon Barnett, Australian Research Council Fellow in the School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Melbourne and James Hardcastle, Senior Adviser for Asia Pacific External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy*
4. What short and long term biodiversity and community resilience objectives can be supported by these partnerships in a way that responds to sea level rise with open dialogue and cultural sensitivity?  
Experts: *Andrew Hewett, CEO Oxfam and Professor Jon Barnett, Australian Research Council Fellow in the School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Melbourne and James Hardcastle, Senior Adviser for Asia Pacific External Affairs, The Nature Conservancy*
5. What is the appropriate timeframe for action and how in your opinion can we ensure that this action occurs?  
Experts: *this is a follow up question for all experts involved in this session*

**12:15-12:30pm** FOCUS POINT: FOOTAGE AND INTERVIEWS FROM THE TORRES STRAIT ISLANDS  
How can relevant legislation and plans address and respond to the needs of our indigenous Torres Strait Island communities?

**12:30 – 1:30 pm** Lunch break



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## Friday 29 August 2008 continued...

### Sea Level Rise & Population Displacement in the Asia-Pacific

**1:30-3:00pm**      **SESSION 3: GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS** The panel believes addressing the issues under consideration needs a steady, long term approach in Australia and around Asia Pacific, which is incompatible with the vagaries of a political system operating in three to four year terms.

1. Given existing regional structures such as the Pacific Islands Forum and Kevin Rudd's proposed Asia-Pacific Union, how are these addressing climate change adaptation in the region and how can this panel recommend improvements to these strategies?  
Expert: *The Hon. Duncan Kerr, Parliamentary Secretary Pacific Island Affairs*
2. Could you expand on how these regional structures will build community resilience through improving energy, agriculture, biodiversity and water and food security?  
Experts: *Jenny Hayward-Jones, The Myer Foundation Melanesia Program, Lowy Institute and Andrew Hewett, CEO Oxfam and Dr. Hugh Saddler, Managing Director Energy Strategies*
3. What is the best pathway to expediently establish an Australian apolitical, collaborative body that has the executive authority to effectively address the issues of climate change adaptation and mitigation?  
Experts: *Jenny Hayward-Jones, The Myer Foundation Melanesia Program, Lowy Institute and Andrew Hewett, CEO Oxfam and Dr. Hugh Saddler, Managing Director Energy Strategies*
4. Which groups, departments, and organisations (both governmental and non-governmental) need to be included in this body?  
Experts: *Jenny Hayward-Jones, The Myer Foundation Melanesia Program, Lowy Institute and Andrew Hewett, CEO Oxfam and Dr. Hugh Saddler, Managing Director Energy Strategies*
5. How should it be effectively structured and managed?  
Experts: *Jenny Hayward-Jones, The Myer Foundation Melanesia Program, Lowy Institute and Andrew Hewett, CEO Oxfam and Dr. Hugh Saddler, Managing Director Energy Strategies*
6. In relation to sea-level rise, what are the top three priorities such a body must take for effective action now and in the long term?  
Experts: *this is a follow up question for all experts involved in this session*

**3:00-3:30pm**      **Coffee break**

**3:30-5:00pm**      **SESSION 4: PREPARING FOR DISPLACEMENT** If adaptation strategies don't work, population movement is a likely result of the impacts of sea level rise and extreme weather in our region.

1. What plans do DFAT and the ADF have now for the movement and relocation of large numbers of people around the Asia-Pacific?  
Expert: *Dr. Anthony Bergin, Director of Research Programs at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute*
2. How does this involve other government departments and organisations in Australia and the region?  
Expert: *Greg Goebel, Head of QLD Red Cross*
3. Is there a disconnect between disaster relief and the broader concerns of long-term climate change consequences in the region?  
Expert: *Greg Goebel, Head of QLD Red Cross*
4. How will Australia move towards legally recognising 'forced migrants of climate change'?  
Expert: *Dr. Jane McAdam, Senior Lecturer & Director of International Law Programs, Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales*
5. What are the diplomatic and legal pathways that Australia might take to recognise and respond to the impending consequences of population displacement due to climate change?  
Expert: *Sonia Caton, Director, Principal Solicitor, Refugee and Immigration Legal Service*
6. How can we better learn from past immigration stories (from Australia and other countries), to improve current migration pathways (including the current legal constraints) and to help us respond as a global citizen in the face of human displacement in the Asia-Pacific?  
Expert: *Margaret Piper, Independent Consultant and Former Executive Director, Refugee Council of Australia*
7. How might new migration pathways include flexible visas, skills development and education scholarships?  
Expert: *Sonia Caton, Director, Principal Solicitor, Refugee and Immigration Legal Service*
8. What other mechanisms may be useful to improve our current migration systems?  
Expert: *this is a follow up question for all experts involved in this session*

**5:00pm**      **Closing Remarks**



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# National People's Assembly

## Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2008

Moderator: Molly Harriss Olson, Director EcoFutures & Green Cross Advisory Panel Member

The first half of all sessions will comprise of a short presentation by eminent speakers, followed by moderated interaction between speakers and the public.

8:30am	Welcome to Country	Maroochy Barambah – Songwoman of the Turrbal People
8:40am	Welcoming Address	Dr. John Cole, Executive Director Sustainability Innovation, Queensland EPA
8:50am	Celebrating Democracy	Explanation by the Moderator of how the National People's Assembly can enable ordinary citizens to influence public policy through deliberative democracy

### SPEAKERS PROGRAM

9:00am	Session one	<b>Science of sea level rise: What are the models, measurements and risks?</b> Wilson da Silva, Editor-in-Chief Cosmos Magazine and G Magazine
9:30am	Session two	<b>Managing extreme weather risks: How do we know what to expect in Asia Pacific?</b> Heinrich Eder, Managing Director, Munich Re Greg Goebel, Head of Queensland Red Cross
10:10am	Session four	<b>Preparing for climate impacts in the Asia Pacific</b> Dr. Alison Green, Senior Marine Scientist for the Asia Pacific, The Nature Conservancy Professor Jan McDonald, Interim Director, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Griffith University
10:50-11:10am		<b>Coffee break</b>  <i>Citizens' Panel return</i>
11:15am	Session three	<b>The Torres Strait Islands King Tides - a reflection</b>
11:30am	Session five	<b>Economics of change: Can we create a lower emissions Australian economy to prepare for sustainable population growth?</b> Professor Paul Hardisty, Global Director Sustainability, Worley Parsons
12:20pm	Session six	<b>Humanitarian story: How will Australia choose to respond?</b> Tim Costello, CEO, World Vision Professor Jon Barnett, Australian Research Council Fellow in the School of Anthropology, Geography and Environmental Studies
1:00-1:40am		<b>Lunch break</b>
1:40pm	Session seven	<b>Law reform: How can the rights of people displaced by sea level rise be protected?</b> Dr. Jane McAdam, Senior Lecturer & Director of International Law Programs, Faculty of Law, UNSW Sonia Caton, Director and Principal Solicitor, Refugee and Immigration Legal Service
2:20pm	Video	<b>Welcome from Penny Wong</b>

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2:40pm	<b>Presentation</b>	Official presentation of Citizen's Panel Consensus Report to the Federal Government, represented by <b>Australia's Special Envoy on Climate Change, Mr. Howard Bamsey</b> , who is also the senior official in the federal Department of Climate Change with overall responsibility for adaptation and international climate change policies.
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2:55-3:00pm	Closing remarks	Mara Bun, CEO Green Cross Australia
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