

THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Australia is already suffering the devastating impacts of the climate crisis. Marine heatwaves have caused coral bleaching, catastrophic bushfires have claimed the lives of billions of native animals, droughts and major floods have swept the country harming wild and farmed animals, as well as human community members. The most comprehensive report on the climate crisis to date, from the IPCC, states that “it is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land.”

DRIVING CLIMATE CRISIS: FOSSIL FUELS

Fossil fuels are the leading contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions. The burning of fossil fuels converts carbon to carbon dioxide and, if not captured and stored, is released into the atmosphere, warming the planet. Fossil fuels supply around 80% of the world's energy. Australia's coal production is the sixth largest producer in the world and has the highest coal power emissions per capita. As of 2021, the IPCC has called for urgent action to phase out fossil fuels, in order to prevent global warming from rising to 1.5C.

DRIVING CLIMATE CRISIS: THE ANIMAL INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Animal agriculture is a huge emitter of greenhouse gas, accounting for 16.5% of total global emissions. A poor knowledge of the Australian landscape following European invasion in the late 1700s has led to inappropriate farming practices that have dramatically depleted limited natural resources.

In 2014, 52% of Australia's landmass was being used for agriculture, with up to 84% of that used for animal grazing. Worldwide, the production of animal-based foods is responsible for 57% of all greenhouse gas emissions linked to food production.

METHANE

Methane is a greenhouse gas ~84 times more potent than CO₂ over a 20 year period, and which breaks down in the atmosphere faster. Though the entire agriculture sector contributes ~13% of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia each year, 42% of methane emissions are produced by animal agriculture.

Cows, sheep and goats release methane through passing gas and their manure. 100g of beef emits ~50kg of GHG emissions, whilst 100g of tofu produces just 2kg.

COMBATTING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

THE CLIMATE CRISIS' IMPACT ON BIODIVERSITY

Climate change poses a serious threat to Australian biodiversity, and vulnerable wildlife continue to face changes in water availability, fire regimes and land use, all while avoiding predation. Australia's current pledged levels of emissions will see half of all birds and reptiles, two-thirds of mammals, and close to 80% of amphibians disappear. The likelihood of extinction for a large portion of currently endangered and non-endangered species is high, unless swift action is taken to alleviate the destructive effects of climate change on wild-living populations of animals.

CURBING CLIMATE CRISIS

Ending fossil fuel subsidisation and production, while also eliminating the methane produced by ruminant animals is essential to halting rapidly rising global temperatures. Transitioning to an entirely plant-based agricultural system by 2050 could sequester 99-163% of our carbon emission budget to 1.5C. This can be achieved by looking towards Indigenous communities and environmental scientists.

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