

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY



Reducing urban impacts on the natural environment.

OUTCOME 1	OUTCOME 2	OUTCOME 3	OUTCOME 4
Increased energy efficiency and climate resilience of vulnerable households.	Increased public understanding of the climate challenge.	Secure, healthy and sustainable food systems.	Protected and rehabilitated aquatic eco-systems.

To access in-depth information about the other outcomes in the Environment & Sustainability Impact Area, visit lmcf.org.au/our-impact/environment-sustainability

Challenge

There is an overwhelming scientific consensus that humans are changing the climate. This consensus is not reflected in the general community, which is hindering an effective response.

The case for human-induced climate change is accepted in the peer-reviewed science (97 to 99 per cent).¹ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which provides the objective, scientific view and reviews all available scientific data, is unequivocal on this.² As global economies have industrialised, carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration has increased from 278 ppm in 1750 to 415 ppm today - the highest level in around two million years.³ These additional greenhouse gas emissions are trapping more heat and changing the climate. Unless emissions are substantially limited, there will be severe impacts across the globe.⁴

In Australia, nine of the ten hottest years on record occurred since 2005⁵ and, now in early in 2019, records are again being broken; the nation experienced its hottest January on record, which followed its hottest December, in 2018.⁶ Rising sea-levels, floods, drought, fire, extreme heat and damaging weather events are just some of the many impacts that will continue to increase in the years to come.⁷

Across the globe, 185 countries have ratified United Nations' Paris Agreement and are attempting to keep global temperature rise this century below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and ideally below 1.5°C.⁸

Despite the overwhelming scientific evidence for human-induced climate change and global efforts to address the problem, significant confusion persists within the community, political spheres, and other sectors. Only 56 to 65 per cent of the Australian public accept that climate change is driven by human activity.⁹ Reasons for the discrepancy likely involve several factors, including exposure to contrary information in the media, optimism bias, discounting the future, ideological positions that are dismissive of climate change and mistrust of institutions.¹⁰

The community, is struggling to introduce an efficient, effective and stable climate response to drive down greenhouse gas pollution, systematically adapt and meet

emissions reduction targets.¹¹ While the reasons for inaction are numerous and complex, a significant barrier to effective action has been the widespread confusion about both the problem and an appropriate response.

The community needs help to understand the climate challenge and highlight the opportunities involved with the transition to net zero emissions, so that appropriate action can be taken at the individual level through to the policy level.

Our Response

Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is increasing understanding of the climate challenge by providing accessible, evidence-based information to the public, which will assist all levels of government and the community to respond to the challenge effectively.

The best practice for communicating the climate challenge involves the use of clear messages, that are repeated often by trusted sources. Climate scientists, farmers, firefighters, paramedics, doctors, weather presenters and nurses are the most trusted sources in Victoria. Information on the local impacts of climate change is also more effective at engaging audiences than national or global information. In addition, combining both emergency and hopeful components in the same message is an effective method of communicating the challenge.¹²

When communicating with different community sectors, specific messages and trusted sources within those communities should be utilised. Specific audiences can also be engaged by messages that speak to demographic differences in age, gender, religion, income, education, political views or geographic location.¹³

The technological and economic case for a cost-effective transition has also been made across many economic sectors and the costs of low-emission alternatives continue to fall dramatically – including the cost of wind power, photovoltaics, solar thermal and batteries, to name a few. The greatest potential comes from unexploited opportunities in the electricity and land sectors, with further potential across the industry, transport and buildings sectors.

The Foundation seeks to educate the community about the science and impacts of climate change, while highlighting mitigation and adaptation opportunities. Increasing understanding of the climate challenge by providing regular, accessible, evidence-based information from trusted sources will allow all sectors of the community to respond effectively.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Reducing urban impacts on the natural environment.



The Foundation's support is focused on:

- Activities that effectively communicate the science and impacts of climate change.
- Activities that communicate the solutions and highlight the mitigation and adaptation opportunities, particularly those that demonstrate how the transition to net-zero emissions is technologically and economically viable.
- Projects that support the implementation of innovative local transition solutions that benefit the community.

The Foundation will consider other activities that address this outcome.

It is expected that these activities engage large numbers of people or specific sectors that are critical to effective mitigation or adaptation solutions.

The Foundation is strongly outcome oriented and seeks evidence of results. There is strong preference for evidence-based approaches that can demonstrate effective engagement and, where possible, can show that the community is reducing emissions or adapting to the changing climate as a result of the communication activity.

Contact

Daniel Pediaditis

Senior Program Manager – Environment & Sustainability
Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation

☎ 03 9633 0024

✉ daniel.pediaditis@lmcf.org.au

Endnotes

¹ J. Cook, et al, "Consensus on consensus: a synthesis of consensus estimates on human-caused global warming," Environmental Research Letters Vol. 11 No. 4, (13 April 2016)

² IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. In: Global warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty. World Meteorological Organization

³ State of the Climate, 2018, Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO. <http://www.bom.gov.au/state-of-the-climate/State-of-the-Climate-2018.pdf>

⁴ IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. World Meteorological Organization

⁵ Annual climate statement 2018, Bureau of Meteorology. <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/month/aus/summary.shtml#extremes>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ State of the Climate, 2018, Bureau of Meteorology and CSIRO. <http://www.bom.gov.au/state-of-the-climate/State-of-the-Climate-2018.pdf>

⁸ United Nations, *Paris Agreement – Status of Ratification*. <https://unfccc.int/process/the-paris-agreement/status-of-ratification>

⁹ Morrison M, Parton K, Hine DW (2018) Increasing belief but issue fatigue: Changes in Australian Household Climate Change Segments between 2011 and 2016. PLoS ONE 13(6): e0197988. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0197988>

Bennet, E. Climate of the Nation 2018, The Australia Institute, 2018. <https://www.tai.org.au/sites/default/files/180911%20-%20Climate%20of%20the%20Nation%202018%20%5BPRINT%5D.pdf>

¹⁰ Swim, J. et al. 'Psychology & Global Climate Change addressing a multifaceted phenomenon and set of challenges', The American Psychological Association Task Force on the Interface Between Psychology and Global Climate Change, 2010

¹¹ Commonwealth of Australia, *Australia's emissions projections 2018*, 2018. <http://www.environment.gov.au/system/files/resources/128ae060-ac07-4874-857e-dced2ca22347/files/australias-emissions-projections-2018.pdf>

¹² Holmes, D and Hall, S (2019) A Literature Review of best practice communication of climate science and impacts: Guide for Policy Makers, Monash Climate Change Communication Research Hub, Melbourne 2019

¹³ Ibid.