

Pacific islands are extremely vulnerable to climate change

- loss of coastal infrastructure and land
- more intense cyclones and droughts
- failure of subsistence crops
- failure of coastal fisheries
- losses of coral reefs and mangroves
- spread of certain diseases
- rising sea surface temperatures
- ocean acidification
- destruction of corals
- loss of stability.

Climate Change – it's time to act!

A World Day of Prayer Service was held at the Uniting Church in Sunnybank Hills in Brisbane which has a Tonga congregation who opened and closed the service with cultural hymns and songs. A priest from the Cook Islands reminded the congregation that the coral atolls which are home to some communities, are slowly sinking into the sea. This is the stark reality of the effects of climate change. It should not come as a surprise to any of us.

Pacific islands are extremely vulnerable to climate change. Families have already been affected by climate change. Low lying coastal communities are vulnerable to sea-level rise, inundation of tides, increased intensity of storm surges and coastal erosion. The original Fijian village of Vunidogoloa is abandoned and dilapidated, overgrown with vegetation. Remnants of an old seawall built to protect the village serves as a reminder of what climate change can do to a community's home. Vunidogoloa is one of four Fijian communities that have been forced to relocate from the effects of climate change, and more than 80 communities have been earmarked by the Fiji government for potential future relocation. The pattern is repeated over and over in the region.

Pacific nations are becoming increasingly worried by Australia's stance on climate change. At the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Tuvalu in August 2019, Australia ensured its official communique watered down commitments to respond to climate change, which meant the only commitment is to commission yet another report into what action needs to be taken.

It is not just the Pacific Islands which are being affected by climate change. Our own nation is also at risk. Scientists point to the more extreme weather events, increased flooding, droughts and fires, desertification of pastoral lands in Australia linked to climate change.

If you feel that it is time to get serious about tackling climate change, please speak up, tell your local politician, your federal politician or the Prime Minister.

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May we always see the world through the eyes of Christ, speak to those we meet with the words of Christ, and take with us on our journey the peace of Christ

