

An update from the Pacific Calling Partnership.



## Responding to climate change in partnership with our Pacific Island neighbours

PCP Patrons Mrs Bonita Mabo, His Eminence Cardinal John Ribat (MSC), Dr Richard A O'Brien, Hon Dr Meredith Burgmann



### PCP Patron speaks out on the need for climate action

Cardinal Ribat from Papua New Guinea, a Patron of the Pacific Calling Partnership recently spoke about his concerns for his country and the impacts of climate change. Below are some extracts from the article published in the March edition of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Australian newsletter.

Concerning climate change Cardinal Ribat said *"It is really the biggest issue for us. We cannot keep quiet about it. We have to come out with it,"* he said, noting that the *"king tides, king waves"* and rough winds *"belting"* the island nation are already forcing many people from their homes.

Cardinal Ribat, a member of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, received his Cardinal's "red hat" from Pope Francis in November 2017. Cardinal Ribat said his red hat was timely because it allows him to have more heft when voicing the country's concerns, particularly on the issue of climate change.

Papua New Guinea is among the nations considered most at risk for the effects of climate change. For several years the country has been affected by rising sea levels and changes in temperature, rainfall patterns and the frequency of tropical storms.

According to the Australian Government's 2011 Pacific Climate Change Science Program report, temperatures in the capital city of Port Moresby have increased since at a rate of 0.11 degrees Celsius per decade since 1950, causing sea levels to rise at a rate of 7mm per year since 1993. Coconut farms – the country's primary agricultural product – have so far been most heavily affected.

*Cardinal Ribat concludes "For those who doubt the effects of climate change or think that it's a myth, his response would be to "come and see" if they "really want to be sure about what is happening."*

To read the full article go to:

<https://www.misacor.org.au/index.php/e-magazine/latest-news/2931-interview-with-cardinal-john-ribat-msc>

### **“Breaking Ground” Tour in Queensland**

Congratulations to 350.org (Australia and Pacific groups) for their recent “Breaking Ground” storytelling tour where the Pacific Climate Warriors from nations such as Kiribati and Tuvalu visited Queensland to share their #FrontlineTruths .

Through song, dance and spoken word, communities in Brisbane and Rockhampton listened to the lived realities of climate change along with stories from the front line of climate action. People were deeply moved by the stories shared and feeling even more inspired to take action this coming federal election. (www.350.org.au)

### **The world needs to limit warming to 1.5°**

Why it is important to let our politicians and communities know...

In the lead up to Australia's 'climate election' on 18 May, much of the discussion about emissions seems to be based on the presumption that because Australia signed up to the Paris Accord a global temperature rise of 2 degrees is enough. In October last year PCP brought Aote Tong to Australia to speak about the urgency of aiming for no more than 1.5degrees based on the IPCC report that had just been released. The IPCC is composed of the world's leading climate scientists and its October 2018 report compared how the impacts of a 1.5°C with the impacts we can expect from a 2°C rise. It also looked at emissions pathways for each of the two temperature goals.

#### **Examples from the IPCC report of the expected effects of 1.5°C rise v 2°C rise Extreme Temperature**

Under 1.5°C of warming, almost 14% of the world's population would be exposed to severe heat waves at least once in five years. Under 2°C of warming, 37% of the world's population would be exposed to severe heat waves at least once in 5 years.

**Drought**

Droughts in the Mediterranean and southern Africa will be longer and more frequent under 2°C of warming.

**Heavy Precipitation and Flooding**

There will be heavier precipitation under 2°C of warming than under 1.5°C.

**Ice-Free Arctic**

While one sea-ice-free summer every 100 years is predicted for the Arctic with a rise of 1.5°C, it is very likely to be ice-free one in every 10 years at a rise of 2°C.

**Sea Level Rise**

A 1.5°C rise will lead to a sea level rise of 0.4 meters by 2100 with up to 69 million people exposed to flooding. A 2°C rise, will lead to a sea level rise of 0.46 m by 2100 while 1.5°C of warming will lead to up to 79 million people exposed to flooding.

**Oceans**

Coral reefs are projected to decline by 70-90% with warming greater than 1.5°C. With warming of 2°C more than 99% are projected to decline. Loss of fishery productivity at low latitudes, acidification, dead zones and other dangerous conditions are projected to be more pronounced with warming higher than 1.5°C.

**Food Security**

Fisheries and aquaculture will experience lower risks if warming stays at 1.5°C.

**Economic Growth**

If warming is 1.5°C, global GDP losses will be 0.3% by 2100. With 2°C of warming, losses would be 0.5%.

**For Australia's Pacific Island neighbours even a 1.5° increase in warming will increase saltwater intrusion, droughts, flooding and infrastructure damage, severely threaten their coral reefs and diminish their fish catch. A rise of 2° will be catastrophic for them.**



Truck bogged while repairing Kiribati Health Retreat's broken seawalls following Cyclone Mona in January this year. Photo courtesy Pelenise Alofa

## **New Information sheet from PCP**

### **Sorting fact from fiction: The habitability of Tuvalu and other low-lying islands**

PCP was very fortunate to have Lauren Macrae, a Sydney University Environmental Science graduate volunteer with us over her summer university break. Lauren researched and wrote a timely information sheet, “**Sorting fact from fiction: The habitability of Tuvalu and other low-lying islands**” which is now available to read on the ERC website.

The information sheet addresses the ‘myth’ promoted by some media commentators, that studies of physical processes such as Kench’s 2018 study on sediment movement means that Tuvalu will remain habitable even with the effects of climate change. As Lauren has so carefully and assiduously pointed out in the information sheet, habitability is about more than land area. She has highlighted issues around sediment transport, erosion, overcrowding, over-wash, water and food security to show how erroneous these commentators’ claims are.

Read the information sheet on the Pacific Calling Partnership web page so that you have the tools and information to counter these myths.

[https://www.erc.org.au/pcp\\_information\\_sheets](https://www.erc.org.au/pcp_information_sheets)

The same link will take you to the other PCP Information sheets:

- Loss and Damage from climate change
- Kiribati: a nation at the forefront of climate change
- Small nations at the forefront of climate change: Tuvalu
- Mitigation: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Climate Finance: Australia and the Pacific
- Climate change: denial versus science
- Mangroves
- Human mobility and climate change



**PCP is on**

**Facebook**



If you are a Facebook user please [visit our page](#) to see regular updates of our activities and events and to find useful resources on climate change and current issues.

Check out [our Facebook page here](#).



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*We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the land. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside them for reconciliation and justice. We pay our respects to our Elders; past, present and future. As we take our next step we remember the first footsteps taken on this sacred land.*

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