



TIME FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION

EIANZ'S RESPONSE TO THE IPCC WORKING GROUP II SIXTH ASSESSMENT REPORT

The [Environment Institute of Australia and New Zealand](#) (EIANZ) is the peak professional body of environmental practitioners in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Through its [Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#), it sets a high standard for the work undertaken by its members and certified practitioners.

The EIANZ has reviewed the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II (WGII) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) [summary](#) for policy makers. We summarise significant points of concern for our members, government, influencers, and the voting public and offer recommendations for policy makers in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

The working group found with very high confidence that *"The cumulative scientific evidence is unequivocal: Climate change is a threat to human well-being and planetary health. Any further delay in concerted anticipatory global action on adaptation and mitigation will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all."* (WGII, 2022)

Risks to human health, ecosystems, biodiversity, and societies are now understood to be greater than in 2014 when the [Fifth Assessment Report](#) was released. Many natural systems are nearing the limits of their adaptation capacity and some are already beyond their limits. It is also clear that action to prevent further climate change is more urgent than in 2014 and investment is well below what is required.

Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand are not immune from impact. Some impacts are obvious (e.g. bushfires, floods, and droughts) and some less obvious (e.g. destruction of the Great Barrier Reef). The current 1.1 degrees of global warming may be beyond the limits of adaptability for the Great Barrier Reef and is also causing significant losses in kelp forests. Kelp forests sequester carbon 30 times faster than terrestrial plants – mitigating climate change and reducing ocean acidity in the process. Both of these natural features provide protection of our coast by dampening waves.

We lurch from one climate related disaster to the next – sinking money into disaster response and recovery, while failing to learn the obvious adaptation and resilience lessons. Our traditional approaches to land use planning and development are inadequate.

WGII found that there are feasible and effective actions that can reduce risks:

- Actual global **mitigation** (i.e. emission reductions) must be consistent with the Paris Agreement at a minimum. We must urgently halt all future temperature rise, not just slow it.
- Even with heroic mitigation achievements, there is so much climate change locked in that **adaptation to build resilience** is essential. Adaptation and protection plans are being written to varying degrees, but implementation lags and must now be scaled to the size of the problem. If we move quickly with innovative adaptation solutions, we can reduce impacts and advance the United Nation's [Sustainable Development Goals](#).



The EIANZ urgently calls for immediate and effective action by the Australian and Aotearoa New Zealand governments and other decision makers, including:

- genuine efforts to work effectively with other nations to contain global warming to 1.5°C.
- legislated national commitments to net zero by 2050 and interim targets of 50% by 2030
- strategies and funding to properly advance both mitigation and adaptation, prioritising equity and justice, integrating Indigenous knowledge, and enabling cooperation amongst all levels of government and all sections of society – including the marginalised and vulnerable
- comprehensive awareness, transition plans and fully resourced implementation works to enable communities to adapt. This includes better and more inclusive multi-sector planning, utilising natural ecosystem services such as mangrove restoration, more climate-adaptive building codes and, in some cases, financial and logistic investment in relocating communities away from highly vulnerable locations. Planning and implementation must be timely, robust and flexible to avoid the costs associated with maladaptation.
- transition plans for sectors and regions most vulnerable to the shift away from fossil fuels.

The EIANZ, as the peak body representing and certifying environmental practitioners who work across all levels of government, industry and academia, offers its support to governments and decision makers to implement the above recommendations.

Forecasting the impacts of climate change is incredibly difficult given the systems that sustain life and social wellbeing on earth are complex and interconnected. These IPCC Working Group Assessment Reports are the best information we have and are the result of years of work by a long list of scientists from around the world. Ignoring or misusing their findings and recommendations threatens our very existence. By failing to act now and act strongly we pass the problem to the next generations who may be faced with the prospect of a planet that is uninhabitable for humans.

About EIANZ

EIANZ is a not-for-profit, professional association for environmental practitioners from across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The Institute has a certification scheme that recognises ethical and professional practice which assures government, industry and the community of practitioners' professional standing. Our members and certified practitioners have specialist knowledge and skills in environmental systems, processes and solutions. They bring passion, ingenuity and creativity to their work.