



Environment Institute
of Australia and
New Zealand Inc.

EIANZ'S RESPONSE TO THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP III SIXTH ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) [Working Group III Sixth Assessment Report](#) (WGIII AR6) is long, deep, and complex. As such it is open to interpretation and, depending on your agenda, can be a beacon of hope for the achievability of a world that is 2 degrees warmer, or a tragic mourning for the lost opportunity to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. The EIANZ aims to provide a clear, concise assessment of the key messages, based on extensive experience working with industry, government, and communities to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

A hotter, less stable environment with greatest impact on the most vulnerable populations

In a nutshell, the report says that limiting warming to 1.5 degrees is now a huge challenge. 2 degrees is also a big challenge and requires strong and quick action. If we maintain our current behaviour, warming will reach 3.2 degrees by the end of this century and, given what we've seen with 1.1 degrees¹ of warming (bushfires, floods, etc.), we don't want that. The Paris Agreement (with near universal participation) states that we will aim to limit warming to 1.5 degrees.

A 50% reduction in emissions by 2030 is essential if the world is to limit warming to less than 2 degrees. This beholds us all to do everything we can reduce emissions for the rest of this decade – we must throw the kitchen sink at it!

The Nationally Determined Contributions committed in the lead up to COP26² are inadequate to achieve the emissions reductions required to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, and national actions are not expected to deliver the reductions pledged.

Low emissions technologies are being adopted less rapidly in developing countries because of limitations related to finance, technology development and transfer, and capacity. Signatories to the Paris Agreement have not delivered on the commitment to provide financial support.

Based on review of IPCC WGI and WGII³ Sixth Assessment Reports that addressed climate change trends and impacts, the EIANZ strongly recommends that the global community continues to push hard to contain warming as close to 1.5 degrees as possible in order to prevent more severe natural disasters and a more difficult transition, as promised in the Paris Agreement.

What can be done?

To limit warming to 1.5 degrees we must immediately reduce emissions rapidly and deeply in all sectors of society/the economy, including:

- transitioning to very low or zero-carbon energy sources such as renewables
- widespread electrification of the energy and transport systems
- improving energy efficiency in our building, transport, and manufacturing sectors
- physical, institutional, and operational integration across the energy system
- reducing non-CO2 emissions (e.g. methane) including fugitive releases from extractive and industrial processes
- deploying carbon dioxide removal methods to off-set emissions that can't be abated
- using coal, oil, and gas ONLY where carbon capture and storage is effectively implemented.

1. IPCC WGI AR6 August 2021

2. 26th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

3. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group One and Working Group Two



It can be done

This isn't easy but at least 18 countries have sustained emissions reductions for longer than 10 years, driven by climate change policies and changes in economic structure. Some countries have reduced emissions by a third or more since peaking, and some have achieved several years of consecutive reduction rates of around 4% per year.

Climate change will be easier to mitigate and adapt to if we limit warming to 1.5 degrees. Many solutions have co-benefits including improved air quality, health benefits, biodiversity conservation, and improved soil quality and food production capacity.

The economic benefit of limiting global warming exceeds the cost of mitigation and there is sufficient global capital and liquidity to close climate mitigation and adaptation investment gaps.

What should we do?

As climate change is caused by, and causes, a broad range of complex and interconnected issues, our solutions must respond to that complexity and interconnectedness.

The report indicates that we need to **implement a package of policies** that:

- provide overall direction (a clear vision for change), set targets, provide regulatory certainty and appropriate governance structures, and facilitate mobilisation of finance
- facilitate international, regional, and cross-sectoral cooperation and interactions between diverse actors as agreed at Paris

- integrate mitigation and adaptation considerations across all policy domains
- provide economic instruments that drive emissions reductions and long-term public spending commitments (3 – 6 times greater than current levels)
- enable innovation and build capacity
- drive energy efficiency and development of renewable energy
- remove fossil fuel subsidies, abandon new coal installations, and support early closure of fossil fuel fired energy plants with appropriate transition plans for affected regions and communities
- support uptake of electric vehicles and sustainable urban planning including a greater commitment to active travel
- overcome barriers to AFOLU⁴ mitigation options (which can deliver large-scale greenhouse gas emissions reductions)
- support developing countries through finance, innovation, and technology transfer
- are broad and sequential, dovetailing national and sub-national strategies.

Conclusion

Everyone has a role to play but the key at this point is for governments to enact legislation that facilitates coordination of solutions across the complex landscape of food production, housing, transport, and industry. We need national governments that cooperate internationally, to great effect, and coordinate efforts with sub-national governments, industry, and civil society.



Recommendation

The EIANZ urgently repeats its 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, and fulfilling our promise to provide finance to developing countries.
- 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 such as vulnerable coastal areas. 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 eminent 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.