

Pay Heed to Latest Climate Commission Report

Monaro residents should pay heed to a new report by the Climate Commission that warns of increases in heatwaves, bushfires and sea level in New South Wales, according to local environmental group, Climate Action Monaro.

The report is set to be released today and titled "The Critical Decade, NSW Climate Impacts and Opportunities", links these events to climate change. It also says "climate change cannot be ruled out" as a factor in the state's recent heavy rains. While the intensity of downpours are likely to increase, according to the report, NSW will get drier on the whole.

Climate Action Monaro President, Ms Jenny Goldie, noted that the chief climate commissioner, Tim Flannery, has warned that climate change will affect health, agriculture, tourism, water security and biodiversity.

"The report is not called 'The Critical Decade' for nothing", says Ms Goldie. "We have to start moving to a low carbon economy this decade and do our best to mitigate climate change.

"We have already seen the effects of climate change on NSW ecosystems. For instance, spring snow depth at Spencers Creek in the Snowy Mountains has decreased by 40 per cent since the 1960s.

"The likelihood of increased dryness is a particular worry as this will mean longer droughts and harsher bushfires. In the Monaro, introduced weeds such as African lovegrass that burn so ferociously, will add to the problem."

"An anticipated 50cm rise in sea-level down the coast will increase the frequency of storm surges from once-in-100 year event to every few months. Those Monaro residents with properties along the coast will be affected.

"By the end of the century, however, we can expect a 1.1 metre rise in sea-level which will

inundate thousands of homes and commercial properties and affect roads and power supplies."

Ms Goldie said that the report notes that NSW is well-placed to move to a low carbon economy through solar power. In Australia, \$20 billion could be invested in solar power by the end of the decade.

The report notes that even if "solar panels are imported from overseas, around 30 to 40 per cent of panel installation costs will go to local installers."

Ms Goldie says there are other measures to lower greenhouse emissions such as moving freight and passengers from cars to rail. The report notes that trains can be 20 times more efficient in moving people than cars.

"Despite this, and rail having less than a quarter the pollution, the NSW Government has been spending twice as much on roads as on rail," she says. "It's time for some real investment in NSW Rail, particularly on the Monaro."

Further information:

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