

Current Heatwave a Portent of a Hotter Future

The current heatwave is a worrying portent of an increasingly hotter world, according to Climate Action Monaro (CAM).

President of CAM, Ms Jenny Goldie, says climate change is already making itself felt.

"It is making extreme weather worse and it's making heatwaves more frequent," she says.

"This is Australia's longest heatwave with seven days where the average national maximum has been above 39oC. The previous record was only four days. But it is not just its intensity, this heatwave is exceptional in its continental spread as well," says Ms Goldie.

According to Dr David Jones of the Bureau of Meteorology, the climate system is responding to the background warming trend. He said this week: "Everything that happens in the climate system now is taking place on a planet which is a degree hotter than it used to be."

Ms Goldie says that extreme heat has taken more lives than any other natural disaster in Australia.

"During the Black Saturday Victorian fires which directly claimed 173 lives, there were another 374 lives lost from extreme heat during the week."

"On the Monaro, bushfire risk will increase as temperatures get higher," says Ms Goldie. "The terrible Yarrabin fire that has spread into the Kybeyan valley is a wake-up call to all of us.

"The World Bank has warned that, without mitigating action, we are heading for 4oC warming. This will mean 6oC on land. It is not inevitable, however, since we can avert the worst effects if we take strong action now. Such action goes way beyond the carbon tax. It will require

significant behavioural change, reforestation and drawing carbon out of the atmosphere through biochar and other means."

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