

# **An Open letter to Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and New Zealand-Aotearoa Prime Minister Helen Clark**

Dear Prime Ministers,

## **Your action needed on climate change in the Pacific**

We represent a range of communities and non-government organisations in the Asia-Pacific, Australia and New Zealand-Aotearoa. Without immediate action, hundreds of thousands of people will be displaced by climate change in the coming decades. Pacific Islanders are already affected, with their islands very vulnerable to sea level rises, storm surge and loss of food security and water supplies.

The Pacific Islands Forum next week is an opportunity to define a more concrete program of action to assist Pacific Islanders.

We welcome past acknowledgment of the problem the Pacific faces and expressions of a willingness to help, but now is the time for action. Therefore we call on the Australian and New Zealand Governments to recognise the urgency of climate change and the particular threat it poses to the peoples of the Pacific.

The Australia and New Zealand governments must begin a real process of partnership with Pacific Island countries in finding ways to prepare for and assist with the resettlement of Pacific Island people who will be displaced by global warming.

In particular the follow actions must be taken:

- substantial and urgent mitigation efforts by Australia and New Zealand;
- strong advocacy internationally for urgent action by developed countries to reduce greenhouse pollution and de-carbonise their economies;
- a commitment of substantial resources, in addition to existing aid programs, to adaptation projects and funding for evacuation and resettlement within and between Pacific Island countries;
- a substantial increase in permanent migration from Pacific Island countries to Australia and New Zealand to help build relationships with Australia and New Zealand and to build resilience and independent resources in Pacific Island countries;
- the establishment of a special humanitarian stream within the immigration program for climate affected people;
- strong advocacy internationally for an international legal framework for assisting people displaced by climate change.

Words are not enough and waiting for the catastrophic sea level rises is not acceptable. Australia and New Zealand have the responsibility and capacity to act now. They should begin to do so.

Anything less will be seen as a betrayal of the people most affected by climate change but least responsible for it.

Yours Sincerely

**Signatories follow**

## **Australia**

Damien Lawson, National Climate Justice Coordinator, Friends of the Earth Australia

Rev Jason Kioa, Moderator, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting Church in Australia

Andrew Hewett, Executive Director, Oxfam Australia

Cate Faehrmann, Executive Director, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

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Stephen Campbell, Head of Campaigns, Greenpeace Australia Pacific

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Fatima Hakaoro, Chairperson, Queensland Tuvalu Community

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Hammy Goonan, Australian Centre for Democracy and Justice, Australia

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## **Pacific**

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## **Aotearoa / New Zealand**

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## **Asia**

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