



2021 First Nation Peoples Statement on Climate Change

We, the participants attending the Gathering, acknowledge the voices of the Gimuy Walubarra Yidinji and Yirraganydji, whose lands we meet upon in 2021. Building on the 2018 statement from First Peoples on Yorta Yorta land, we as First Nation Peoples of Australia recognise that overwhelmingly scientific and traditional knowledge is demanding immediate action against the threats of climate change.

When Country is healthy, we are healthy. Our knowledge systems are interconnected with our environment and it relies on the health of Country. This knowledge is held by our Elders and passed on to the next generation. Solutions to climate change can be found in the landscapes and within our knowledge systems. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the tools, knowledge, and practices to effectively contribute to the fight against climate change. We have lived sustainably in Australia for over 100,000 years.

First Nations people of Australia contribute the least to climate change, yet the impacts of climate change are affecting us most severely. We at the Gathering are calling for the following:

- A commitment from Federal Government to financially support an annual First Nations-led dialogue on climate change.
 - The annual dialogue should be a place where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders can discuss the changing climate in their communities and is a valuable input to inform policy at all levels.
- A commitment for federal-level funding for an Indigenous-led climate action hub, which would fund both Indigenous-led mitigation and adaptation climate change projects. These projects could focus on:
 - Domestic emissions reductions through enabling reliable renewable energy supply to off grid communities, Indigenous-led nature-based solutions.
 - Indigenous-led adaptation planning for communities and the recording and transmission of knowledges and experiences across the country.
- The establishment of a Torres Strait Island taskforce, led by First Nations peoples of the region, to drive critical and tangible climate change solutions for island communities under present and immediate threat.
- We call on all Australians to join us in acting on climate change and in protecting the environment. To work collaboratively with us, learn our laws and our ways and respect our knowledges to find solutions together to combat climate change.
- Climate action that links all levels of government so our people and communities can work collaboratively in an Indigenous-led fight against climate change.
- The right to manage Country. First Nations peoples must be involved in the national dialogue about climate change and be engaged on any decision that impacts us and our Country. We call for these rights to be respected and observed on an international, national, state and local level. Our knowledge must be included in climate management frameworks.
- To look beyond ourselves, to include flora and fauna in climate planning and climate management frameworks so the plants and animals that support us can be represented.

We are seeing changes in the environment and the declining health of Country and people. We can see our native flora and fauna are suffering and the conditions of our lands, waters, seas and skies declining. For some of our people it is an emergency because the climate crisis has already caused widespread damage. Our connection to Country represents climate science developed over countless generations, listen to us, work with us and together we can enact a change that will shape our future for all Australians.