

Climate change impacts are here now and we need to adapt to them

When it comes to tackling climate change, everything we can do to rapidly reduce emissions still matters. However, communities around the country and globe are already experiencing climate impacts like bushfires, floods, drought and extreme weather. We know we need to prepare for a certain amount of warming that is locked in.

Most resources to address climate impacts are currently put into disaster relief, but we can't only be reactive to climate impacts.

Communities need to be supported in advance of climate-related disasters to adapt and build resilience in order to lessen the damage of now unavoidable climate impacts. **We can begin creating safer communities and protecting the environment now by implementing climate adaptation initiatives.** Through climate adaptation we can become more resilient to things such as heatwaves, floods, storm surges, bushfires and droughts.

Last year, the Act on Climate collective at Friends of the Earth travelled the West Coast of Victoria to hear from communities about their perspectives on climate change. Many feel anxious, unprepared and felt governments don't have their back. Act on Climate met with community leaders who were wanting to implement climate adaptation initiatives, but are not getting the support to do so. **Communities know how they need to adapt and they have ideas for implementing these strategies, but there is no clear pathway or funding to make them a reality.**

Climate adaptation initiatives need to be **highly localised and community-led**, because different communities face different risks and have different vulnerabilities. Each community knows what will work best for them. One community might need flood beds and storm shelters, another community would benefit from controlled burns and more strategic fuel breaks, or revegetation "stepping stones" to allow fauna migration between habitats.

Many communities will want house retrofitting for those most vulnerable in their community, so that they can be safe and comfortable inside their homes despite the extreme heat or cold outside. While the impacts of climate change will affect us all, they won't affect us equally. The people in our communities who are going to be impacted the worst are those who are already marginalised in other ways. Many people can't afford to use their heating and cooling appliances. People with health conditions will be more at risk of serious consequences due to climate impacts and people who are homeless are extremely vulnerable as they already lack adequate shelter.



Act on Climate is working with multiple communities around Victoria through their Frontline Climate Alliance Victoria (FCAV). We are working with community members around the state to share resources and ideas for adaptation, as well as providing training needed for those wanting to get their communities on board and their initiatives funded. **We are hosting monthly Adaptation Activator calls with climate-impacted communities in order to promote bottom-up approaches to climate adaptation, and back local solutions.**

Additionally we are advocating that the Victorian Government establish a permanent Victorian Community Climate Adaptation Fund (VCCAF) in the 2025 state budget, so that communities can apply for funding for their localised climate adaptation projects. We need community-led climate adaptation that is continuously and adequately funded. The fund would distribute money to community groups that apply to undertake localised adaptation and resilience projects. This approach would help the government meet its obligations under the *Victorian Climate Change Act (2017)*. You can sign their petition to **call on the Victorian government to support communities in building resilience to climate impacts here:**

[myyux244 | | 3r j@gtzwsjktj3wlfz4htr r zsy-dhqr fyjdfifuyfytstzkzsioktdw{mytwf](https://www.vic.gov.au/petition-to-call-on-the-victorian-government-to-support-communities-in-building-resilience-to-climate-impacts)

If you are as concerned about climate change and want to take some proactive steps in your community to adapt to climate impacts, you can get in contact with the Act on Climate collective. **You can sign up to volunteer or join their mailing list** to be kept informed with what they're doing here: <https://www.melbournefoe.org.au/climate>

If you would like to join the Frontline Climate Alliance Victoria (FCAV) for their monthly Adaptation Activator calls where they work together to share resources and ideas to progress climate adaptation in our respective communities, you can do so here: <https://www.melbournefoe.org.au/frontline-climate-alliance>

Every step we take to help communities adapt to locked-in climate impacts secures a safer future and builds resilience, protecting people and the environment.

