



CLCs Australia Positions on the Global Climate Crisis

December 2019

CLCs Australia acknowledge that the laws and customs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations cared for the Australian continent and islands for more than 60,000 years. Our laws must continue to protect this land and its inhabitants, in the future. We pay our deep respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We are facing a **climate crisis** - one of the most urgent challenges facing Australia and the planet.

Heatwaves, fires, floods and storms (all examples of extreme weather events) are increasing as a result of the climate crisis - threatening people's homes, livelihoods, health, quality of life, employment and the natural environment that sustains us.

The climate crisis is a **social justice and intergenerational equity issue**. In Australia, the impacts will be felt disproportionately by the people and communities our sector works with, as well as increasing the risks and burdens for future generations - with fundamental human rights likely to be negatively impacted.

The climate crisis impacts are, and will be, felt first and **disproportionately by people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage**. Community Legal Centre's are frequently at the forefront of responding to the legal needs of these communities. Those with the fewest resources and protections to respond; those least able to have their voices heard in the development of mitigation and adaptation policies; and those who may be less equipped to deal with the transformative social, economic and technological changes.

The cost of inaction is significant. Failing to reduce the impacts of the climate crisis will result in greater poverty and inequality. There are **mitigation and adaption strategies** that governments, communities and individuals can, and must take, now. We must all play our part in addressing this climate crisis.

The community legal sector urges that the climate crisis and environmental impacts are accounted for in all government decision-making - specifically recognising the severity and disproportionate burden that will be borne by people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage.

As a sector, we also commit to key actions recognising our role in working with people and communities to ensure they can access the legal help they need, and in contributing to a fairer and more just society.

Calls for Action

The community legal sector supports **immediate action for Australia by Commonwealth, State, Territory and local government** to:

1. **Rapidly reduce emissions** - set emission targets in line with the Paris Agreement to limit warming to 1.5°C, including targets to **achieve a carbon neutral Australia by 2050**.
2. **Ensure a just transition to a carbon neutral economy**
 - Implement a credible, low-cost and equitable plan to transition to a clean economy
 - Ensure transition empowers people and communities to have a say in decisions that affect them and provides targeted support for people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage as well as affected workers and communities.
3. **Provide adequate incomes to support the transitions and peoples' resilience**
4. **Ensure people live in affordable, climate-safe homes**
5. **Help communities respond to the climate crisis**

All responses to the climate crisis must support and coincide with other efforts to build a fairer, more sustainable future for people and planet.