



Fact sheet:

Mitigating Climate Change & the Pacific

The terms defined

Mitigation reduces the rate and magnitude of changing climate hazards¹

References

¹ Jones, R.N., 2004: Managing climate change risks. *The Benefits of Climate Policies*:

Analytical and Framework Issues, J. CorfeeMorlot and S.Agrawala, Eds., OECD, Paris, 251-297.

² McGregor, 2009 (full reference pending)

³ Keen and Andrews (2007) *Declaring War on Kerosene in the Pacific*, Ecogeneration

⁴ CIA Factbook: Electricity Production

⁵

<http://www.garnautreview.org.au/chp7.htm>

The issue

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) acknowledges that Small Island States are particularly vulnerable to the hostile effects of climate change². The response to addressing climate change must be twofold: to mitigate and to adapt. This factsheet focuses upon climate change mitigation and questions whose role it is to prioritise the mitigation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the Asia-Pacific.

Mitigate what?

Consumption of fossil fuels to generate electricity is generally the most GHG emissions intensive activity performed by nations throughout the world.

Sources of electricity generation in the Pacific are primarily diesel and some hydropower, with kerosene being a common energy source for household lighting, due to 80% of the Pacific not having access to electricity³. A person from the Solomon Islands consumes 95 times less electricity than a person in Australia⁴.

Australia generates the most emissions-intensive form of electricity through its heavy reliance upon brown and black coal as an energy source. As a consequence of this and combined with emissions from agriculture, transport and heavy industry, Australia is the highest GHG emitter within the

OECD and one of the highest in the world⁵.

What becomes apparent when observing the source of emissions within the Asia-Pacific region is that those first affected by the impacts of carbon emissions, being small island states, have barely contributed to the generation of those emissions. It can therefore be argued that Australia and similarly developed, emissions-intensive nations should immediately take responsibility for the introduction of mitigation measures in order to reduce the rate and magnitude of climate impacts upon all countries.

The solution

There is no single mitigation solution however some suggestions are as follows:

- Campaign for the Australian Government to place a cost on carbon NOW and to employ additional policies which discourage the continued use of coal-fired electricity.
- Switch to GreenPower in your home, use electricity efficiently, ride a bike or use public transport to get around.
- Push for AusAid and other Development funding to be invested in the roll-out of decentralised, renewable electricity systems throughout the Pacific, so that Pacific Islanders can share in the benefits of energy security, without contributing to climate change.