

# CLIMATE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2014

The Climate Council is an independent, crowd-funded organisation providing quality information on climate change to the Australian public.

[CLIMATECOUNCIL.ORG.AU](http://CLIMATECOUNCIL.ORG.AU)

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# Introduction

After the Climate Commission was abolished, thousands of Australian's chipped in to Australia's biggest crowd-funding campaign.

More than 16,000 Founding Friends of the Council helped us raise \$1.1 million in just over a week. Thanks to this huge wave of community support, our dedicated team relaunched as the new, independent Climate Council on 23 September 2013.

The Council exists to provide independent, authoritative climate change information to the Australian public. Why? Because our response to climate change must be based on the best science available.

We're a fast growing organisation made up of expert Councillors, staff, volunteers and supporters. Together we are doing everything we can to spread independent and accurate information on climate change.

# Chairman's Message

The Climate Council has emerged as a unique and dynamic organisation, which performs the critical role of providing independent and accurate climate change information to the Australian public.

Following our launch in September 2013, and the incredible support that we received from the Australian public, the Council has been able to provide millions of Australians with climate change information through the media, online and in person through briefings, events and forums.

As inaugural Chairman, I am immensely proud of the achievements of the Climate Council in its first year. The Board, Councillors and staff have worked tirelessly over the past year to build a robust and high impact organisation. In a very short amount of time the Climate Council has built a reputation as a credible authority on climate change both nationally and internationally.

It is important to recognise the vital role that the Climate Council plays in communicating independent, accurate and up-to-date climate science to the Australian public. 2013 was Australia's hottest year on record, and this is the critical decade to respond to climate change. When the former Climate Commission was

abolished in September 2013, the Australian public was left without an independent, credible and highly visible authority on climate change. The Climate Council has done a formidable job in filling the gap, re-launching as an independent not-for-profit organisation, which is driven by community donations.

**As inaugural Chairman, I am immensely proud of the achievements of the Climate Council in its first year.**

It has been an incredibly exciting first year with the Climate Council. My special thanks goes to my fellow Directors, the Climate Councillors, and to our members, staff and volunteers. On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present the Climate Council's first annual report to our supporters, members and Founding Friends.



**Gerry Hueston**  
Chairman

# Message from Chief Councillor Tim Flannery and CEO Amanda McKenzie

In September 2013, we asked for public support to help launch the Climate Council of Australia, an independent, not-for-profit organisation that would carry on the work of the recently disbanded government-funded Climate Commission.

The response was incredible, and in just over one week more than 16,000 Australians joined together to help put the Climate

Council back in business. Our Founding Friends raised \$1.1 million dollars in just 10 days, in Australia's biggest ever crowd-funding campaign. Tens of thousands more joined as supporters of the organisation and in our first month our social media presence had grown to over 70,000.

The Climate Council plays a critical role in providing authoritative, trusted information to the Australian public on climate change. Our Climate Councillors and staff have worked tirelessly throughout the year to provide the latest climate change information to the Australian public. Educators, local government, journalists, emergency services, health professionals, decision makers and our friends and supporters have greatly benefited from the

**This community support illustrates the strong public desire for an organisation of this nature to exist.**

critical work that the Climate Council has undertaken.

It's been an incredible first 9 months. Since our launch in September 2013, the Climate Council has published 10 important reports, putting more than 15,000 important climate change stories in the media and reaching an approximate cumulative audience of 100 million readers, viewers and listeners. The Council has also gained a significant following on social media with a community of close to 100,000 people. This puts our information in the news-feeds of millions of Australians each month.

As Chief Councillor and CEO, we are delighted to present the first annual report of the Climate Council to our supporters, members, and Founding Friends. We would like to thank the Climate Council

staff, Councillors, our Board of Directors, members and volunteers for doing an amazing job in creating and building the Climate Council into a credible national and international force.



**Tim Flannery**  
Chief Councillor



**Amanda McKenzie**  
CEO



Chief Councillor Tim Flannery and CEO Amanda McKenzie

# Our Landmark Reports

In our first 9 months, the Climate Council has released 10 important reports.

Major reports include: September Heat, October Heat, Climate Change and the Australian Bushfire Threat, Off the Charts, Heatwaves, The Angry Summer, Unpacking the Fifth IPCC Assessment Report, and a groundbreaking report on Australia's Electricity Sector.

The Climate Council's reports are written by our expert Climate Councillors, co-authored by other leading experts, and draw heavily on peer-reviewed scientific literature. Our reports are reviewed by a team of expert and community reviewers. The Council's reports provide accurate and up-to-date information to the Australian public and to those on the frontline of climate change impacts, such as local governments, farmers and emergency services.





## FEATURED REPORT

# Australia's Electricity Sector: Ageing, Inefficient & Unprepared

In June 2014, the Climate Council released a major report titled [Australia's Electricity Sector: Ageing, Inefficient and Unprepared.](#)

Internationally, the energy sector accounts for the largest proportion of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which are the main drivers of climate change. Yet, Australia's electricity is largely generated by ageing, inefficient coal-fired power plants. The Climate Council's report details how the transition to renewable energy has significant advantages for the Australian economy.

### A REFLECTION FROM THE LEAD AUTHOR ANDREW STOCK

"The Climate Council's report on Australia's electricity sector played a vital role in opening up discussion about the future of electricity generation in Australia. At present, Australia's electricity is largely generated by ageing, inefficient coal-fired power plants, and as the Climate Council's report has detailed, Australia must act now to prepare itself for our clean energy future. Significantly, the Climate Council's report has acknowledged that globally, the shift to renewable energy is already underway and that there are substantial opportunities for Australia in renewable energy."

## FEATURED REPORT

# Be Prepared: Climate Change and the Australian Bushfire Threat



In December 2013, the Climate Council released a major report on bushfires and climate change: [Climate Change and the Australian Bushfire Threat](#)

There was so much interest in the bushfire report early in the bushfire season, we released our key findings early, in October. The landmark report attracted \$1.3 million worth of media coverage, with more than 1,100 stories.

### **A REFLECTION FROM ONE OF THE LEAD AUTHORS PROFESSOR LESLEY HUGHES.**

"Bushfires are expected to become more frequent and intense in coming decades in many parts of Australia, especially those currently most at risk. The Climate Council made the decision in September 2013 that our first major report should be on bushfire risk, in view of the extremely dry winter, and the extended period of above average temperatures. Little did we know then



that the bushfire season in NSW would start so early, and with such vengeance. Indeed, as I was deep within the bushfire literature the next month, my phone was busy with calls from journalists wanting to know if the bushfires then raging in the Blue Mountains were related to climate change. The interest was so intense that we decided to launch a pre-report press release with our key messages - that climate change was increasing the risk, and that our emergency services will need to be increasingly well resourced to meet

the challenge. The full report, which was thoroughly reviewed by some of Australia's most respected fire ecologists, was released in November, generating much interest in the community, and amongst fire managers and the emergency services. It was a timely reminder that Australia is a highly flammable country, and that the impacts of climate change will be felt via the increased risks of such extreme events."



## FEATURED REPORT

# Heatwaves: Hotter, Longer, More Often

The heatwaves experienced throughout 2013 continued into early 2014. In the summer of 2013/2014 Canberra experienced 20 days of at least 35°C, and Australia's extreme heat drew international attention when play in the 2014 Australian Open tennis tournament was suspended because of the heat.

The Climate Council released its report: *Heatwaves: Hotter, Longer, More Often* in mid February 2014, providing important information on how climate change is making heatwaves worse in terms of their impacts on people, property, communities and the environment.

### A REFLECTION FROM LEAD AUTHOR PROF WILL STEFFEN

"The Heatwaves Report was a landmark for the Council for a number of reasons. We engaged a guest co-author, Dr Sarah Perkins of UNSW, who brought world-class expertise on extreme heat into the report. We analysed the worsening trends of heatwaves in great geographical detail, connecting heatwaves to specific places that people can relate to. And we unequivocally demonstrated the link between increasing hot weather and climate change. The report was an excellent example of how the Council can cut through on the complexities of climate science—putting the escalating risks of climate change into a here-and-now context, and relating the impacts of climate change to locations where Australians live and work."

# Shaping the media discussion

The Climate Council and our community of founding supporters want to see a common sense, science-based debate responding to the huge risks we face from climate change.

We mobilise world-leading experts to cut-through the media debate and frame the urgent issues. We focus on reaching a broad audience with relevant stories via the mainstream press. In a short time, the Council has emerged as one of the loudest and strongest voice communicating climate change impacts, science and solutions to the Australian public.

In our first 9 months we:

- › Put close to 15,000 important climate change stories in the news, many of them responding to harmful misinformation campaigns
- › Reached approximately 100 million people cumulatively through the media
- › This media coverage has an estimated advertising value of more than \$18.5 million



Chief Councillor Tim Flannery speaks to journalists about the health impacts of coal.

# Media highlights

From highlighting increasing bushfire risk, to putting big policies in perspective and painting a picture of the coming

clean energy future, here's a small sample of the more than 15,000 stories we put in the media.



## THE AGE Federal Politics Climate change raising fire risk EXCLUSIVE





# Our incredible community

From a core of more than 16,000 founding donors our community has exploded to include over 100,000 donors, members, volunteers and followers.

We've also partnered with emergency management groups, health groups and local councils to power our work. This incredible community is behind all of our work and is what makes us unique.

## WHAT OUR COMMUNITY SAY:

- › "Because not enough is being done to stop climate change and communicate the risks. We need an independent voice to stand up and point out what's going on" — Caitlin M
- › "Typical environmental advocacy groups are usually ignored by the mainstream - the difference with the Climate Council is that it's mission is for communication rather than advocacy" — Jessica, Eltham
- › "Fantastic first 6 months. I am proud to be a founding member of the

Climate Council. The work you are doing is vital for our next generation"  
- Janette M, via Facebook

## VOLUNTEERS

In our first few months of operations we were overwhelmed with people generously offering to volunteer their time to support the Climate Council. We had over 500 people volunteer their time to help us when we launched and through our first couple of months of operation.

In particular we would like to thank the Climate Councillors who provided their time and knowledge pro bono for first 6 months of our operations. In addition all our past and current directors on our board provide their time voluntarily.

A formal volunteer program was launched late in the 2013/14 financial year. Our volunteers include university students as well as experienced graphic designers, lawyers, photographers, researchers, scientific experts and digital specialists. If you like to get involved please contact us via our website.

# Accessible online content



Through our online network we reach 2.5 million people every month with relevant information based on the best science available.

Thousands of people have tuned to ask questions directly to our experts in live online Q&A's.



**HUNDREDS  
OF THOUSANDS  
OF PEOPLE 🐾  
HAVE WATCHED  
AND SHARED  
OUR 🎥 VIDEOS &  
... INFOGRAPHICS**

Our live online Q&As give the public a chance to connect directly with the experts and ask questions.



# Fundraising and Finances

The Climate Council is primarily supported by donations from individual Founding Friends and many, over 1,800 and climbing, donate to us on a regular basis.

From the outset we built and invested in robust financial and donor management systems overseen by our Finance Committee and Community Management team. Our financial management is supported by a strategic plan and we have implemented financial and compliance controls as well as prudent budgetary and cash management review processes.

The financial information in this annual report has been extracted from the Annual Financial Report which has been audited by Thomas Davis & Co, Chartered Accountants. The auditor provided an unqualified audit report.

## INCOME FROM DONORS

In the 2013/14 financial year we received a total of \$2,120,227 in community and major donations from more than 16,000 supporters. The average community one-off donation was \$80.

The 2013/14 financial year saw the Climate Council's number of core regular (weekly and monthly) donors grow to over 1,800 people, the average regular donation \$27 per month.

## MAJOR DONORS

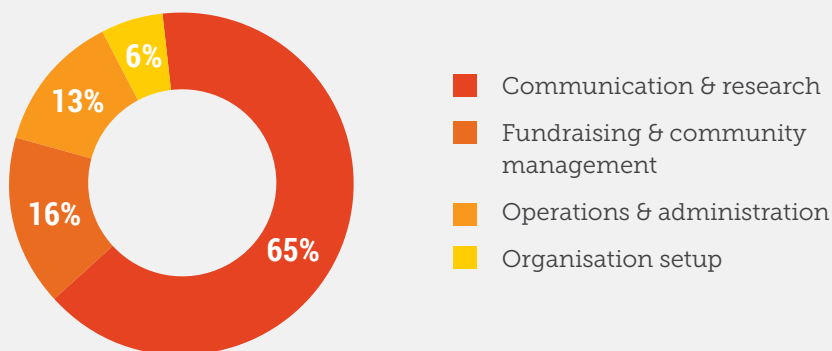
The Climate Council thanks the Purves Environmental Fund for its contribution to the Council.

# Expenditure

Climate Council expenditure in 2013/14 financial year was \$912,417.

- › 65% of expenses related to Communications and Research i.e. research, writing and delivery of world leading expert reports as well as communicating the latest research and information on impacts and solutions to Climate Change through media outreach, digitally (via the website and social media), and through the design of graphics, videos and presentations .
- › 16% of expenses were used for fundraising purposes and managing our large community of Founding Friends and online communities.
- › 13% of our costs related to administrative and operations costs, ensuring we are legally compliant, have robust accounting systems, setting up processes and managing an office for staff to work effectively.
- › 6% of our costs relate to the initial setup of the organisation.

## CLIMATE COUNCIL EXPENSES



## PRO BONO SERVICES AND GOODS

We were able to keep our core setup and ongoing operational costs lower than expected in our first 9 months due to the provision of significant pro bono and discounted services. In the 2013/14 financial year the equivalent of \$216,000 worth of services were provided voluntarily.



Renowned health expert Professor Fiona Stanley launches our joint statement on the health impacts of coal alongside Chief Councillor Tim Flannery and Dr Liz Hannah from the Climate and Health Alliance.

# Our team

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Gerry Hueston** is currently the Chairman and a Councillor of the Climate Council of Australia. He is also the current Chairman of Plan International Australia. He was previously a Commissioner with the Climate Commission and President of BP in Australasia where his career spanned 34 years with BP in Australia, New Zealand, UK and Europe. He is a past board member of the Business Council of Australia, a past Chairman and board member of the Australian Institute of Petroleum and a former member of the Chairman's Panel of the Australian Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

**Robert Purves AM** Robert is a businessman and an environmentalist. He is currently the President of WWF-Australia and is a former board member of WWF International. Robert is also a founding member of The Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists, a Director of Earth Hour Global, a Director of Climate Council of Australia, a Patron of the Lizard Island Research Station, and a Governor of Australian Youth Climate Coalition. Robert has a long career in public companies, including being Chairman of a public listed company, DCA Group Limited. In 2004 Robert established the Purves Environmental Fund, which funds numerous environmental initiatives. In 2008 Robert was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to conservation and the environment,

and awarded an Honorary Fellow from the University of Sydney.

**Martijn Wilder AM** is head of Baker & McKenzie's Global Environmental Markets legal practice. Martijn is chairman of Low Carbon Australia, a board member of the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, chair of the NSW Climate Change Council, on the governing board of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, and a director and governor of WWF. Martijn is an adjunct professor of climate change law at the Australian National University and an affiliate, Cambridge Centre for Climate Change Mitigation Research Department of Land Economy University of Cambridge.

**Samantha Mostyn** is a Non-executive Director of Virgin Australia Holdings Limited, Citigroup Pty Ltd, Transurban Group and Cover-More Group Limited. She is President of the Australian Council for International Development. She is also a Director of Australian Volunteers International, Australia Council for the Arts, Carriageworks, St James Ethics Centre Foundation, the NSW Climate Change Council and ClimateWorks Australia. Samantha is currently Deputy Chair of the Diversity Council Australia, and is a member of the advisory board of the Crawford School of Government and Economics, ANU. She is also a Commissioner of the Australian Football League.

**Matthew Honey** is currently a Partner at EY. He provides a range of assurance services to a variety of clients in the resources, utilities and manufacturing sectors. He is an Associate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, a Registered Company Auditor and Registered Greenhouse and Energy Auditor. Matt has over 17 years of experience providing financial reporting, governance, risk management, transactional and climate change related advice to his diverse client base both in Australian and internationally.

## COUNCILLORS

**Professor Tim Flannery** (Chief Councillor) is one of Australia's leading writers on climate change. An internationally acclaimed scientist, explorer and conservationist, Professor Flannery was named Australian of the Year in 2007.

**Gerry Hueston** (Chairman and Councillor) see previous page.

**Professor Lesley Hughes** (Councillor) is an ecologist in the Department of Biological Sciences at Macquarie University and an expert on the impacts of climate change on species and ecosystems.

**Professor Will Steffen** (Councillor) is a world-renowned climate science expert and researcher at the Australian National University, Canberra.

**Professor Veena Sahajwalla** (Councillor) is Associate Dean (Strategic Industry Relations), Faculty of Science, and Director, Centre for Sustainable Materials Research and Technology, at UNSW.

**Andrew Stock** (Councillor) is a senior energy advisor and an experienced executive in the oil and gas, renewables and petrochemical industries in Australia and overseas.

## STAFF

**Amanda McKenzie** (CEO) was Senior Communications Advisor at the Climate Commission. Previously she founded the Australian Youth Climate Coalition. She has worked as an Environmental advisor at PwC, Chairs the Centre for Australian Progress, was 2009 Young Environmentalist of the Year and was recently named as one of Westpac's 100 Women of Influence.

Katrina Porteus - Chief Operating Officer  
 Claire Snyder - Head of Community  
 Martin Rice - Research Manager  
 Emma Jukic - Community Officer  
 Cassie Bremner - Executive Assistant  
 Alix Pearce - Research Officer

## AUDITOR

Thomas Davis & Co, Chartered Accountants

# Appreciation

Without your support, we wouldn't have made it this far, so from the whole team at the Climate Council, a sincere thank you and we hope that you will continue to support us into the future.

## FOUNDING FRIENDS

Our biggest thanks goes to our incredible Founding Friends who have made all of this possible.

## MAJOR DONORS AND FUNDRAISERS

Purves Environmental Fund, City of Sydney, Theresa Sark & Sark Studios, Performance Space

## VOLUNTEERS & SUPPORTERS

Baker & McKenzie, Bleyer Lawyers, Centre for Australian Progress, CQR Consulting, Essential Media Communications, Organix Republic Bakery, AltusQ, Squareweave, Motion Picture Company, Agency, 2B, Know Studios, Lewin Advisory, CTAS Finance & Tax, Sophie Trevitt, Katherine Tu, Katherine Hall, Garbielle Kuiper, Domenic

Bartolo, David Lloyd, Adrian Daniel, Daniel Raby, Eden Ottignon, Hannah Cifuentès, Ilse O'Reilly, Lily Barnett, Lydia Smithers, Natalie Long, Natasha Homsey, Zak Baillie, Brigitte Russell.

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