



THE AUSTRALIAN CLIMATE SECURITY SUMMIT

Exploring the **significant and growing security challenges** presented by a changing climate.



"Climate change puts
the **Australian Defence
Force** under pressure"

- *Climate Council (2015) Be Prepared: climate change, security and Australia's Defence Force.*

The Australian Climate Security Summit

Australia and its neighbours are on the frontline of climate change. Soaring temperatures, rising sea levels and increases in extreme weather events will play a role in raising the risk of conflict, increasing the displacement of people and worsening the extent of destruction caused by extreme weather events in our region. Climate change exposes Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen, as well as Australia more broadly, to considerable strategic risk and uncertainty. Now is a critical time to talk about the implications of climate change for the Australian Defence Force. This is why the Climate Council is holding Australia's first national summit on climate change and security.

Wednesday the 28th of October: **Summit Day One**

The Australian Climate Security Panel

10am-11.30am

This panel will bring together world renowned Defence leaders and a scientific experts to discuss climate change, its security implications and the steps being taken by the US and UK militaries to be prepared.

- › **Speakers:** Admiral Chris Barrie (Ret.), Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti RN (Ret.), Rear Admiral Dave Titley USN (Ret.), Professor Will Steffen.
- › **Facilitator:** Ms. Amanda McKenzie, Climate Council CEO.
- › **Venue:** Adams Auditorium, Building 111, UNSW Canberra at the Australian Defence Force Academy, Northcott Drive, Campbell ACT.

The Climate Security Private Roundtable Part One

2pm-6pm

- › **Attendees:** 30 experts from across defence, academia and other government departments.
- › **Discussion:** Closed door roundtable. Discussion exploring the significant and growing security implications of a changing climate.

Thursday the 29th of October: **Summit Day Two**

The Climate Security Private Roundtable Part Two

9am-12pm

- › **Attendees:** 30 experts from across defence, academia and other government departments.
- › **Discussion:** Closed door roundtable. Discussion exploring the significant and growing security implications of a changing climate.

Press Conference

1pm

- › **Venue:** Senate Courtyard, Parliament House.
- › **Speakers:** Admiral Chris Barrie (ret.), Rear Admiral David Titley USN (ret.), Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti RN (ret.), Professor Will Steffen.
- › **Media Contact:** Jessica Craven 0400 424 559.

Summit Co-Chairs



PROFESSOR WILL STEFFEN

Panellist and Co-chair of the Australian Climate Security Summit

Professor Will Steffen is Councillor at the Climate Council. He is a leading climate change expert and researcher at the Australian National University, Canberra. He was on the panel of experts supporting the Multi-Party Climate Change Committee, has served as the Science Adviser to the Australian Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency, and chaired the Antarctic Science Advisory Committee.

From 1998 to 2004, Professor Steffen served as Executive Director of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, an international network of scientists studying global environmental change based in Stockholm, Sweden. His research interests span a broad range within the fields of climate change and Earth System science, with an emphasis on sustainability, climate change and the Earth System. He is the author of numerous publications on climate science.



ADMIRAL CHRIS BARRIE AC, FAICD, FARPI, RAN (RET.)

Panellist and Co-chair of the Australian Climate Security Summit

Chris Barrie is currently an Adjunct Professor at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University. Chris retired after 42 years of service in the RAN, and after five years of service as the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) in 2002. Since then he concentrated on strategic leadership issues as consultant, teacher and mentor through work at Oxford University, the National Defense University in Washington DC, and at the Australian National University.

At ANU Chris is Chair of the London Foundation, and a Director in the Tuckwell Foundation. He teaches on campus and at the Australian Command and Staff College. He has co-facilitated short courses for National Security College on risk, and facilitates induction courses for new entrants into the Department of Defence.

He is Chair - PTSD Australia New Zealand, which has launched FearLess Outreach to assist all Australians and New Zealanders who have post traumatic stress or live with people who have it.

He became very concerned about climate change matters in 2006 after which he has taken action to raise awareness of the costs of inaction.

Statement from the co-chairs of the Australian Climate Security Summit

Thirty of Australia's leading minds from Defence, academia, policy think tanks and other government bodies have joined together for discussions over the last two days for Australia's first climate security summit.

The roundtable members wrestled with many issues of fundamental importance to Australia's national security including the risks posed by climate change to geopolitical stability, the challenges faced by the Australian Defence Force in providing humanitarian assistance in response to more frequent and extreme severe weather events and how the ADF can best prepare for the considerable strategic risk and uncertainty posed by climate change.

Increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, changing rainfall patterns and more frequent and severe extreme weather events are heightening the risk of conflict and increasing the displacement of people.

One of the primary areas of discussion was the steps that need to be taken to align Australia's defence preparedness with allies such as the US and UK.

Summit co-chairs, former ADF chief Admiral Chris Barrie (Ret.) and the Climate Council's Professor Will Steffen, joined by key summit participants Rear Admiral David Tittley (Ret.) and Rear Admiral Neil Morisetti (Ret.), issued the following co-chair statement:

1. The Australian Government should take immediate and significant steps to mainstream climate change into defence planning.

- › Governments in the UK and US have taken significant legislative and strategic steps to ensure that climate change is integrated into defence planning. The US has mandated that their military forces address the risks of climate change as a routine part of all mission planning.
- › In Australia, comparatively less action is being taken by the Government to ensure that the ADF is prepared for the security risks posed by climate change.
- › The upcoming Australian Defence white paper must address the security implications posed by a changing climate.
- › Security is a whole of government task and therefore the challenge needs to be viewed more broadly than the ADF.

2. Climate change is exacerbating tensions in areas with existing global instability, increasing the risk of conflict and changing the nature of ADF missions.

- › The impacts of climate change can exacerbate other stresses, like poverty, economic shocks and unstable institutions, to make crises worse, particularly in countries with poor governance or existing instability.
- › For instance, increasing extreme weather events can reduce the availability of food. Extreme weather and water scarcity contributed to soaring food prices, which saw food riots erupt across Africa and the Middle East in 2008. Rising food prices in 2011 have also been identified as one of the factors that destabilised the Middle East, leading, for example, to the "Arab Spring".

3. The Australian Defence Force is already under pressure from climate change.

- › Australia and the Asia-Pacific region are particularly vulnerable to climate change. The ADF is increasingly called upon to deliver humanitarian assistance in response to the rise in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events and their impacts both at home and in the region. In serious cases the ADF coordinates with civilian disaster relief organisations in Australia and with a range of military and civilian organization in other countries to provide assistance.
- › Extreme weather could also affect the ADF's readiness and capability by disabling critical military and civilian infrastructure at times when rapid mobilisation is needed. Defence property (military bases) are also at risk from sea-level rise and extreme weather.
- › Rising temperatures and more frequent and intense heatwaves have implications for the health of Australia's military personnel when undertaking training and conducting military exercises.

4. Limiting the security consequences of a changing climate requires strong action by countries like Australia.

- › Global emissions must start tracking strongly downward this decade if there is to be a chance of keeping the warming of the planet to below 2°C, and thereby limit the severity of climate change and its implications for security.
- › The upcoming COP21 conference in Paris is a crucial turning point that must build momentum towards rapid and deep decarbonisation of the global economy over the coming decades.
- › We must adapt to the inevitable changes that are already occurring while working hard to minimise the long-term changes, some of which could be massive, abrupt and disruptive.

The bottom line is clear and compelling: Climate change is far more than "just" an environmental issue; it fundamentally changes our relationship with food and water, which is essential for our well-being and for the viability of nearly all other forms of life. We have collectively built and optimized all of human civilization for the relatively stable climate that has existed for thousands of years, starting at the end of the last ice age. That climate is now changing rapidly.

As noted by Brigadier-General King (Ret), the Chief Academic Officer at the US Army's Command and General Staff College "[Climate change] is like getting embroiled in a war that lasts 100 years....There is no exit-strategy."

This statement is signed by the Australian Climate Security Summit co-chairs:

Professor Will Steffen

Admiral Chris Barrie (Ret.)

An aerial photograph of a flooded landscape, likely a wetland or coastal area, with a yellow overlay on the right side. In the foreground, a black mechanical object, possibly a camera lens or part of a drone, is visible. The text is overlaid on the yellow area.

**"Global military forces
have identified climate
change as a high-risk
phenomenon"**

*- Climate Council (2015) Be Prepared: climate change, security and Australia's
Defence Force.*

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

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