

Climate sceptics can't deny the evidence from an everyday Aussie

Written by Melissa Coleman

The bushfire crisis, seven years of drought, and an estimated 50 per cent of corals on the Great Barrier Reef have died and still some Aussies including those in Federal government are denying the reality of climate change. The fires came in September of the hottest and driest year on record in Australia. And much to the Australian populations' disgust came the Nations leaders' poor handling of the situation along with their particularly dismal record on climate action, disgracing them in media world. World-wide media coverage discussed the different factors that have driven the extreme fire season, with climate change coming up as a prominent theme. USA Today quoted a tweet from Nasa climate scientist Dr Kate Marvel. She noted that Australia has warmed by around 1 degree Celsius since records began. An article in the New York Times said, "longer and more frequent periods of extreme heat which worsen the conditions and makes vegetation drier and more likely to burn". It added, "A changing climate has meant an increase in temperatures in the Indian and Southern Oceans, which in turn has meant drier and hotter weather across Australia this summer." Closer to home Mike Brown, Former Chief Fire Officer from the Tasmania Fire Service member of the Emergency Leaders for Climate Action hopes that the deniers of the Australia population can have a better understating of what is meant by climate change and its effects after reading this article. "My view of climate change is the variance that exists from the average in rainfall and temperature from known records, for example, and even records from geological survey," Mr Brown said. "Australia has a pretty accurate recording of meteorological events for over 100 years even ice-core samples, so the recent variances we are seeing, over an alarming short period of time, is of great concern." Climate change means accepting certain facts. Mr Brown said going back some years there was division within the scientific community about climate change. "There was debate about climate change being a natural cycle or whether it is something influenced by humans but now there is a lot of hard evidence and a more united stronger opinion by the scientific community that climate change has been accelerated since the Industrial Revolution." "One thing I noticed in the latter decade of my career was that we were having the incidents of lightning starting fires more frequently. A lot more frequently than 30 years ago." Mr Brown recently discussed the topic with senior scientists at the Bureau of Meteorology. "The scientists suggest that dry lightning is not increasing in frequency due to climate change, in fact they are not seeing any real pattern of increase in dry lightning. However, because the landscape is so much drier and there is more available fuel in the vegetation, its catching alight far more readily." "Twenty or thirty years ago the environment was damper, lightning would strike, and nothing would come of it but now, we have had it feature in major bushfire starts in the last decade." "Climate change is warming up and drying the landscape, influencing fires in Australia and other parts of the world," he said. Dry lightning occurs when a storm forms from high temperatures, but the rain evaporates before it reaches the ground, the lightning strikes the vegetation and sparks a bushfire. Research has found that as climate change creates drier environments in Australia and around the world fires due to dry lightning will increase. "In Tasmania, we have had lightning feature in major fire starts in remote areas, often in high altitude places, which makes access for firefighting equipment and people difficult." Mr Brown asked that sceptics to climate change consider what changes have taken place in recent times. "We are experiencing more ferocious fires more frequently. An example is someone will say 'we've had bad fires forever'. I agree, I know that in Tasmania for example there are records of major fires dated in 1850 and in the 1890s. "Another major fire for Tasmania and Victoria was in the 1930s, another merciless fire disaster occurred in Tasmania in 1967 where 62 people died in the Black Tuesday fires." "If you look at those statistics, we had events almost once a generation – they were not that prevalent. Now compared to the last decade we have had major fires in 2006, 2013, 2016 and 2019. They are far more consistent, regular and of high intensity," he said. The data released from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology this week showed 2019 was the hottest and driest year on record. The annual climate statement 2019 revealed nationally-averaged rainfall was 40% below average for the year, while the national mean temperature was 1.52 degrees Celsius above average. The data confirms that Australia's climate is warming. Now more than ever, we need to act on climate change and reduce our emissions to protect Australia, our wildlife, our natural systems, and future generations. Australia's target is to reduce emissions to 26-28 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030.

Contacts

Cindy Rochstein

0437094049

mailto: cindy@cindication.com