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## **Australia must build climate resilient communities as an issue of justice: Jesuit Social Services**

The latest report by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which synthesises the findings of recent reports, is an urgent reminder that Australia must take strong action to address climate change vulnerability and build climate resilient communities as an issue of justice, alongside mitigation measures, says Jesuit Social Services.

“The IPCC’s report on climate impacts, adaptation and vulnerability has identified Australia as suffering greater impacts from climate change than any other advanced economy. We know that climate change is exacerbating existing inequities in health and wellbeing in Australia,” says Susie Moloney, Executive Director of Jesuit Social Services’ Centre for Just Places

“More frequent and intense floods, bushfires and storms, along with rising levels of energy poverty, have real and worsening consequences for people already experiencing marginalisation and disadvantage.”

Jesuit Social Services’ [Dropping off the Edge 2021](#) report revealed the interconnected nature of social and ecological disadvantage, finding that many of the most disadvantaged communities across Australia, based on more than 30 unique indicators, are also more likely to experience climate-related challenges such as heat stress and poor air quality.

“While much attention is rightly paid to advocating for strong action on mitigation and emergency response, the current magnitude of climate impacts in Australia requires all levels of Government to go beyond emergency management to deepen their understanding of what needs to be done to build climate resilient communities,” says Ms Moloney.

Locally-led, place-based responses to climate change are also vital in addressing the intersections of climate change and health inequities.

“Residents have lived experience and community organisations are on the frontline dealing with the impacts of climate change in their communities, with deep knowledge of community needs, strengths, and opportunities,” says Ms Moloney.

Jesuit Social Services’ [Centre for Just Places](#) is working with local governments, local leaders and community services and health organisations to develop effective place-based approaches to address complex disadvantage, climate risk and build community resilience. In 2022, the Centre published a [Collaborative Action Plan](#) – a shared vision for mobilising climate justice in Melbourne’s western region – resulting from collaborative work with over 44 local community health and community services organisations.

“In order to successfully adapt and build resilience, place-based, cross-sectoral coalitions which include the voices of those most affected are important. Councils and community service organisations have a key role to play in these collaborative partnerships,” says Ms Moloney.

To support that work, there is a need for consistent national and state level commitment backed by adequate resourcing, legislation, frameworks, guidance, and sustained implementation funding to ensure that all councils and communities can reduce vulnerability, adapt and build resilience.”

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