



**Responding to climate change in partnership with our Pacific Island neighbours**

*PCP Patrons Mrs Bonita Mabo, His Eminence Cardinal John Ribat (MSC), Dr Richard A O'Brien, Hon Dr Meredith Burgmann*

**Former President of Kiribati visit Australia in October 2018**



Pacific Calling Partnership's international guest, Mr Anote Tong had an eventful second week in Australia beginning with a public talk in Melbourne on the 22nd of October and finishing with another talk at the Good Samaritans' in Glebe on the 25th of October. The former president of Kiribati came with a message and many people wanted to hear that message. Anote Tong came to Australia to advocate for a more robust and urgent action on climate change which threatens to wipe out his Pacific home within a matter of decades as sea levels rise. He clearly stated that he was very disappointed with the reaction of the Australian government to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report that was released in early October stating that "the world had just 12 years to limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5C.

In Melbourne Mr Tong attended two roundtables, one organised by Mariana O'Gorman of the McKell Institute and the other by Simon Bradshaw of Oxfam. This was followed in the evening by a public talk at Melbourne University. This well attended event was hosted by The Climate Reality Project, Oxfam Australia, Pacific Calling Partnership and Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute. The Q and A was moderated by Dr Celia McMichael Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography, The University of Melbourne.

A highlight of Mr Tong's Australian tour was the public talk at Sydney University on the 24th of October. This talk, presented by Sydney Ideas and Co-presented with [Sydney Environment Institute](#) in association with the Pacific Calling Partnership, included a hard-hitting introduction by Professor David Schlosberg Professor of Environmental Politics in the Department of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney.

On 25<sup>th</sup> October at a gathering called *The Rising Seas: Climate Change and the Pacific* at the Good Samaritan congregational centre in Glebe, organised by the Inter-Congregational Voice on Climate Change in the Pacific, Anote Tong discussed the challenge that Kiribati and other Pacific Island nations are facing. Climate Change is real in the Pacific and the recent release of the IPCC report makes it clear that Pacific Island nations such as Kiribati are in danger. Australia as a neighbour in the Pacific along with other Western nations has a responsibility to attend to this important issue.

Mr Tong impressed many people in his campaign to bring to awareness the issue of climate change and that it is above all a justice issue. Though he was inspiring and challenging in his presentation he did it with graciousness as he shared

stories as to how climate change is impacting on the lives, culture and future of the people of Kiribati and other Pacific Island nations.

## PCP team in Tuvalu



Ms Jill Finnane (PCP Co-ordinator), Mr Phil Glendenning (ERC Director), and Vincent Sicari (PCP Project Officer) from the Edmund Rice Centre's Pacific Calling Partnership have been in Tuvalu running workshops with 16 youths and members of TuCAN, the Tuvalu Climate Action Network. The workshops on *Resilience and Advocacy on Climate Change* began on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and ran for one week. The course is in three phases and will require the students to complete a project under the supervision of a local mentor. The Pacific Calling Partnership of the Edmund Rice Centre will complete the third phase of the course in February 2019. Education and capacity building is seen as being fundamental component of the welfare of the people of Tuvalu with climate change resilience of Tuvaluan youth being a key objective of the PCP team.

## Kiribati and Tuvalu Climate Change Policies

The Government of Kiribati has launched its climate change policy with the aim of ensuring the existence of the Pacific Island nation. Climate change is one of the greatest threats to Kiribati and the I-Kiribati people, their security and survival. It has been, and will continue to be, a hindrance to their efforts to pursue sustainable development. President Taneti Maamau has said that, "As a government and

people, we all have a duty to address the challenges posed by climate change and disaster risks in a holistic manner, while also recognizing the constraints of our limited resources and capacity."

Kiribati is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the effects of Climate Change and climate-related disasters. Its ability to respond to climate risks is hampered by its highly vulnerable socio-economic and environmental conditions and geographical situation.

Low atolls, isolation, small land areas separated by a vast expanse of ocean, a highly concentrated population, and the costs of providing basic services make Kiribati, like all Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, especially vulnerable to external shocks including the adverse impacts of Climate Change and disasters.

Sea-level rise and exacerbated natural disasters, such as drought and extreme weather fluctuations, pose significant and direct additional threats to sectors and resources central to the provision of basic services and national development.

Tuvalu is the fourth smallest nation in the world with the landmass of 26km with 9561 people scattered across eight inhabited islands. Funafuti, where the national capital of Tuvalu is located, is home to about half of Tuvalu's total population. The challenges Tuvalu faces in the context of climate change are similar to other small island countries but Tuvalu is a small atoll country and their vulnerability to climate change impacts and associated disasters are much more profound due to limited ecological, socio-economic and technological capacities.

The Tuvalu Government's climate change policy is called *Te Kaniva: (Tuvalu Climate Change Policy)* and is available here: <https://reliefweb.int/report/tuvalu/te-kaniva-tuvalu-national-climate-change-policy-2012-2021>