



Chief Scientist

Professor Penny D. Sackett

MEDIA STATEMENT

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DELAYED ACTION INCREASES RISK OF DANGEROUS CLIMATE CHANGE

At a time when governments are struggling to adopt climate legislation, the Chief Scientist for Australia, Professor Penny D Sackett, said continued delays in reducing carbon emissions could ultimately contribute to the dangerous impacts of global warming.

Reluctance of nations around the world to implement mechanisms that recognise the cost of greenhouse gas emissions will increase the effort required to manage and adapt to the impacts of climate change, according to the country's top independent science advisor.

"Delays in the reduction of emissions mean that the amount of CO₂ in the atmosphere will continue to increase and continue to compound the greenhouse effect," Professor Sackett said.

"If no action is taken, this will eventually lead us to dangerous climate change."

Professor Sackett warned that additional delay meant more stringent emission reduction would be required in future if Australia still planned to meet its portion of the worldwide carbon budget aimed at limiting temperature increases to 2 degrees. A 2 degree change is considered to be the guardrail value that if surpassed, would result in dangerous conditions.

"It is clear that now is the time for action on climate change, and yet we are not acting with sufficient speed to reduce the large degree of risk that climate change poses to our health, our environment and our livelihoods," she said.

According to the Chief Scientist, not all required action will be taken through national government policy, but nations should show leadership to safeguard a sustainable and economic future for their citizens.

"Combating climate change is not just a matter of policy and government, it's an issue that affects our society at every level, right down to the individual, and requires systematic change at all levels and in all sectors, not just at policy level," Professor Sackett said.

“In the face of slow changes at national levels, it is all the more important that forward-looking industries, states, individual cities and towns, community groups and family groups continue to network together to reduce their carbon footprints and assess the impact of climate change on their activities”, she said.

“We all recognise that this is a global problem that is not just confined to Australia, but we have an opportunity to do more than our fair share and be international leaders in tackling climate change at national, sectoral, community and individual levels. We must not let that opportunity to make a positive difference pass.”

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