



INAUGURAL FIRST NATIONS CLIMATE SUMMIT REPORT



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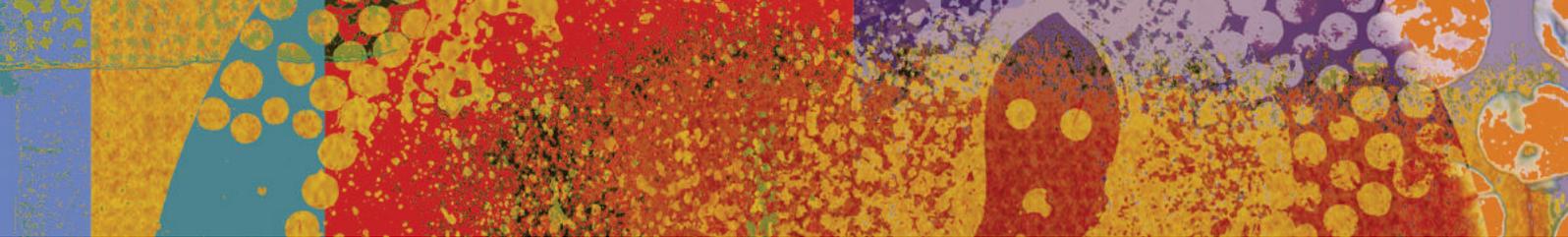
Climate
Week
QLD
2019

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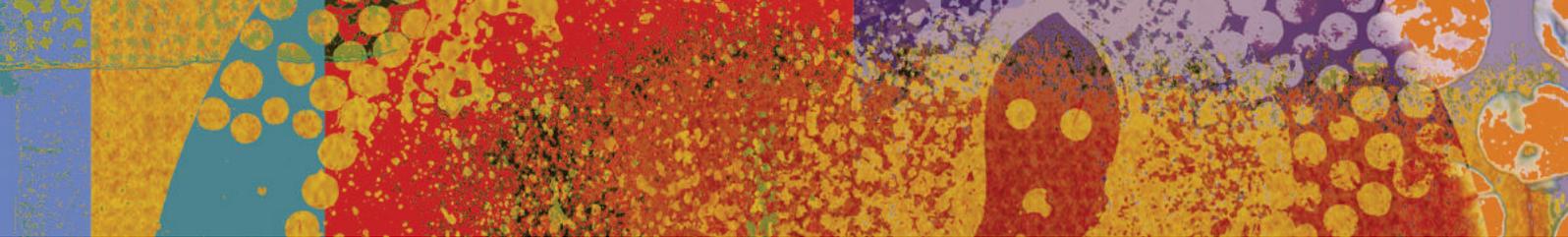
We would like to thank everyone who contributed to making this summit possible. We are especially grateful to Honourable Leanne Enoch, a Quandamooda woman of North Stradbroke Island, MP, Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts.

Acknowledgment to Country

First Nations Climate Summit Leadership team acknowledges the First Nations Peoples of Australia, the traditional custodians of the lands and waters. We pay respect to all Elders, past and present as well as the individuals and organisations working in their communities to address climate change.

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Executive Summary

The First Nations Climate Summit highlighted existing and future leadership of First Nations Peoples's perspective to climate response and the importance of embedding this into public policy and community awareness. It showcased the long history of First Nations Peoples as the knowledge holders, knowledge sharers and educators; the original climate scientists.

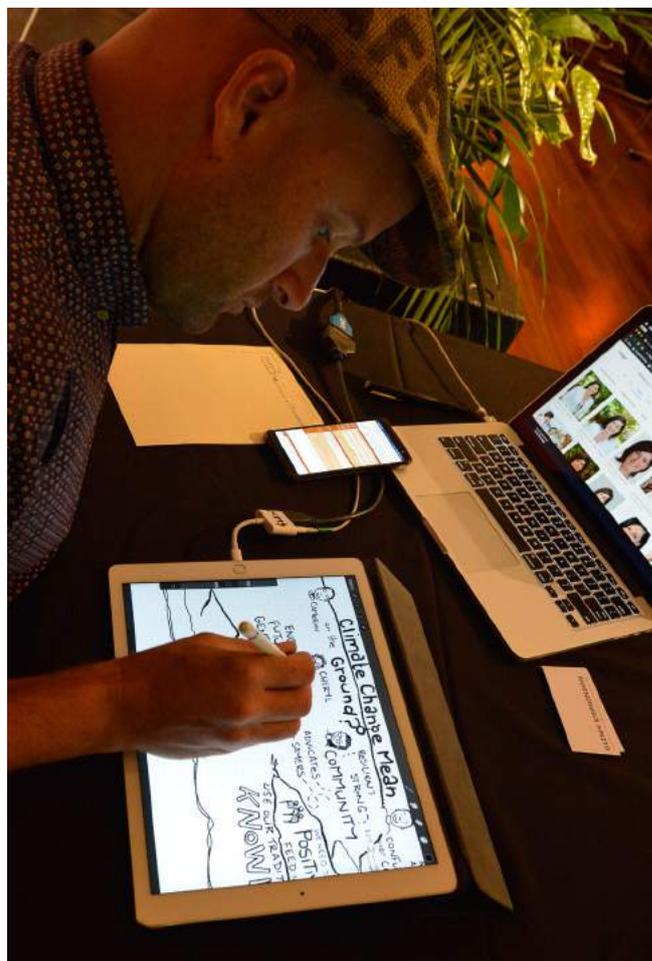
The forum provided a fundamental platform for the discussion to occur amongst First Nations Peoples about climate change. A panel of speakers embraced a traditional message stick identifying pathways and capturing various perspectives from First Nations Peoples present.

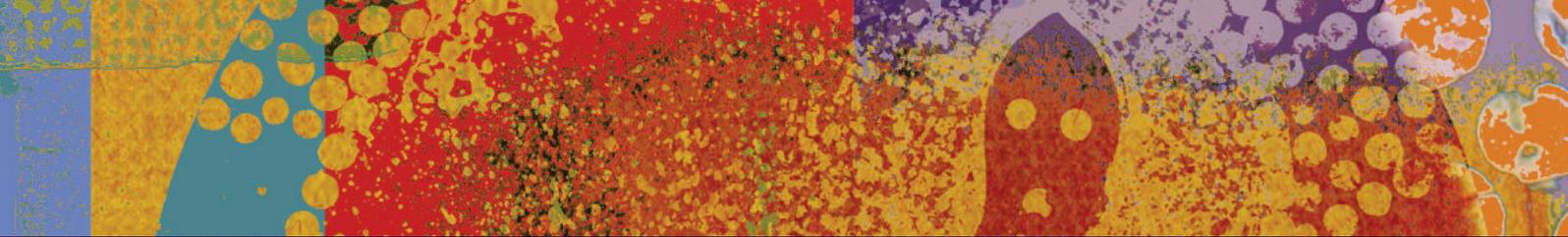
The narratives developed by the group provide valuable insights for Government in policy development and are key recommendations for implementation strategies from the group. A shared position developed by the participants was delivered to Minister Enoch at the Summit Dinner as a climate statement. The statement was the culmination of the intricate cultural knowledge and oral traditions passed down through the generations.

Central to these discussions was the collective support for the inclusion of young voices.

Key Recommendations

- » Commitment from the Government to support and invest in building climate change resilience.
- » First Nations People to co-design and support the implementation of public policy in relation to climate change.
- » Invest and understand water security inundation of water above the ground and lack of water security 370m below ground based on current exploration.
- » Climate sustainability should include more funding for the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program protecting land and sea country.
- » A First Nations Climate Change Commissioner
- » A First Nations diverse leadership group to work with government.
- » Infrastructure to be fit for purpose avoiding harm from natural movement of sand, soil and land.
- » The Climate Change Summit to become a yearly event for First Nations Peoples.





First Nations People's Climate Summit Statement

Developed by the participants and delivered to Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for the Arts Leanne Enoch MP

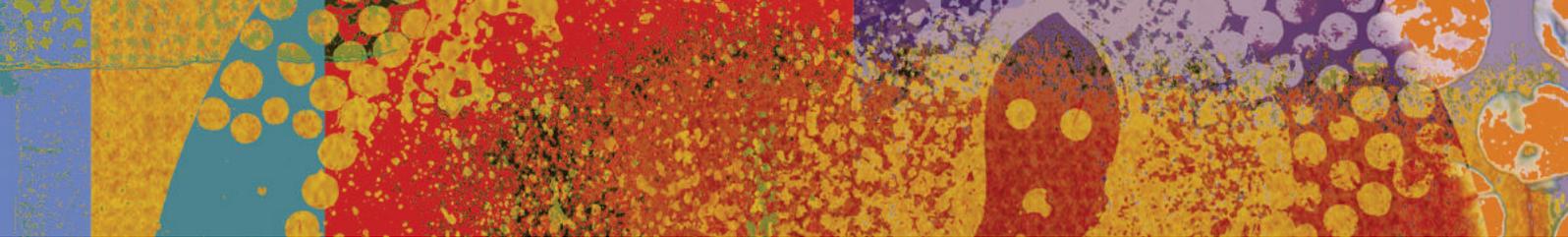
We, the First Nations Peoples of this country, have always known the ancient truth hidden in plain sight, in our ancient cultural landscapes, that we are all a part of one living universe. Our ancient relationship with this land means we can hear her voice clearly. She is calling out to us that she is sick, sick from our failure to care for her. She is calling out to us to meet our responsibilities to her, to sustain her, as she has sustained us.

On her behalf, we call on all Queenslanders and Australians, indeed all of humanity, to do what our people have been doing for over three thousand generations, telling stories that are true. We call on humanity to breathe the spirit of truth and the spirit of the people into country, as she has done for us since creation. We must have the courage to individually and collectively face the truth of the impacts that we are having on our climate and our home.

We call on the Queensland Government to invest in First Nations People's leadership and expertise in climate adaptability, on our country and on our terms, so that we are better resourced to share our climate wisdom here and internationally. This will include supporting First Nations Peoples to share amongst ourselves our climate knowledge and expertise, guided by our cultural, community and administrative leaders.

We call on all First Nations People's to unite. Our climate wisdom has been developed over more than 100,000 years. Our voice is needed now more than ever.

We make this commitment to our people, and the people of Queensland: we will leave nobody behind, we will walk forward together.



Introduction



Indigenous Australians have the longest continuous cultural history of any group of people on Earth which is preserved and passed down through intricate song, dance, art and stories of the times past. Woven into this history is the oral traditions of song lines which operate as a potent form of cultural memory. A message stick is a First Nations tool used to capture collective information. The person imparting knowledge holds it while sharing their stories so the message is captured in it's core.

The First Nations Inaugural Climate Summit message stick was hand crafted from Gidyea wood by Bidjara/Kara Kara woman Leann Wilson. Gidyea is known for its strength and longevity and is the instrument is used to capture and carry the collective knowledge, wisdom, memories and ongoing stories of the oldest surviving civilisation on earth. The ghost net basket that held the message stick during the summit was woven by Angela Torenbeeck from the Torres Strait. Its stories are a powerful reminder to us of the collective wisdom of the participants at the summit and was used as a symbolic gesture to capture a shared position for the First Nations Inaugural Climate Statement which was presented to the Minister.

The summit highlighted existing and future leadership by First Nations Peoples in climate responses, and the importance of embedding this into public policy and community awareness. It showcased the long history of First Nations Peoples as knowledge holders, knowledge sharers and educators; the original climate scientists. The forum identified a path forward that will respect and value

First Nations People's perspectives in climate decision making and help future generations to continue hearing their voices.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Nations People are the world's oldest living culture, people who have continued to reside in their areas of land for over 65,000 years. Genetically their families have been present in the same location from then until now. They had been hunters, farmers, fishermen and women, with millennia of collective knowledge about the ecology of their surroundings. This knowledge and experience have given them early warning about global warming. They suffer the consequences of it to a far greater degree than others due to their beliefs and connection to country. They believe the biggest current threat to their land and waters is because of global warming; climate change.

First Nations Peoples are among the first to face the direct consequences of climate change through rising seas in the Torres Strait. Climate change poses a threat and danger to the survival of these communities even though they contribute the least greenhouse emissions to the environment. First Nations Peoples are interpreting and reacting to the impact of climate change in creative ways by drawing on their traditional knowledge and other solutions which may help them to cope with the impending change. One example of this is the use of the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program to train and work with others, teaching traditional ways of land and sea management.

Conference Speakers and Panel members



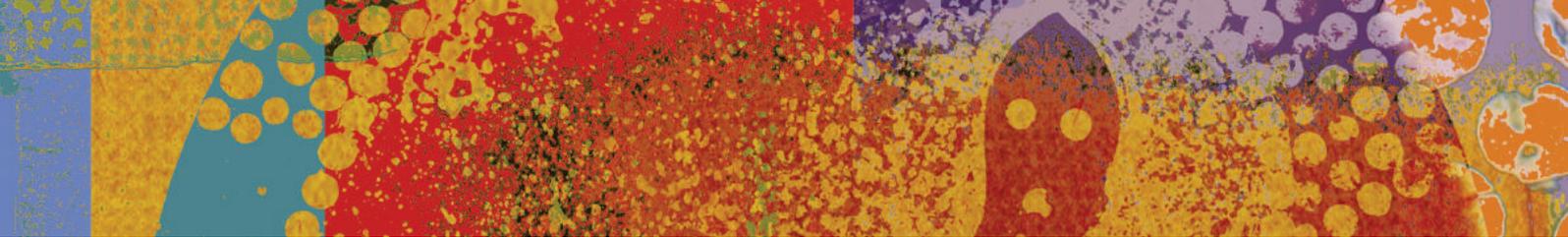
Panel Discussion 1: **What does climate change mean on the ground?**

Panellists:

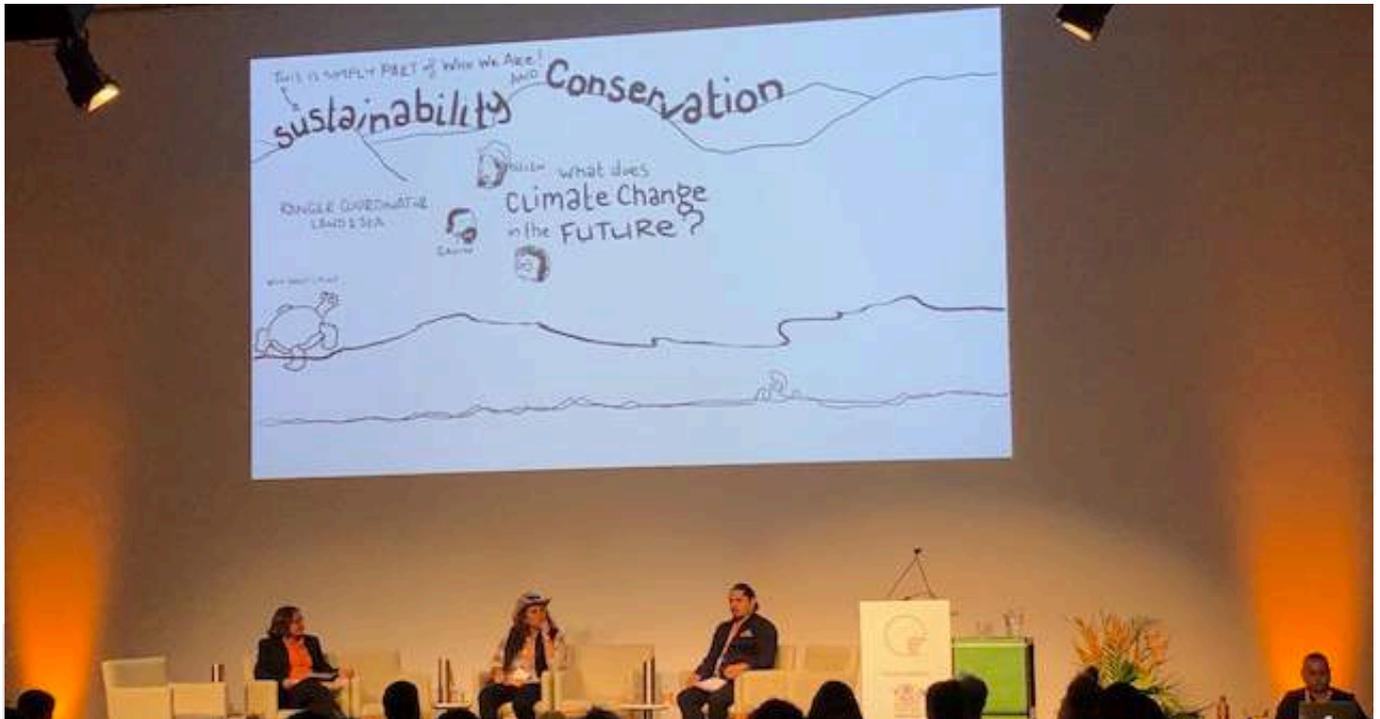
- Cr Fred Gela, Mayor Torres Strait Islander Regional Council
- Cheryl Leavy, Executive Director, Partnership Department of Environment & Science
- Toni Hay, Principal Advisor, Climate Change, Bay of Plenty Regional Council Toi Moana
- Cameron Costello, CEO of Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation

Key Points

- » Concerns of rising seas for the cultural history and safety on islands in the Torres Strait .
- » Utilization of traditional knowledge to protect culture and heritage, in particular to rebuild and preserve the land and address the mismanagement of land,
- » Traditional knowledge to protect their cultural heritage past and present.
- » Acknowledging and support the use of land management principles.
- » More funding to increase First Nations rangers in the Indigenous Land and Sea First Nations Rangers Program.



Conference Speakers and Panel members



Panel Discussion 2: **What does climate change mean in the future?**

Panellists:

- Sandra Creamer, Adjunct Professor School of Public Health, University of Queensland
- Keelen Mailman, Station Manager, Mt Tabor
- Gavin Singleton, Project Manager, Dawal Wuru Aboriginal Corporation

Key Points

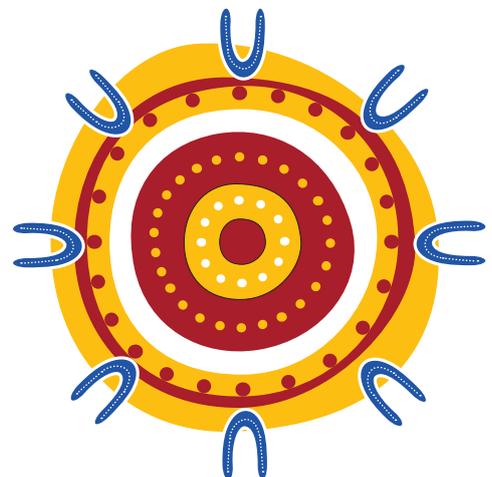
- » The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all, and interconnect in order to 'leave no one behind'.
- » The lack of underground water in the great artesian basin in south west Queensland at 370 metres down.
- » Concerns for the number of uncapped bores across the state of Queensland.
- » The importance of rangers on the land using traditional knowledge to care for country.

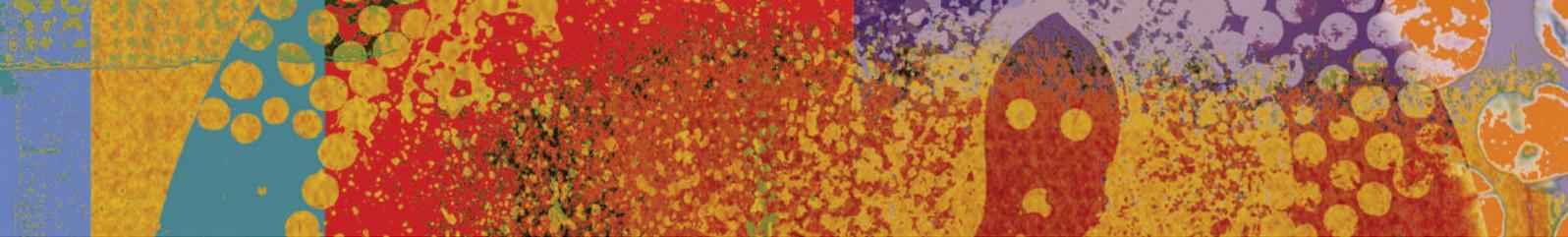


Discussion Groups

What participants said

- › Key Statement – ‘Leave no one behind’.
- › First Nations people to co-design and implement policies in our own right to be consulted and included in the conversation.
- › Commitment and investment into new technology, for example tax incentives.
- › Key Performance Indicators on carbon emission, similar to the Paris Agreement to keep parties accountable.
- › Excess on all mineral and carbon implicates is reinvested into infrastructure and other climate change initiatives for example climate change relocations.
- › Regulate energy space for the good including opportunities for more renewable energy such as making it more accessible and affordable for everyone.
- › Infrastructure must be fit for purpose, a past example is not taking into account natural movement of dams.
- › Water sustainability – protecting water by identifying water issues and creating solutions.
- › Assist climate change refugees.
- › Create a climate change advisory committee.
- › Regional Climate summit with community voices, and action plans
- › Sustainable process:
 1. An environmental right to veto;
 2. Dependant on each community/country values.
- › A First Nations representative in government and on State Committees having integrity, honesty, with realistic goals and accountable to the people.
- › Educate youth by working with Elders, Traditional Owners and Native Title holders on country.
- › Inclusion of First Nations People’s voice, of traditional knowledge and management.
- › Free Prior and Informed Consent.
- › Building climate change resilience.
- › Making government accountable.
- › Sustainable economies, for example the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program.
- › A clear, strong and united message.
- › Ancient land, Ancient truth - it’s our custodial right to care for country as the stewards of the land.
- › Acknowledge and recognise climate past, present and future with our continued connection to the land and sea country.
- › Climate is everyone’s responsibility.
- › We are the longest living culture and custodians of our land and sea
- › Recognition of First Nations People’s rights in land, water and sea in law and policy.
- › Youth voices – positioning them in their future.
- › A climate change and adaptation agency driven by First Nations People’s knowledge
- › Research, elders knowledge and youth vision.
- › First Nations voice in all climate change discussions.
- › Value water as a cultural value and entity in itself.



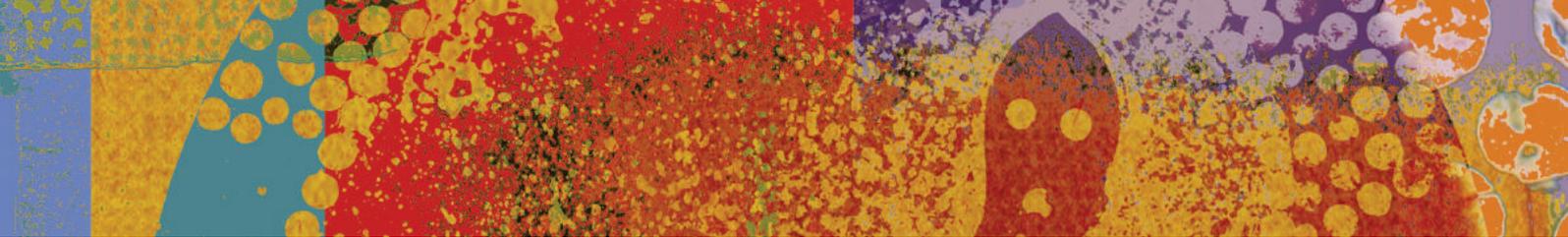


Discussion Groups

What participants said

1. Rights of First Nations peoples
 - OPAC – Owner, Possession, Access, and Control;
 - Free Prior and Informed Consent;
 - Valuing our First Nations Peoples traditional knowledge and ownership.
2. Truth telling
 - Valuing the years of cultural intelligence;
 - Authority and wisdom does exist;
 - Creating with urgency an awareness about climate change effects.
3. Learning from others, for example the international precedent of;
 - On March 2017 in New Zealand the Whanganui river was given special status owing to its importance to the Maori people, of being its own legal identity, with the rights, duties, and liabilities of a legal person.
4. Accountability:
 - Duty of care to First Nations Peoples;
 - Understand and influence responses to climate change in the international arena;
 - Service provision through the Racial Discrimination Act lens.
5. Recognise First Nations People's rights, knowledge and connection to our ancestral lands.
6. First Nations Peoples want to manage country and people holistically.
7. We want to lead the change.
8. First Nations Intellectual property to be protected.
9. Plants, forests, seas, animals and places should be protected as our cultural right.
10. Legislated designated high-value places within regions from First Nations Peoples perspective and designation via specific indicators for the sick river review system. Our river systems are sick or thirsty through having no water.

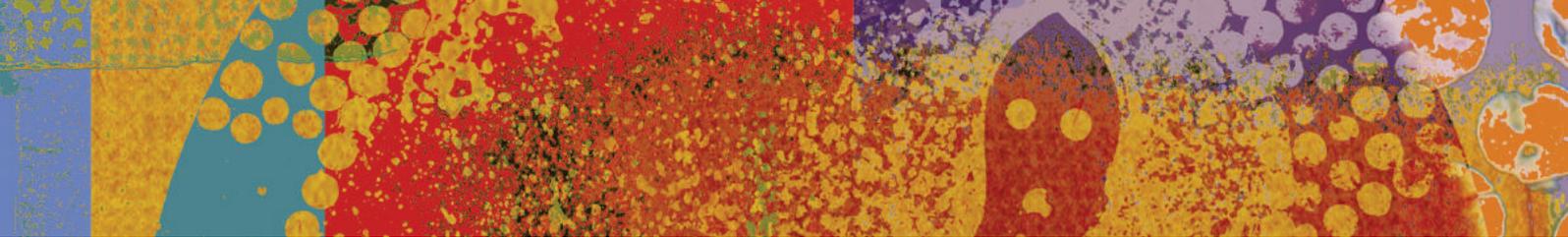




Discussion Groups

What participants said

1. Water is life - Above and below the ground.
 2. Protecting the well-being for all.
 3. Enshrining in legislation.
 4. Climate Change Refugees;
 - Torres Strait Islanders could be the first in this country.
 - Provision to be built around this status.
 - Right to live on their homelands.
 - Our surrounding neighbours will be looking for refuge.
 5. First Nations Climate Commission.
 6. Inquiry into the Great Artesian Basin;
 - Water uses and the impact on First Nations Peoples.
 - Water, land, culture and heritage.
 - Identify the number of flowing bores still to be capped.
 7. First Nations person on the Great Artesian Basin co-ordinating committee.
 8. Award Great Artesian Basin legal status as 'legal person'.
 9. Further First Nations summit/forums.
 10. Youth – create training and employment programs for young people in ranger roles protecting First Nations People's waters (voice & inspirations) – expressed by young people as an avenue to address suicide and unemployment.
 11. Form a First Nations People's Climate Council in Queensland.
 12. Commitment and resources to establish a First Nations peoples voice and advocate.
 13. Youth Forums.
 14. More rangers.
 15. Education – communication campaign on First Nations People's rights and rights in the climate change agenda.
 16. Historical connection recognised.
 17. Traditional knowledge – macro level
 18. Climate Change Commission – every carbon action that's going on now which cannot be reduced a commission strategy into all the policies and procedures.
 19. Documents – Traditional Owners writing their own documents in rehabilitation after mining and D.A approvals.
 20. Carbon economy emerging/opportunities.
 21. First Nations data sovereignty is respected in any climate research – Action now for Torres Strait Islands.
 22. Establish Climate Change Asia Pacific First Nations Group to;
 - focus on regional issues that affect Australian Land;
 - support the existing carbon industry;
 - to support the emergence of carbon economy on Aboriginal land and water;
 - All industries being carbon neutral by 2050.
- Jobs in carbon neutral by 2050.
 - Jobs in Carbon farming need to be supported.
 - Youth voices to be heard and for them to sit at the table.
 - Climate change refugees around the Asian Pacific region, entering in early to assist.
 - Evaluate the power of the Department of Environment and Heritage Protection as policy should hold more power than tenure, money or any corporation.
 - First Nations Peoples need to restructure assessments of environmental approvals, breaches and repatriation efforts.
 - Redirect funding, directly to community controlled organisations to employ and remunerate people for work they are already doing with a real focus on caring for country and climate.
 - First Nations Peoples declare a climate emergency for our people.
 - Climate summit delegates to the United Nations.
 - Call the government to work with First Nations Peoples to plan for climate impacts on culture, physical, spiritual and intangible with each mob and collectively.
 - Fast track resource co-stewardship whereby First Nations Peoples are given more agency.
 - Invest more into reducing racism.
 - The environmental assessments need to look up and downstream, look around the environment and the developmental impacts on people.
 - Our values need to be paramount.
 - Commissioner needs to be someone else other than the Minister.
 - Someone from First Nations Peoples is responsible to lead.
 - Restoration focus, for example the Great Barrier Reef, and mangroves are effected therefore the need to slow down and repatriate our natural protection system is paramount.
 - Stronger, courageous policy on water use.
 - Better communication around the what, and why explaining it will take time.
 - We need to lead the world, influence our region with urgency and awareness.
 - Investigate making the Great Barrier Reef, the Wet Tropic rainforest, and the Artesian Basin a natural person.

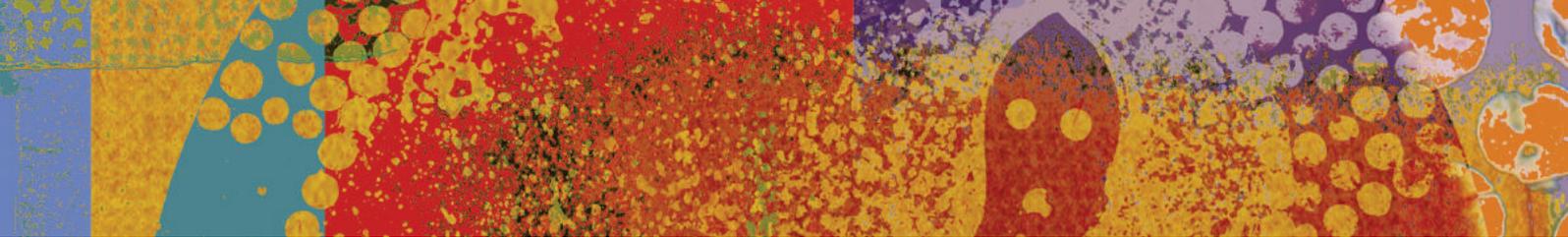


Discussion Groups

What participants said

- A. We the First Nations People gathered here in Brisbane on this occasion of this historical first ever First Nations Climate Conference recognise that our lore, custom and traditions have ensured the health and well-being of this ancient land. We also recognise the destruction of all aspects of this ancient land environment from the loss of aquifers waters in South West Queensland to the die back of mangroves in Kurumba.
- B. Media coverage – Get Up
- C. First Nations Peoples are researched out – what is the data saying.
- D. Historical Patterns of land use, occupancy, harvesting, location of medicine plants, and cultural sites.
- E. Ethical values with respect to animals and environmental management systems.





Calls to action from the participants

At Kurilpa, Meanjin, now known as Brisbane.

Home of the Cheppara, Yuggerah speaking people.

We acknowledge all First Nations Peoples at the Summit and their elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the climate change impacts on their country.

The First Nations Climate Summit declares a 'code black'; we declare a climate emergency.

We declare our support for the delegates from the Torres Strait whose islands and homes are being inundated by sea water, with loss of access to their homes, churches, community infrastructure, graves and burial sites.

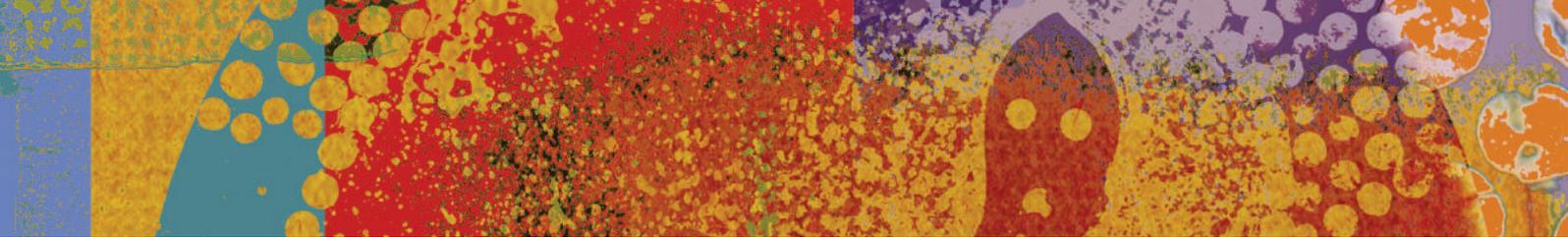
We call on all governments to work with us to respond and plan for the current and future climate impacts our people are facing. These impacts on our people, lands and cultures are physical, spiritual, social, and intangible.

We will soon be facing the need to accommodate climate refugees, not just from the Pacific region but also from First Nations to First Nations. Many of us need to prepare for a new wave of climate driven removal from country as climate change impacts become irreversible and make our homes uninhabitable. Loss of groundwater and artesian water and other impacts will result in new generations of our peoples losing access to country, challenging the resilience of our health and cultural and spiritual wellbeing yet again.

We call on all governments and people to respond to the crisis in our river and artesian systems and to acknowledge that water is life. It must be respected as much as the people and country it gives life to.

We call on the Queensland Government to co-design with First Nations Peoples the policies, programs and invest in new and existing technology and infrastructure that will support First Nations Peoples responses to climate change and assist in implementation of these responses.





Calls to action from the participants

Our Traditional Owners and Native Title Holders regard their cultural resources and traditional knowledge of our environments as key assets in developing an First Nations Peoples climate change policy and legislation for Queensland. Our own investments, such as our self-funded ranger programs to successfully manage First Nations Protected Areas, and their contributions to the endangered species programs are critical to the success of climate change adaptation in Queensland.

We call on the Queensland Government to contribute to these efforts and to include First Nations Peoples of Queensland in all climate change initiatives. The investment in FNP's lead in response to climate change should include employment opportunities to manage our land and sea estates, care for our environments, our flora and fauna, and reduce the threats to the health of our country.

This Climate Summit calls for a First Nations Climate Commissioner with legislative powers to:

- monitor climate change impacts on the environmental and cultural assets of First Nations People's land, waters, seas, communities;
- work with other agencies and FNP communities to develop community-based responses;
- conduct research and provide evidence-based advice to governments and the community;
- provide independent advocacy;
- report and make recommendations to the Queensland Government and the wider community;
- make recommendations for training and development opportunities for communities experiencing climate change impacts, with particular attention to the education, training and involvement of our First Nations's youth.

This Climate Summit calls for the establishment of a First Nations Climate Council with legislative power that will support self-determination in climate change responses and adaptation, with a focus on:

- place-based, community priorities driven by FNP's knowledge and experience with localised monitoring of climate change;
- making recommendations based on the collation and advocacy of local and regional FNP's knowledge of climate change impacts;
- making recommendations to the First Nations Climate Commissioner and governments based on research and



advice;

- supporting FNP to share amongst ourselves our climate knowledge and expertise.

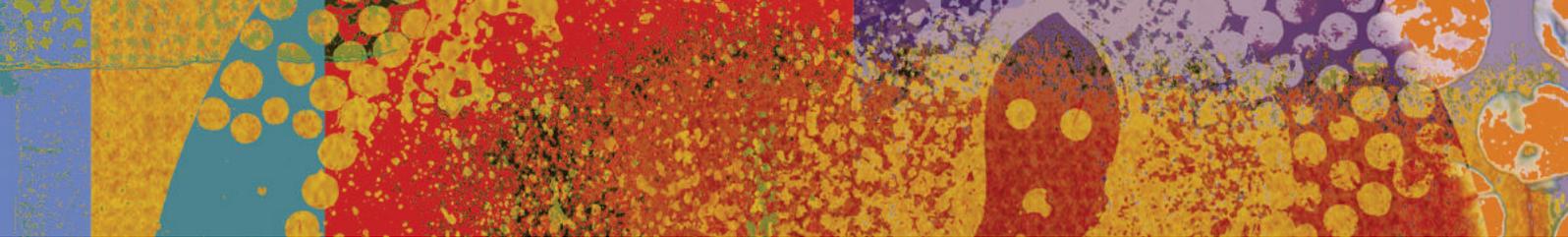
We call on the Queensland Government to elevate the power of the Department of Environment and Science and the Ministry managers of Climate, because their leadership is needed now more than any other time in our history.

We call on the Queensland Government to provide legislative designation and protection of high value places and regions that are identified from both a cultural and climate perspective. This Summit recommends that places like the Great Barrier Reef, the Artesian Basin, and the Murray Darling Basin, be recognised as a legal entity, a natural person, with rights that we can defend.

We call on the Queensland Government to support a delegation from this Climate Summit to share this communicate up and down stream, from salt water to brown river country, and at all future United Nations Permanent Forums on Indigenous Issues and the Rights of First Nations Peoples and at the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

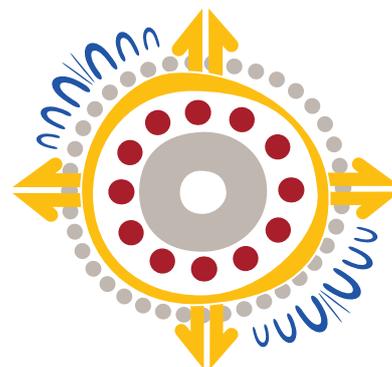
We recommend the Queensland Government commits to a First Nations People's Climate Summit in 2020 and beyond, extending the program to bring together First Nations People's from across Australia as the boundaries created by your Federation do not apply to us. While we respect our individual identities, we wish to unite as one First Nations People's on the climate emergency.

In addition, as a final recognition from the 2019 Climate Change Summit the First Nations People's delegation extends their thanks to the Queensland Government for supporting this historic, inaugural event on Meanjin country.



Calls to action from the participants

- » Redirect funding to communities
- » First Nations Climate Change Commissioner
- » Water is life, above and below the ground
- » Restoration focus
- » Stronger policies on water usage especially underground water, capping water use
- » Climate Change is everyone's responsibility from the grassroots, businesses and the world
- » Climate change refugees
- » Australian land and waters are currently being impacted negatively through climate change
- » More funding for First Nations People's communities to run their own climate programs, using their traditional knowledge for management including fire burning and preserving seeds.



Leadership team for the First Nations Climate Summit - QLD



Leann Wilson
Bidjara/Kara Kara
Leadership Chair
Executive Director
Regional Economic Solutions



Cameron Costello
Quandamooka
CEO
Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee
Aboriginal Corporation



Councillor Vonda Malone
Mayor
Torres Shire Council



Scott Gorringe
Mithaka
Director
Murrimatters Consulting



Lane Brookes
Mandandanji
Youth Ambassador



Phil Thompson
Bidjara/Kara Kara
Head of Operations
Regional Economic Solutions



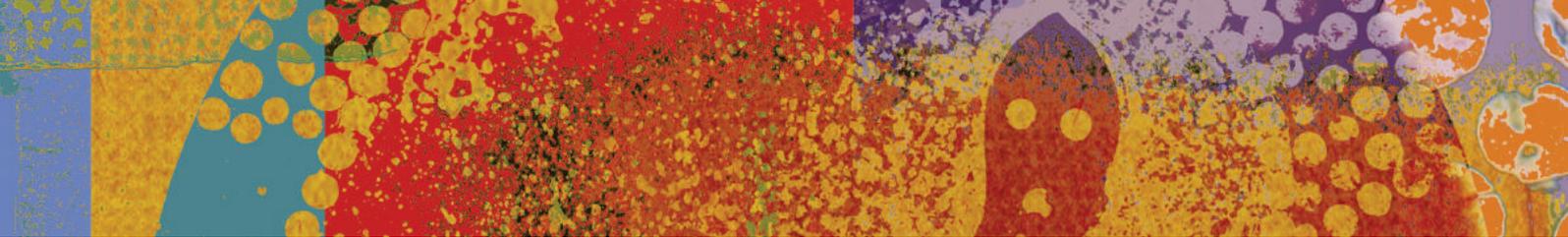
Roma Keelan Mailman
Bidjara
Cattle Station Manager
Mt Tabor



Cheryl Leavy
Kooma
Executive Director
Partnerships
QPWS and Partnerships
Department of Environment and
Science

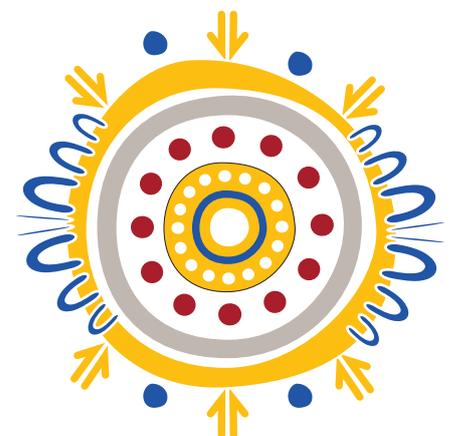


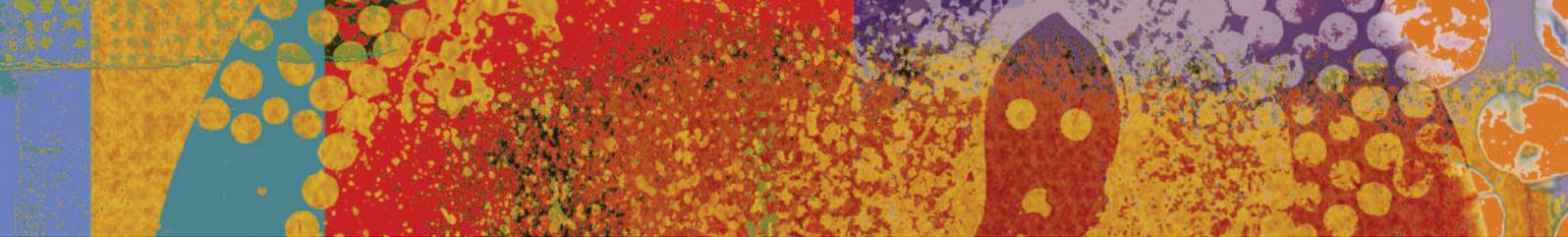
**Adjunct Professor
Sandra Creamer**
Wanyi/Kalkadoon
University of Queensland
– School of Public Health

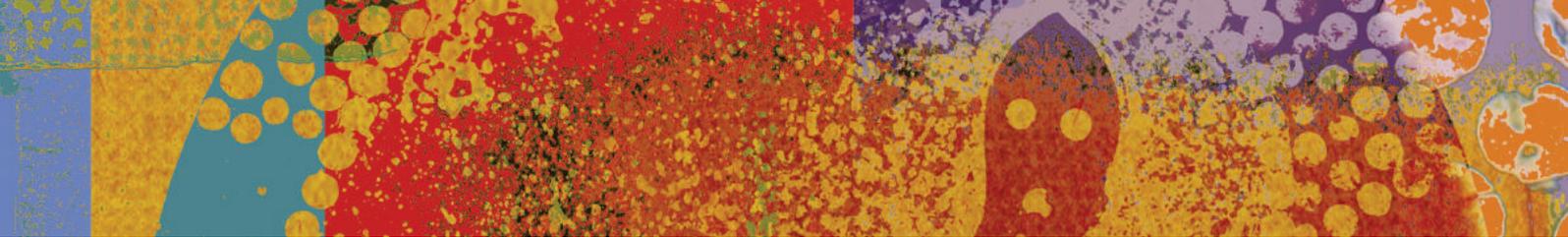


Participants

1. Mr Gavin Singleton
2. Jeremy Marou (Rockhampton)
3. Steven Noy (Gold Coast)
4. Leecee Carmichael (Brisbane)
5. Maleika Tappin
6. Murrawah Maroochy Johnson
7. Olivia Robinson (Sunshine Coast)
8. Tamika Sadler (Toowoomba)
9. Jacob Martin (Stradbroke Island)
10. Adam Brunton (Goondinwindi)
11. Joan Hendricks
12. Madonna Thompson (Brisbane)
13. Melanie Grills (Brisbane)
14. Karen Seage (Brisbane)
15. Marion Renouf (Brisbane)
16. Deb Sandy (Brisbane)
17. Shaniah Thomason (Brisbane)
18. Bronwyn Fredericks (Brisbane)
19. Lance McCallum (Brisbane)
20. Carla Dorman (Brisbane)
21. Tricia Stoud (Brisbane)
22. Melanie Meredith (Brisbane)
23. Dean Daylight (Brisbane)
24. Noel Niddrie (Brisbane)
25. Darren Burns (Brisbane)
26. Kul Murphy (Brisbane)
27. Ted Nai (Torres Strait)
28. Toby Adams (Sunshine State)
29. Bruce Martin (Canberra)
30. Terry O'Shane (Cairns)
31. Isaiah Shillingsworth (Charleville)
32. Floyd Robinson (Charleville)
33. Rowan Foley (Darwin)
34. Charlee Fraser (Mackay)
35. Darryl Frazer (Barcaldine)
36. James Bambrick (Mount Isa)
37. Nai Ted Fraser
38. Susan Hurman (Baracaldine)
39. Nazareth Warria (Masig Island)
40. Fred Gela (Torres Strait)
41. Prof Marcia Langton (Melbourne)
42. Hilda Mosby (Masig Island)
43. Rocky Stephen (Cairns)
44. Saraeva Mitchell (Roma)
45. Deborah Symonds (Cairns)
46. Larrisa Hale (Cooktown)
47. Michael Ross (Cairns)
48. Joanne Griffin/Pender (Cairns)
49. Seraeh Wyles (Cairns)
50. Alicia Haines (Cairns)
51. Charlene Berndt (Brisbane)
52. Jodie Ah Kee (Longreach)
53. Bayah Coolwell (Brisbane)
54. Trudie Broderick (Brisbane)
55. Ruth Link
56. Annette Simpson (Brisbane)
57. Karita Button (Brisbane)
58. Fiona Smallwood (Brisbane)
59. Gary Oliver (Brisbane-visiting)
60. Kyl Murphy
61. Janet Lawson









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