

# Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## Australians take action to keep their heads above water

Fourteen ordinary Australians, a panel of experts and an ambitious environmental organisation are tackling one of Australia's key climate change issue – rising sea levels.

As part of Riverfestival 2008, Green Cross Australia is holding the *National People's Assembly* Consensus Conference at Queensland State Library on 29 and 30 August to recommend a national response to rising sea levels.

In a coordinated approach, the 'citizen jury' of 14 aims to find solutions on how to prepare Australia for the expected mass displacement of people in our region as a result of climate change.

Over the past three months, the jury has gathered evidence from high profile experts from the science, humanitarian, environmental, business, security and legal sector to gain a holistic view of the threat to Australia and the region.

The Brisbane conference will hear further submissions from experts on predicted sea level rise models, insurance, business, social and economic impacts and national security concerns.

At the conclusion of the two-day event, the National People's Assembly will present live a report of recommendations to the Federal Government's Special Envoy on Climate Change for consideration in policy making for a sustainable future.

In this free event, the public can take part in the democratic process and contribute to the discussion between experts and the citizen jury.

"The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) expects that 90 per cent of people displaced by climate change will originate from the Asia Pacific region, mainly because of the large coastal population," said Green Cross Australia's CEO Mara Bún.

"Sea level rise is going to have far-reaching impacts on our region and the effects are already being felt in the low-lying islands in the Torres Strait and the Pacific.

She said impacts included possible disputes over changing sea territories, permanent relocation of entire communities and maintenance of cultural heritage for displaced peoples.

"As major producers of greenhouse emissions and contributor to climate change, Australians have a moral obligation to assist our region to adapt to sea level rise," said Ms Bún.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

**Rev. Tim Costello A.O**  
(CEO World Vision)

**Dr. Andrew Ash**  
(Director of CSIRO  
Climate Adaptation National  
Research Flagship)

**Emeritus Professor  
Ian Lowe AO**  
(President ACF)

**Mr. Julian Burnside QC**  
(Barrister and Author)

**Mr. Tony Coleman**  
(Chief Risk Officer and  
Group Actuary,  
Insurance Australia Group)

**Professor Jan McDonald**  
(Head of Griffith University  
Climate Response Program)

**Professor Paul Hardisty**  
(Global Director, Sustainability,  
EcoNomics – WorleyParsons)

**Mr. Heinrich Eder**  
(Managing Director,  
Munich Holdings)

**Ms. Jenny McGregor**  
(CEO, Asialink  
University of Melbourne)

**Mr. Daniel Almagor**  
(CEO,  
Engineers without Borders)

**Dr. Jane McAdam**  
(Director, Gilbert + Tobin  
Centre for Public Law, UNSW)

**Mr. David Freeman**  
(FRGS, Lieutenant Colonel  
Chief Legal Officer  
1<sup>st</sup> Division & Deployable  
Joint Force Headquarters)

**Prof. Stuart White**  
Director,  
Institute for Sustainable Futures,  
UTS)

“Previous citizen juries have demonstrated that ordinary people can and will make intelligent choices and present impartial, innovative and thoughtful contributions that are supported by the community as a result of deliberation,” she said.

Griffith University is hosting the National People’s Assembly as part of their commitment to climate change adaptation research and community support.

The People’s Assembly is further supported by Queensland Government, Brisbane City Council, Brisbane Riverfestival and Phillips Group.

Green Cross Australia is a national environmental organisation launched in Brisbane in 2007 with the vision of reconnecting humanity and the environment and fostering sustainable partnerships between business, government and the community.

Green Cross International was founded by former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993 and today has over 30 offices around the world.



**ENDS**

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