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What is Climate Change going to cost us? What do we stand to lose?

These are the key questions that must be raised to fully understand human induced climate change.

To do so, the Climate Action Network Australia and Friends of the Earth Australia have joined forces to produce a web-based summary of the expected social implications of climate change, including impacts on agriculture, employment, tourism, health, planning and housing.

Friends of the Earth Campaign Coordinator Cam Walker said the website www.cana.net.au/socialimpacts is a compilation of major national and international research across of range of topic areas detailing projected impacts of climate change for both Australians and the international community to consider.

“The message is quite clear, in a hotter and more volatile world both rich and poor stand to lose significantly,” Mr Walker said.

“However those already living in or near poverty, with limited health services or employment opportunities will face new hardships as a result of climate change with exacerbated drought, heat and extreme weather events.

“We have recognised the particular vulnerability to health and quality of life for people in parts of Asian-Pacific, Africa and remotes Indigenous Australian communities and have produced additional pages on the website of the impacts to these regions.

“This on-line resource is written for a broad public audience, with the specific objective of reaching professionals in the national and international social sector as well as communities who want to learn the facts about climate change.

“As major per capita polluters, Australia must assess how we meet our needs and take responsibility for the impact on those around the world.”

Inspiration for the project has come from the collaboration between environment, faith, and aid and development organisations in the United Kingdom.

The project's aim is to encourage similar partnerships in Australia by providing information about the social implications of climate change, generally discussed as an environmental issue.

Climate Action Network Australia's Julie-Anne Richards said: “It is a vital time for the environment movement to join forces with the community sector to build a comprehensive understanding the risks of climate change.”

“Cyclone Larry is an clear example of how extreme weather events impact on the social and economic base of a community. Larry was an invaluable lesson on the importance of reducing our climate risk by reducing our greenhouse pollution.”

Cam Walker said that Friends of the Earth has long perceived climate change as a humanitarian issue, with vast global differences in historical greenhouse gas emissions and social, economic and environmental vulnerability of people.

Development of the web resource was commissioned and funded by the Myer Foundation.

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