

# Submission from Climate Emergency Australia

## Questionnaire in relation to Human Rights Council resolution 59/25 on human rights and climate change (climate financing)

1. Please share concrete examples and stories of actionable pathways in mobilizing sufficient climate financing and associated challenges and opportunities in the pursuit of the full realization of human rights for all people. Please describe relevant opportunities and promising practices, such as in relation to international cooperation, non-debt creating climate financing, social protection aspects, participation, direct access, taxonomies, role of the private sector, taxation, or climate-related insurance and financial facilities.
  - Kato
    - The [Kato Pacific Community Climate Fund](#) provides an actionable pathway to non-debt creating climate financing. Designed for and by Pacific communities, Kato provides a decolonised approach to funding that empowers local people. Joseph Sikulu, Chair of the fund, said when it launched:

*“Too many of our communities seem to be falling between the gaps when it comes to resources... The Kato Pacific Community Climate Fund was created as a finance mechanism that is simple, clear and accessible to all. While global climate finance pledges are a victory for frontline communities, they mean nothing until they reach the people they are meant to serve... Transforming our climate finance structures is a crucial step towards securing the resources our communities need to transition their energy systems, adapt to the changing climate and invest in the local solutions they deserve. A regional finance mechanism that simplifies these processes and removes barriers for at-risk communities is timely and has the opportunity to address the intersecting climate and debt crises in the global south.”*
    - [Short video](#) on Kato.
  - [Climates](#) provides an example of a mechanism for [providing micro grants](#) directly to Pacific communities for climate projects without becoming mired in bureaucracy or debt. Video about the [details of Climates’ micro grants](#).
  - The [First Nations Clean Energy Network](#) was set up to address the need in Australia for First Nations to access the opportunities of renewable energy, particularly important since many First Nations communities do not have access to affordable, secure and clean power. They aim to provide access to household solar, to drive community-owned clean energy projects and secure equitable arrangements for large scale renewable projects on First Nations’ lands, securing good jobs and

strong economies, allowing community members to live and work on Country. They [track First Nations renewable energy projects around the country](#).

2. Please provide relevant quantitative or qualitative data or information on climate financing received and its relationship to human rights, including on how the quality and quantity of climate finance can impact climate and human rights outcomes. Please provide information on financing needs including regarding human rights realization and alignment, provision and disbursement, accessibility, predictability, effectiveness, and any tools used for assessment or monitoring of human rights impacts.
  - We echo Oxfam’s submission to this consultation which states that “As a minimum, rich countries need to mitigate fastest and set targets in line with their fair share of responsibility and economic resources and dramatically increase climate finance to lower income countries, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility (CBRD).” Their submission also highlights and expands upon four core justice principles to ensure that climate finance contributes to and does not impede the full realization of human rights for all people
    - **Recognition justice** requires that the rights, concerns of, and injustices experienced by, affected marginalized economic and social groups are recognized and addressed.
    - **Procedural justice** requires that affected people have a meaningful say in the design and implementation of transition policies and projects, including the rights to access to information, to freedoms of expression, assembly and association, Free and Prior Informed Consent, among others.
    - **Distributional justice** requires a fair distribution of the responsibilities, costs and benefits of climate/energy action across different economic and social groups.
    - **Remedial justice** requires that people and communities negatively affected by the energy transition are fairly compensated.
  - It is important for climate finance to be underpinned by and support good governance, including working with traditional governance structures, to ensure that funding is reaching communities on the ground and is not absorbed by bureaucratic process nor diverted into unaligned projects or purposes.
3. Please describe specific measures, legislation, policies, strategies, programmes, or practices that your Government has undertaken or advanced to mobilize, support, provide access to, or effectively utilize climate financing, in compliance with international human rights law, including financing in relation to mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, just transition, and technology.
  - The Australian Government released the [The First Nations Clean Energy Strategy 2024 – 2030](#) in late 2024 after extensive consultation with First Nations peoples. It provides a national clean energy framework for governments, industries and Communities, guided by these core principles:

- First Peoples maintain their right to live on their land, with access to reliable and affordable clean energy.
  - First Peoples' cultural heritage must be recognised, protected and celebrated throughout the clean energy transition.
  - The Strategy's vision is a sustainable clean energy future for all Australians, with Country and Culture at the Heart.
  - The vision is underpinned by three goals:
    - empower First Nations communities with clean energy
    - achieve economic benefits with First Nations peoples
    - enable equitable partnerships.
  - This strategy came about in part due to advocacy from the [First Nations Clean Energy Network](#) whose [submission regarding the strategy above](#) outlines many practical actions and funding needs in line with the just transition aims of both the Australian Government and the Network.
  - The Victorian State Government has recently financed a publicly-owned wind farm that will directly benefit the local community of the Latrobe Valley, which has in the past been economically reliant on coal mining, and has experienced negative health impacts from mining as well as direct climate impacts in the form of fires and floods. Friends of the Earth have [outlined how this project](#) will support not only climate mitigation but just transition.
4. Please identify challenges and barriers that limit mobilization of, access to, or effectiveness of climate financing for advancing human rights-based climate action, including systemic issues such as increased debt burdens, debt servicing, and potentially debt creating loans.
- As identified by the creators of the Kato Pacific Community Climate Fund, funding mechanisms that reproduce colonial power structures leave local communities disempowered and without access to promised funding. Long lead times, bureaucratic processes, onerous reporting requirements and foreign assessment of local needs are counterproductive.
  - Oxfam's [Climate Finance Shadow Report 2025: Analysing progress on climate finance under the Paris Agreement](#) highlights the fact that in recent years over half of climate finance provided to the least developed countries and small island developing states has been in the form of climate loans, along with a range other severe shortcomings. These shortcomings include the reported value of climate finance far exceeding its real-world value "due to over-reliance on loans and other misleading accounting practices" (see Oxfam's submission, which summarises its 2024 report: 'Rich Countries Overstating the True Value of Climate Finance at \$88 Billion.' They also warn that relying on private finance is not a solution, as it rarely reaches frontline communities.

- CLIMATES has produced [a report on the shortcomings of traditional climate financing](#) in reaching Torres Strait Islander communities. In summary it finds that “little funding reaching the Torres Strait Islands, and communities face barriers to accessing wider climate finance, as current funding mechanisms are often complex, slow and misaligned with local needs.”
  - In contrast, mechanisms highlighted like Kato and CLIMATES can provide rapid, effective finance through relationships of trust, local understanding, and simplified processes for applications and reporting.
  - It is important to ensure that funding for climate adaptation measures does not create perverse outcomes but rather deliver locally and culturally appropriate, sustainable and lasting solutions informed by traditional knowledge and practices. Protective concrete sea walls, for example, may not provide a long-term solution and may create other problems. While temporary protection of this kind may be vital in the near-term, where possible, it should be funded alongside long term solutions that restore and protect ecosystems using nature-based and traditional technologies and approaches, which should be given high priority.
5. Please describe how your Government ensures accountability, transparency, and meaningful participation of rights-holders, particularly those most affected by climate change, regarding climate finance. Please provide information regarding human rights standards, safeguards, and grievance mechanisms, access to information including scientific information, and ensuring business enterprises’ human rights responsibilities.
- In developing the [The First Nations Clean Energy Strategy 2024 – 2030](#), the Australian government undertook a consultation process with First Nations and [published the results of the consultation](#).
6. Please share specific recommendations for mobilizing climate financing, including through international cooperation, to support the realization of human rights of all people, such as relating to relevant legal principles, the new collective quantified goal on climate finance, taxation, grant-based support, debt relief and cancellation, debt for nature swaps, non-debt-creating innovative mechanisms, and the respective roles of public and private finance.
- CEA recognises the disproportionate impacts of climate change on First Nations, the Global South, poor people, older people, women, young people and children, people with disabilities, people of colour and other at-risk communities and maintains that climate finance should seek to redress to the inequitable impact of climate change on all of these communities.
  - PICAN shares specific guidance about this. Their [Pacific demands](#) include the following, highlighting the need for **reparations** and **mandatory grants** to address historical injustice and debt owed from the Global North to the Global South:

- **Deliver Reparative Climate Finance.** The current global financial system is unjust. We demand reform that prioritizes climate justice and empowers vulnerable nations.
  - **Provide mandatory, quantifiable Grant-Based Finance.** We demand new, predictable, and accessible grant-based climate finance from developed countries, provided as reparations and separate from ODA. This funding must directly support mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage without bureaucratic delays or colonial conditionalities. We recognise that as it stands, the Fund Responding to Loss and Damage is not fit for Purpose. Reparative justice has been clarified by the International Court of Justice, and this existing mechanism or another avenue must address harm through this lens.
  - **We demand climate reparations** for historical injustices committed across the Pacific region. These reparations must be fair, adequate, and accessible, supporting affected communities.
  - **Address Loss and Damage.** The existing Loss and Damage Fund is not fit for purpose. We demand climate reparations for historical injustices, aligned with the polluter-pays principle, to provide fair and adequate support for affected communities.
- Oxfam’s [Climate Finance Shadow Report 2025: Analysing progress on climate finance under the Paris Agreement](#) recommends that nations “tap into new sources for climate finance” – not by trying to leverage private investment, but by taxing “the rich and super-rich...the profits of the fossil-fuel industry” and/or “by redirecting fossil-fuel subsidies to international climate finance, including for loss and damage finance.”
  - Oxfam’s submission to this consultation highlights the need for
    - “high-quality financing that is predictable, debt-free, accessible, and of adequate scale to support the Global South’s transition” and upholds the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities.
    - global cooperation “to establish a fairer, more democratic and transparent system of global tax governance through the UN Tax Convention, to end tax abuse and illicit financial flows, coordinate on the taxation of high-net-worth individuals and ultimately redistribute wealth to lessen the inequality that is fueling the climate crisis”
    - resolution of “the debt crisis that is further destabilising many lower-income economies and preventing them from investing resources in their just energy transitions” via a “Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt at the upcoming Financing for Development Conference to address the root causes of debt crises and provide a more balanced approach to debt restructurings”
    - “equitable access to environmental technology for the Global South by removing obstacles such as excessive trade rules and intellectual property rights for technology transfers”
7. Please provide any additional information that may be useful with respect to mobilizing climate financing towards the full realization of human rights for all people.
- We support Oxfam’s recommendations for national governments to:

- adopt and implement a detailed national strategy and put in place a relevant mix of legislation, standards, public investment, taxes and financial incentives to achieve a just distribution of responsibilities, costs and benefits of the transition, with particular attention to low-income and marginalized groups
- commit to timetables in order to strengthen national climate plans that will ensure a safe climate (see CEA’s definition of a safe climate below) based on science and a fair share principle, whereby the richest, highest emitting countries must cut emissions and phase out fossil fuels first and fastest
- operationalize UNDRIP, including upholding Indigenous Peoples’ right to FPIC for all mining and renewable energy projects. Where communities have developed their own FPIC protocols, these should be respected and followed.
- pass national laws requiring all companies, especially mining companies, to implement robust, mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence and facilitate access to justice for any community adversely affected by company activities, whether domestic or offshore.
- ensure that climate-related policies and strategies, including NDCs, are designed to address existing inequalities and prioritize the needs and rights of people experiencing marginalisation and most likely to be affected by the transition.
- ensure that the transition is gender-transformative, particularly by recognizing, reducing, redistributing, representing, and sometimes rewarding care work and ensuring scaled-up and consistent public investments in the care economy
- increase the availability of public finance to support JET, wealthy governments should increase taxes on extremely wealthy people and corporations that have seen their income and profits swell this decade while those on low-incomes are pushed deeper into poverty and crisis – and redirect some of these revenues to international climate finance, including for just transition.
- We support Oxfam’s recommendations for Global North governments should provide the necessary financial compensation to Global South countries for having exceeded their fair share of global greenhouse gas emissions, thus enabling Global South governments to reduce emissions more than they otherwise could with their own means alone.
- We would add that countries (such as Australia) and companies that have profitted from exporting fossil fuels bear additional responsibility in terms of determining their fair share of emissions.
- We support Oxfam’s recommendations for UNFCCC to
  - require that all NDCs are genuinely and demonstrably participatory, champion locally led solutions, and ensure the needs of the most impacted by climate change are prioritised. For instance, a participation benchmark can be developed and included as part of NDC submissions to ensure more meaningful participation of groups that are currently excluded or that have limited participation.

- ensure that climate-related trade measures such as carbon tariffs or border adjustment taxes do not disproportionately hit Global South countries, and exempt countries identified by the UN as LDCs from their application.
- ensure equitable access to environmental technology for the Global South by removing obstacles such as excessive trade rules and intellectual property rights for technology transfers.
- CEA maintains that in order to restore our climate to a safe state, we need to return temperatures and atmospheric carbon concentrations to as close to pre-industrial levels as possible – we have already reach 1.5 degrees of warming, and are already experiencing severe climate impacts.
- CEA seeks a safe climate for all species and ecosystems and maximum protection from the risks and impacts of climate change, necessitating:
  - real zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030
  - returning to atmospheric carbon of no more than 325ppm co2
  - average global temperatures less than 0.5 degrees warmer than pre-industrial temperatures
  - delivery of three key areas of action aligned with these targets
    - elimination of greenhouse emissions as soon as possible
    - drawdown of existing atmospheric carbon and other greenhouse gases, particularly through nature-based solutions
    - research into the potential for safe, nature-based rapid cooling methods
  - restoration and redress of the intertwined needs for and crises in
    - Sovereignty of First Nations
    - Human rights and just transition for all communities
    - Ecological health and biodiversity
    - Unequal impacts of climate change and inequality and injustice more generally.