



## **Pacific Climate Warriors Media Briefing Back**

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**#StandUpForThePacific**

## 1.) About the tour

*“Every morning, we wake up and the ocean is there, surrounding our island. But now the ocean, driven by climate change is creeping ever closer. Unless something changes, many of our Pacific Islands face losing everything to sea level rise.”*

For 20 years Pacific Islanders have asked world leaders to take action to stop polluting the atmosphere. But they cannot wait longer. Now, Warriors of the Pacific are rising peacefully to protect the Pacific Islands from climate change.

Their message:

*We are not drowning. We are fighting.*

This October, the Warriors are traveling to Australia to stand up to those blocking action on climate change. Over the past year they have built traditional canoes in their homelands, which they have brought to Australia to block coal shipments for a day at the **Newcastle Coal Port on October 17.**

Following this bold action, the Warriors will travel the country bringing their message in a range of speaking events, and supporting solidarity actions.

This tour will be a rallying call for Pacific Islanders and Australians to rise up to take the bold, peaceful action we need to halt climate change and save these Pacific Nations.



## 2.) Who are the Warriors?

Five years ago, a network of young Pacific Islanders began to form under the name of 350 Pacific, to join with the global climate change movement, 350.org.

Active in 15 of the Pacific Island Nations, this network has a unique approach of empowering young people to understand the issue of climate change and to take action to protect and enrich the islands, cultures, and oceans of the Pacific Nations.

The Pacific Climate Warriors have been chosen from this network of active community leaders. The Warriors are traveling from 12 different Pacific nations; Papua New Guinea, The Solomon Islands, Samoa, Fiji, The Marshall Islands, Tonga, Tokelau, Niue, Kiribati, Vanuatu, The Federated States of Micronesia and Tuvalu.



**List of Warriors**

Name	Country	Name	Country
Logo Monise	Tuvalu	Viema Boraoi	Kiribati
Kaio Taula	Tuvalu	Nooa Aate	Kiribati
Rudy Andreas	Federated States of Micronesia	Tatoa Kamkeiti	Kiribati
Canita Swigert	Federated States of Micronesia	Emil Samuel	Vanuatu
Rexricco Melekitama	Niue	Magrina Taribas	Vanuatu
Daphne Pihigia	Niue	Isso Nihmei	Vanuatu
Aleki Silao	Tokelau	Silivesiteli Loloa	Tonga
Suega Detlef Isaia	Tokelau	Taufu'i Naufahu	Tonga
Save Tumua	Tokelau	Suliana Mahe	Tonga
Mikaele Maiava	Tokelau	Falakika Vaetangitau	Tonga
Raedena Solomona	Samoa	Taniela H Paea	Tonga
Junior Laaloi	Samoa	Mele Soakai	Tonga
Arianne Kassman	Papua New Guinea	Toketa 'Ati Vailea	Tonga
Dagia Aka	Papua New uinea	Heu Vakaahi	Tonga
Fredrick Limai	Solomon Islands	Makelani Maka	Tonga
Melissa Fomani	Solomon Islands	Siosaia Faleta	Tonga
Ceceilia Moku	Fiji	Faka'anaua Kaloni	Tonga
George Nacewa	Fiji		

### 3.) Tour itinerary

Date	Activity	Location
8 October	Warriors arrive	Sydney
9 October	Sydney photo shoot	Venue TBC
11 October	Sydney Welcome event	
12 October	Warriors travel to Maules Creek	
13 October	Photo opportunity with Warriors and community campaigners at The Leard Forest, the site of ongoing protests against Australia's largest new coal mine under construction.	Venue TBC
14 October	Warriors travel to Newcastle	
15-16 October	Warriors in Newcastle Interviews and photo opportunities available if required	
17 October	Newcastle flotilla <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Welcome ceremony at 9am</li> <li>- Boats on water 10 - 5:30pm</li> <li>- Post-event BBQ at 6:00pm</li> </ul>	Horseshoe Beach, Newcastle
19 October	Brisbane River Flotilla (10:00am)	Brisbane - Maritime Museum, South Bank
21 October 6:00pm	Canberra speaking event	Hayden Allen Tank, ANU
21 October 6:00pm	Perth speaking event	Fremantle Town Hall, 8 William St, Fremantle
22 October 6:30pm	Melbourne speaking event	RMIT Cinema Building 80, Level 1, Room 002, 445 Swanston St Melbourne
22 October 6:30pm	Sydney speaking event	Newtown Neighbourhood Town Hall, 1 Bedford St Newtown



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350.org

**23 October  
6:00pm**

Brisbane speaking event

Jagera Arts Centre  
121 Cordelia St, South  
Brisbane

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#### 4.) Actions fact sheet

##### Maules Creek Visit:

##### About Maules Creek:

- The Maules Creek Coal Mine is currently under construction in the Leard State Forest close to the town of Narrabri in north-west New South Wales
- The Leard State Forest is recognised for its rich biodiversity as a critically endangered Box Gum ecological community. It's the largest remaining tract of this forest in Australia. The forest is home to over 390 species, more than 30 of which are endangered. The coal mine will directly destroy half the forest and the remainder will suffer from a major drop in the water table, increased vehicle activity and the dispersion of coal dust.
- The Mine will dig up 13 million tonnes of coal will be ripped from the group and transported to Newcastle for export.
- This coal will release 30 million tonnes of CO2 emissions, which is equivalent to the annual emissions of New Zealand's entire energy sector. This will continue for 30 years.



##### The Warrior Visit:

- The Warriors will visit the site of the Maules Creek Coal Mine and the ongoing campaign against its construction from the 12th - 14th October.
- The Warriors will be given a tour of the site, investigating the source of the fuel that is leading to the destruction of their homelands. They will then share the stories of the impacts of climate change on their homelands with community campaigners in the region.
- The Warriors will hold a photo shoot with community campaigners, holding up banners opposing the construction of the mine at 10:00am at the Leard Forest Sign (get address). Photos will be made available for media who cannot attend.

## Newcastle flotilla

### About the Newcastle Coal Port

- The port of Newcastle is the world's largest coal port.<sup>1</sup>
- The port has a shipping capacity of 211 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). In 2013 the Port reached a record 150.5 million tonnes in coal exports, a 12.5% increase on 2012.<sup>2</sup>
- There are plans to increase the capacity of the port by 70 million tonnes through the construction of the T4 coal terminal.<sup>3</sup>
- Community groups have been campaigning against the construction of the new terminal, as well as the existence of the current terminals, due to its impacts on climate change, community health and the natural environment.<sup>4</sup>
- Australia is the world's second largest coal exporter<sup>5</sup>, fueling global climate change, which is damaging Pacific Islands.
- Based on calculations from 2013 export rates, we will be blocking the path of approximately 578,100 tonnes of coal that would otherwise be leaving the Port on October 17th.

### About the action

- The Warriors will lead a peaceful flotilla of the Newcastle coal port on October 17.
- The Warriors have built traditional canoes in their islands. Five of these canoes have been shipped to Australia to lead the flotilla.
- The flotilla will happen in the following way:
  - 9:00am: Welcome to country and traditional welcome ceremony for Warriors
  - 10:00am: Boats are launched into the water
  - 10:00am - 5:00pm: Warriors and hundreds of Australians participate in flotilla, blocking movements of coal ships for an entire day

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-04-30/nsw-government-sells-port-of-newcastle-for-175-billion/5421800>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/newcastle-continues-set-record-coal-exports>

<sup>3</sup> <http://reneweconomy.com.au/2014/newcastles-4-8bln-coal-facility-that-should-not-be-built-37066>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hcec.org.au/sites/default/files/T4BriefingNov2012.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.minerals.org.au/resources/coal/exports>



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The logo for 350.org, featuring the number "350" in a large, bold, blue font, followed by ".org" in a smaller, blue font. A small blue arrow points to the left, positioned between the "3" and the "5".

- 5:30pm: Warriors are welcomed back to shore to be followed by evening barbeque at the park.
- Kayaks and canoes have been hired to allow Australians to participate in the flotilla with the Warriors. People are bringing their own boats as part of the action as well.
- On current estimates 200 - 300 people are expected to attend the flotilla.

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## 5.) Climate change and the Pacific - fact sheet

Pacific nations are some of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Due to their small size, low elevation, and remote locations, many Islands are already suffering due to global emissions. The impacts vary from place to place, but include:

- Rising sea levels and increased number and severity of storm activity leading to inundation, storm surges, beach erosion and coral bleaching,
- Rising saltwater tables impacting deep rooted food crops such as coconut, pulaka, and taro and infiltrating fresh water supplies,
- Drier climate conditions reducing the islands' already limited water resources to the point that they become insufficient to meet demand during increasing low-rainfall periods.

It is for these reasons that three Pacific Nations are considered within the 10 most vulnerable in the world to the impacts of climate change.<sup>6</sup>

It is estimated that a temperature rise of 2-4 degrees celsius could result in up to \$1 billion of damages to water resources in Papua New Guinea alone.<sup>7</sup> The Pacific region is estimated to require \$447 million per year until 2050 to deal with losses to GDP.<sup>8</sup>



This does not take into account the potential hundreds of thousands of people in the Pacific region who may be displaced by the impacts of climate change. Rising sea levels, the loss of crops and the reduction in water will force many away from their homes, resulting not just in the loss of a home, but also in a massive loss of culture and sense of place for these communities.

<sup>6</sup> <https://germanwatch.org/en/download/8551.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.new-ag.info/en/country/profile.php?a=2924>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/pub/2013/economics-climate-change-pacific.pdf>

## Examples of impacts of climate change

Some notable ones include of the impacts of climate change include:

- The Government of Fiji, earlier this year, identified 676 villages that are being threatened by climate change. Of that 42 have the potential to be relocated in the next 5- 10 years.<sup>9</sup> The people of the village of Vunido-goloa have already had to relocate because of climate change.<sup>10</sup> The people of that village have literally had to pack up their lives and move to higher ground because their village was not suitable for living anymore.<sup>11</sup>



- Kiribati is particularly vulnerable due to the geography of atoll islands, which form the basis of the nation's land mass. Atolls islands are very small islands, barely two meters above sea level. With Kiribati being made entirely of atoll islands when the sea level rises there simply isn't higher ground for people to move to. Kiribati has had to recently purchase 20 sq kilometres of land on the island of Vanua Levu, on one of the Fiji Islands, about 2,000 kilometres away, for agricultural and fish-farming projects to guarantee the nation's food security. With a population of 110,000 people spread across 3.5sq kilometres on 33 islands, President Anote Tong admitted this land could host the entire nation's population if required.
- In March earlier this year, Marshall Islands declared a state of emergency following severe floods that swamped the low- lying atolls. Over 1,000 people were forced to be evacuated after massive 'king tides' rose across the islands. These king tides are being seen more frequently on the Marshall Islands, which comprise of 29 atolls which on average lie only two metres above sea level. The flooding has seen massive damage to communities and infrastructure, and resulted in an ongoing debate about the potential need for migration for islanders.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=257164>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.alternet.org/environment/inside-look-one-first-villages-forced-relocate-due-climate-change>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=254326>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.rtcc.org/2014/03/04/marshall-islands-face-evacuations-as-sea-swamps-capital/>

## 6.) The Australian fossil fuel industry - fact sheet

- According to the International Energy Agency to reach the degrees target no more than one-third of proven reserves of fossil fuels can be consumed prior to 2050 (unless carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology is widely deployed). Australia plays a major role in meeting this target.
- Australia is currently the world's second largest coal exporter.<sup>13</sup>
- While Australia's domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions represent approximately 1.5% of global emissions, if our coal exports are taken into account Australia represents at least 4.8% of global emissions.<sup>14</sup>
- The Australian Government and fossil fuel companies have plans to increase coal and gas exports. Coal exports are due to triple from 300 million to 1 billion tonnes per year<sup>15</sup> while plans would see Australia become the world's largest gas exporter.<sup>16</sup>
- New plans would significantly increase our emissions impact. The nine new proposed "mega coal mines" in Queensland's Galilee Basin for example would be responsible for 705 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. That would turn the region into the world's seventh largest contributor of global emissions.<sup>17</sup>

### Australian Government policies

- The Abbott Government has approved a number of new massive coal projects, including the massive Carmichael coal mine<sup>18</sup> in Queensland and the associated dredging and dumping at Abbot Point.<sup>19</sup> The previous ALP

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.minerals.org.au/resources/coal/exports>

<sup>14</sup> <http://theconversation.com/why-australia-must-stop-exporting-coal-9698>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.smh.com.au/business/put-money-where-mine-mouth-is-to-reap-rewards-20111021-1mcef.html>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/opinion/local-market-needs-our-gas/story-e6frg9if-1227003374408?nk=f2720758dacecf84e2537b40dcfe43c0>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2012/sep/18/mega-mine-australia-global-emissions>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-07-28/carmichael-coal-mine-project-gets-federal-approval/5628584>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/queensland/abbot-point-coal-terminal-reef-dredging-project-approved-20131210-2z3v2.html>



Government approved similar projects, including the Maules Creek Coal Mine currently under construction.<sup>20</sup>

- The Australian Government provides over \$7 billion in fossil fuel subsidies.<sup>21</sup>
- State Governments provide an additional \$17.6 billion in fossil fuel assistance, with the Queensland State Government alone providing \$9.6 billion worth of assistance.<sup>22</sup>
- Recent analysis has also shown that “Australia’s polluting energy sector benefits from an annual subsidy of \$14-39 billion from the unpriced cost of climate damages on economic growth, environmental systems, health, and security.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup><http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/burke-approves-huge-gas-and-coal-plans-20130211-2e8vh.html>

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.acfonline.org.au/sites/default/files/resources/G20\\_fossil\\_fuel\\_subsidies\\_25-6-10.pdf](http://www.acfonline.org.au/sites/default/files/resources/G20_fossil_fuel_subsidies_25-6-10.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.tai.org.au/content/mining-age-entitlement>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/articles/media-releases/polluting-energy-receives-multibillion-dollar-carbon-subsidy.html>

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## 7. Contact Us

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