

UN human rights and climate change complaint - client quotes and asks

Ethan Lyons, 15, Sydney said:

“I am a Wiradjuri teen and my connection to Country is incredibly important to me. I am standing up to protect my Country, culture and community and ensure every First Nations person has access to a safe future,” he said.

“The intergenerational trauma that my mob has faced is enough already, but now we face the trauma of losing connection to Country and culture as a result of climate change.

“Our politicians cannot stand by while my generation and those to come after me suffer the consequences of their inaction.”

Adrien Edward, 15, Melbourne said:

“Our government must listen to the stories and experiences of all Australians, particularly disabled people, and act immediately to protect our future,” they said.

“I have sensory issues and chronic pain which are exacerbated during extreme temperatures which heavily impacts my accessibility to education, travel and to leave the house which takes a toll on my mental health.

“I am angry that our government is unwilling to address the disproportionate harms on disabled people, especially when there are global crises. It is unfair that we are harmed more because we are not considered.”

Shylicia McKiernan, 24, Melbourne said:

“This is a democracy. The government is meant to represent all of us. But the government isn’t acting. That is messed up. We need proper representation,” she said.

“I am a Kulkalaig woman from Kulkagal Nation, Zenadth Kes – the Torres Strait. My family’s island, Masig, is already seeing the impact of climate change. My great-grandparents moved because of rising sea levels. The thought of my family being displaced in their own country is heartbreaking.

“On the individual and local level there are some people doing some great things, but it isn’t enough. Everything makes a difference but right now, what we need is action from our governments.”

Chris Black, 14, Sydney said:

“I hope for a future where I can work to protect the environment, and so, I am calling on the government to take immediate action and set a new 2030 target which will ensure my human rights are protected,” he said.

“I have mental health issues and disabilities, which puts me at a higher risk of climate harms.

“My anxiety is triggered by climate change and can manifest in physical pain. I am very annoyed the government doesn’t have any solid actions to stop climate change.”

Leila Mangos, 18, NSW Central Coast said:

“I am fighting for the future of my generation and every generation to come after us, so everyone feels safe, secure and can pursue our passions,” she said.

“I have struggled with depression and anxiety brought on by the knowledge that without action by our governments, the planet I live on has an expiry date.

“By 2030, I will only be 26. My life will have barely begun. We’re told time and time again that we will save the planet, and those who should be responsible for climate action - our world leaders - pass the responsibility down to us, the generation who can do nothing about it.”

Seed Indigenous Youth Climate Network said:

“First Nations communities are facing the impacts of climate change first and worst, but we’re also at the forefront of change, leading the movement for climate justice. We have looked after our land sustainably for over 60,000 years. Our knowledge of our homelands and our leadership is absolutely critical in our collective fight for climate justice.

“In order to limit warming to 1.5 degrees, we need to listen to First Nations communities and keep all coal, oil and gas in the ground. Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory have been fighting to protect their lands and waters and saying no to fracking for over a decade, and yet our government is continuing to hand out public money to oil and gas corporations who are rushing ahead with their destructive fracking plans. Enough is enough.”

Ross Joyce, CEO of the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations said;

“The voices of young people with disability are critical to be heard in the climate conversation. There is a growing consensus that people with disability are at acute risks of climate harms, and we support these young people’s brave approach to the UN and calls for international intervention.”

The complaint requests that the UN Special Rapporteurs to contact the Australian Government and:

1. Urge the Australian State to without delay set a 2030 target under the Paris Agreement that is consistent with its human rights obligations to young people in Australia and to the Complainants.

2. Seek explanation from the Australian State regarding:

- How the Australian State’s current inaction on climate change and its first and second Paris Agreement Greenhouse Gas emission reduction targets are consistent with its human rights obligations to the Complainants and to young people in Australia, especially young people from First Nations communities and disabled people;

- How its current conduct is compatible with the human rights of young Australians and a 1.5 degree pathway, in light of:
 - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Sixth Assessment Report;
 - The 2021 International Energy Agency Roadmap;
the 2021 International Energy Agency World Economic Outlook; and
 - The Australian government's continued approval and pursuit of new gas and coal extraction projects across Australia including major gas exploration in the Beetaloo basin.
- How its current NDC decision-making has involved young people in Australia who are and will continue to feel the acute impacts of climate harms and the State's decision-making, and whether the State will establish a permanent forum to take advice from young people from impacted communities about the lived reality of climate inaction.

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