



# Pacific girls in a changing climate and how Australia can act to support them.

Briefing, February 2025

New research, from Plan International Australia and Kiribati Climate Action Network in partnership with girls in Kiribati and Fiji, paints a compelling picture of how climate change is fundamentally reshaping the lives of girls in the Pacific.

Carried out by Edith Cowan University and the Australian National University, the research was co-designed with girls in Kiribati and Fiji and included a survey of 319 girls aged 10-18 in six Pacific countries – Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.

**82%** of surveyed girls say that climate change has affected their life at home, in school or in the community.

**50%** of surveyed girls say that climate events have stopped them from going to school.

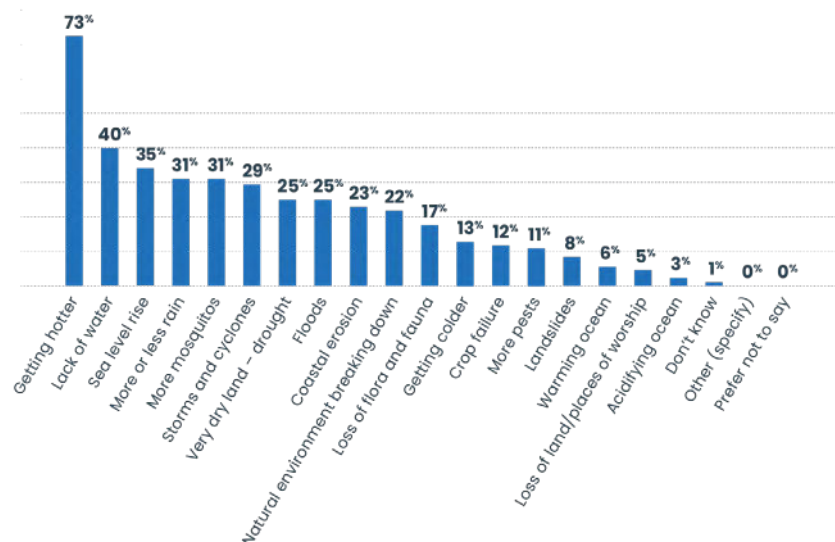
Only **0.6%** of surveyed girls say that climate change has not affected their health and wellbeing.

**27%** of surveyed girls say there is less food and 19% say they feel hungry due to climate change.

Close to **50%** of surveyed girls say the most common impact of climate change on their basic needs is lack of clean fresh water.

Almost **1/3** of surveyed girls say that climate change has damaged or destroyed their homes.

Climate change impacts experienced by girls in the survey



“It is not safe to bathe in poor quality water, salty and brackish, especially when menstruating.”  
Co-design workshop participants

“We can't grow food around the house due to poor water quality.”  
Co-design workshop participants

“Hot temperatures in weather causes raises and boils on the head. Frequent changes in weather patterns causes sicknesses like short of breath, headaches. During hot sunny days it causes headaches.”  
Indigenous girl, aged 10, living in an urban area in Fiji

See the full report [here](#).

## The girls who participated in the research were clear about the action that needs to be taken in the face of climate change:

Girls called for all governments to take action to prevent and address climate change, including cutting use of fossil fuels and stopping deforestation.

A key message from girls was that governments must centre girls and their lived experience in climate policies. A 13-year-old indigenous girl from Tuvalu highlighted that governments need “to look at the difference between girls and boys”.

The Australian Government can support girls to build girl-led feminist climate movements in the Pacific, such as training, and supporting girl-led organizations.

Girls called for:

- Support to help them build climate resilience – including specifically strengthening climate change education for girls from early years through the university level.
- Resourcing and support to girls as first responders.

## Plan International Australia recommends that the Australian Government:

1. Establish the first **Pacific regional program targeting adolescent girls and climate change** with \$30million over four years to support activities including:
  - Ensuring disaster preparedness and response, and climate resilience is built into curricula across the Pacific, including contextually appropriate focus on girls.
  - A program to audit essential infrastructure with a focus on climate resilience, accessibility and safety for girls and other groups with particular vulnerabilities, including people with disabilities.
  - A focus on protection and ensuring safety for adolescent girls as part of disaster risk reduction and resilience investments.
  - Targeted support to adolescent girls as first responders, and agents of change in climate adaptation, climate resilience and anticipatory action.

This program might sit within a new Global Gender-Responsive Climate Adaptation Funding Window such as that proposed by ACFID in its [2025-26](#) Pre-Budget Submission.
2. Commit to the **next phase of Pacific Women Lead** with an investment of \$250m over 5 years, including \$25m, over 5 years for the highly successful **Pacific Girls program**.
3. Given the scale of the challenge on hunger and food security, and the impacts on girls and women, make a targeted **investment of \$50m to boost impact and innovation in hunger relief and famine prevention**. This investment could support Plan’s important work in this space, including piloting a groundbreaking new approach to therapeutic foods.

Contact

### Conor Costello

Associate Director, Policy & Advocacy.

Plan International Australia.

[conor.costello@plan.org.au](mailto:conor.costello@plan.org.au) +61 438 320 271