

April 2026

COP31 Submission

Delivering for girls
and young women
on the frontlines of
the climate crisis

Executive summary

Girls are on the frontlines of the climate crisis. Across the Indo-Pacific, climate impacts, rising energy costs, and economic instability are making it harder for girls to eat, stay in school, and stay safe. These pressures are already reshaping lives and weakening stability across the region. Yet girls are also powerful agents of change. When their rights are upheld and their leadership is supported, they help build fairer, safer, and more resilient communities.

COP31 must respond to a new reality: climate impacts are worsening, global instability is rising, and inequality is deepening. The test is no longer only what countries agree to, but how commitments are delivered and for whom. Pacific girls told Plan International Australia the climate crisis is already disrupting their lives: half have missed school, nearly a third report less food, and almost half lack clean water.¹ Yet only 2.4% of climate finance from major multilateral climate funds is child-responsive, despite children making up one-third of the global population and half of those living in extreme poverty.²

COP31 is an opportunity to place people and fairness at the centre of climate action and demonstrate that multilateralism still delivers in

an increasingly unstable world. To date, no COP has meaningfully prioritised adolescent girls. COP31 can change this by ensuring climate action delivers for girls, alongside clear, time-bound commitments on climate finance, adaptation, loss and damage, and the transition away from fossil fuels.

The stakes are high. Prior to COP31, the United Nations General Assembly is expected to consider a resolution welcoming the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on climate change, which affirms that states have a legal and moral obligation to protect present and future generations from climate harm. In this context, delay carries real consequences.

COP31 is a moment for leadership. As a values-based middle power, Australia can use COP31 to deliver outcomes that strengthen stability, inclusion, and resilience across our region, especially for girls and young women.

This submission was developed by Plan International Australia, the Australian Youth for International Climate Engagement, and the Oceania Youth Climate Negotiation Network, informed by consultations with young people and experts.

Priority actions for Australia

1

Embed girls' and children's rights across COP31 outcomes

Mainstream gender equality, children's rights, and intergenerational equity across all negotiation tracks, Presidency-led initiatives, and the Action Agenda.

2

Champion adolescent girls as agents of change

Announce a flagship investment in girls' climate resilience across the Asia-Pacific and establish a ministerial roundtable on girls and climate action at COP31.

3

Deliver climate finance for communities

Announce a new climate finance target, including tripling Australia's contribution to AUD 11 billion (2025–2030). At COP31, Australia should host a pledging COP to mobilise finance for multilateral climate funds, alongside support for the Pacific Resilience Facility.

4

Support an equitable and rights-based just transition

Advance a rights-based just transition by ensuring the just transition mechanism is adequately funded, has a clear timeline, and sets out practical steps for implementation.

5

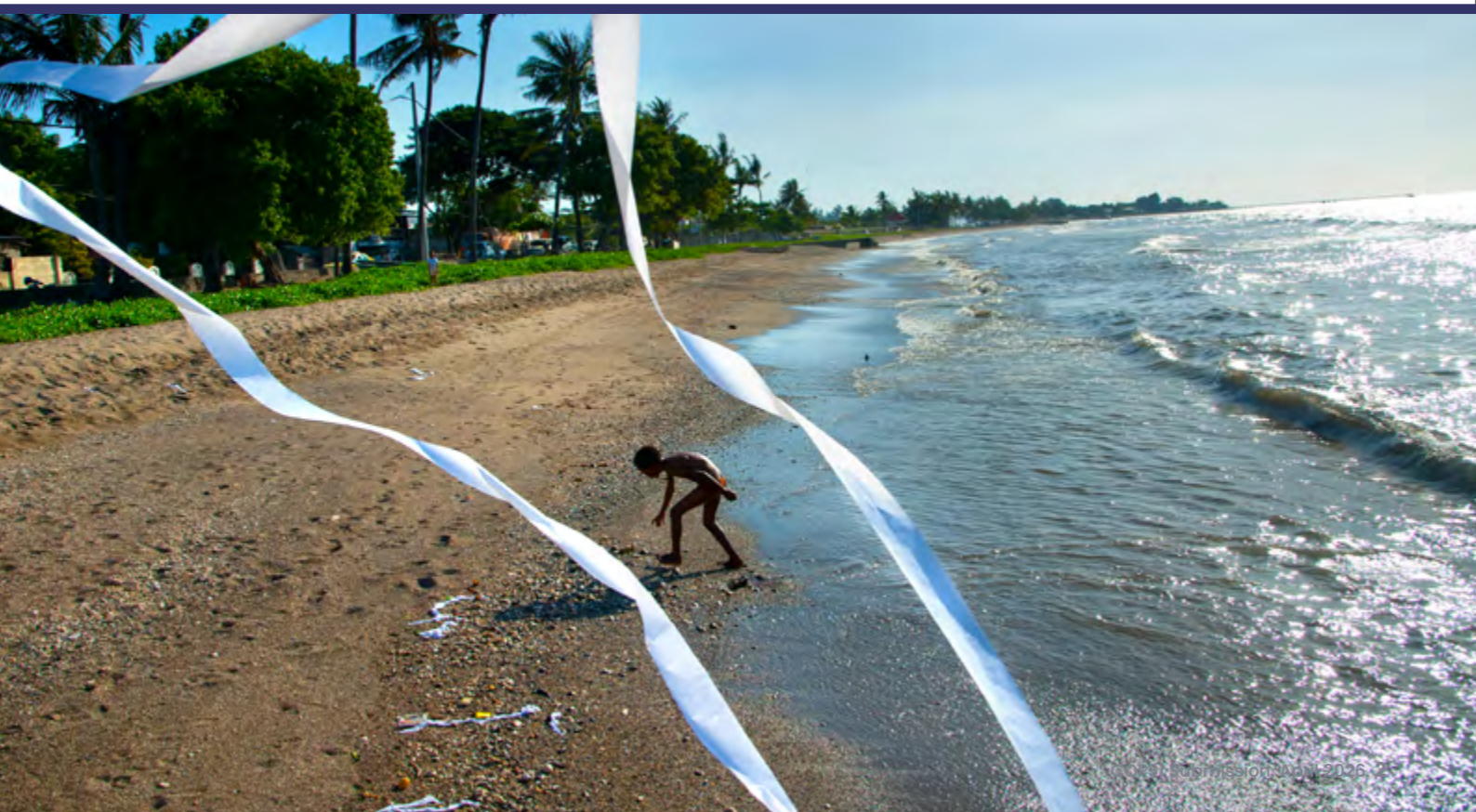
Elevate adaptation and loss and damage

Maintain strong political focus on adaptation and loss and damage, scaling up finance and strengthening implementation to ensure support reaches girls and young women. Champion locally led adaptation in the COP31 event on SIDS' climate finance needs.

6

Strengthen multilateral cooperation

Lead a transparent and inclusive COP to rebuild trust in the multilateral process and protect the integrity of negotiations. Support international momentum by welcoming the ICJ Advisory Opinion and advancing discussion on implementation.



Advancing girls' and children's rights

"Climate change affects my education. I hardly go to school. Shorten money for bus fare."

- Girl, aged 10, living in a rural area in Tonga.³

The gap and the opportunity

Australia has an opportunity, as COP31 President of Negotiations, to champion the rights and leadership of adolescent girls as part of gender-responsive climate action. No previous COP Presidency has substantively focused on girls—this is a clear gap Australia can address.

Across the Asia-Pacific, adolescent girls are disproportionately affected by climate change, poverty, and systemic marginalisation. Girls often eat last and least, are pulled out of school, denied access to sexual and reproductive health care, exposed to violence, and excluded from decent work. The climate crisis deepens these existing inequalities.

Despite this, adolescent girls remain underrepresented in policy and funding. Although they make up more than a third of the female population in Asia and the Pacific, most gender-focused finance is directed towards adult women, leaving girls' distinct needs largely unmet during a critical stage of their lives. Less than four percent of projects from multilateral climate funds explicitly and meaningfully consider girls.⁴

Adolescent girls are powerful agents of change. When their rights are upheld and their leadership is supported, they help build fairer, safer, and more resilient communities. Supporting girls to thrive benefits not only them, but also their families, communities, and economies. Each additional year of schooling for girls measurably strengthens communities' ability to withstand climate-related shocks.⁵

Investing in adolescent girls—including those facing intersecting forms of marginalisation, such as girls with disability—is both a moral and strategic priority. Targeted investments

can accelerate progress on Australia's development and climate priorities, including under the International Gender Equality Strategy, and strengthen resilience across the region.

A focus on adolescent girls also aligns with broader COP31 priorities, including Türkiye's youth engagement and Pacific priorities to amplify frontline voices.

What COP31 can deliver

Australia should:

- Elevate the role of adolescent girls, children, and young women across key negotiation tracks and Presidency-led initiatives, including by mainstreaming their rights and leadership in processes such as the Just Transition Work Programme, the midterm review of the Glasgow Work Programme on Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) and its new action plan, the second Global Stocktake, and the Global Implementation Accelerator.
- Announce a flagship investment to strengthen the resilience of girls and communities across the Asia-Pacific, with targeted support for adolescent girls most affected by climate change.
- Convene a ministerial roundtable on girls and climate action at COP31, bringing together ministers across climate, children and youth, gender, and development portfolios to drive implementation and translate commitments into practical outcomes.
- Fund a regional youth gathering ahead of or during Pre-COP, organised by children, girls and young people from across the Oceania-Pacific.

Advancing gender equality at COP31

"[In the evacuation centres] there is more focus on everyone's safety and not much on women and girls' safety. Women and girls are bearing the burden of looking after families and community in the evacuation centre."

- Co-design workshop participants, Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate report.⁶

The gap and the opportunity

The Belém Gender Action Plan (GAP) makes important progress for girls and young women through stronger recognition of girls, improved use of gender- and age-disaggregated data to inform action, and clearer pathways to address care, health, gender-based violence, and protection. However, key gaps remain. Intersectionality has been weakened, and human rights language has been removed amid growing global pushback. To deliver real outcomes for girls, the GAP will require strong political will, dedicated funding, and a strong focus on implementation.

Too often, gender equality is confined to the GAP, rather than integrated across all negotiation tracks. The evidence is clear: climate programs led by women deliver stronger results for marginalised communities—a finding confirmed by the UNFCCC's Standing Committee on Finance in 2023.⁷ Yet the organisations doing this work are under threat. Nearly half of women's organisations surveyed after the 2025 USAID funding cuts are at risk of closure, putting decades of progress at risk.⁸ As COP31 President of Negotiations, Australia can play a decisive role in embedding gender equality across all tracks—not only through

the GAP. Australia has demonstrated strong leadership on gender equality in other forums, including at the 70th Commission on the Status of Women. COP31 is an opportunity to reinforce that leadership on climate.

What COP31 can deliver

Drive implementation of the Belém Gender Action Plan

Australia should:

- Use Gender Day at COP31 to encourage Parties to publicly reaffirm their commitment to implementing the GAP.
- Encourage Parties to begin national-level assessments this year to support timely submission and consideration at COP32.
- Leverage Australia's role on the Green Climate Fund board to strengthen gender-responsive finance, including by supporting gender-transformative funding, setting targets within funds, and strengthening technical support for gender focal points.

Strengthen leadership and accountability on gender equality and children's rights

Australia should:

- Champion strong gender equality and human rights language across COP31 outcomes, supported by gender and child rights expertise.
- Establish clear benchmarks and indicators to track progress on gender equality and children's rights outcomes at COP31.
- Appoint a dedicated gender equality and children's rights technical lead within the COP31 Taskforce to drive integration across negotiations, Presidency-led initiatives, and the Action Agenda.
- Ensure early and ongoing engagement with experts and constituencies, including the Women and Gender Constituency and YOUNGO.

Defending multilateralism

“Climate change really affects my future as a young girl like my education and the loss of my island home.”

- Indigenous girl from an ethnic minority group, aged 13, living in an urban area in Solomon Islands.⁹

The gap and the opportunity

COP31 comes at a critical moment for the multilateral system. Global instability is rising, and confidence in the rules-based order is weakening. Recent COPs have faced criticism for increased use of shuttle diplomacy, which has reduced trust, limited Party participation, and weakened ambition. Without trust, even strong technical progress will not deliver real-world results.

The climate crisis is accelerating faster than government responses to it, with real consequences for our region. The International Court of Justice’s Advisory Opinion provides clear guidance that states have legal and moral obligations to protect present and future generations. The next step is translating that guidance into collective action.

Australia and the Pacific share an ocean, a future, and a deep responsibility as custodians of the vast Blue Pacific Continent. The Pacific is on the frontline of the climate crisis – and our credibility as a partner depends on multilateral systems that work and commitments that are kept. COP31 is an opportunity to demonstrate both.

What COP31 can deliver

Australia should:

- Lead an open and inclusive COP process to rebuild trust in the multilateral system, including through regular, structured engagement with observers and civil society.
- Co-sponsor and support the UN General Assembly resolution on the ICJ Advisory Opinion, and convene discussions among Parties on implementing its obligations ahead of COP31.



Just transition

The gap and the opportunity

The green economy could create millions of jobs by 2030, but girls and young women risk being left behind. Only one in three young people say their education has prepared them for climate change, and young women feel less ready than young men; they are more likely to cite a lack of skills as the main barrier to green jobs.¹¹ Without action, structural inequalities in education and training will lock girls and young women out of the sectors shaping our future economy.

Just transition policies must invest in climate education, green skills, and pathways into decent work, particularly for girls and young women. They must also recognise the care economy—largely carried by women and girls—as a foundation of social and economic stability. The COP30 outcome on just transition, with its strong human rights language and commitments to inclusion, provides a platform to build on.

Australia is well placed to lead. It brings experience managing regional transitions and addressing challenges such as extreme heat and energy insecurity in First Nations communities. As COP31 President of Negotiations, advancing a just transition mechanism could be a defining legacy: demonstrating practical support for countries shifting to clean energy while protecting workers and communities. This aligns with Australia’s economic and regional priorities, supports a 100% renewable Pacific, keeps 1.5°C within reach, and presents an opportunity for Australia to lead globally on a gender-responsive just transition.

What COP31 can deliver

COP31 should focus on operationalising the mechanism, with clear timelines, adequate resourcing, and practical detail on how it will function. To build momentum, Australia should identify a short list of options for the mechanism by Bonn and, where consensus is delayed, consider piloting key elements to demonstrate early delivery.

Australia should lead consultations to shape the mechanism. Australia can draw on its own experience of regional transition and learn from international models such as the EU Just Transition Mechanism, Scotland’s Just Transition Commission, Spain’s Just Transition Institute, and South Africa’s Just Energy Transition Partnerships.

Australia should:

- Deliver a rights-based just transition mechanism at COP31 that reflects different national contexts, including clear timelines, adequate resourcing, and practical detail on how it will function.
- Convene just transition consultations before COP31, to shape the mechanism, ensuring it is grounded in practical experience, responsive to developing country needs, and avoids top-down approaches.
- Renew support for the Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Action Partnership and expand it by COP31 to include UN agencies, civil society and development partners.

“Whenever there is a cyclone, our plantation is destroyed and we have to re-plant and this is the usual hard work communities, especially women and girls, have to endure.”

- Co-design workshop participants, Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate report.¹⁰



Adaptation

The gap and the opportunity

Climate change is already testing the limits of adaptation across our region, and its costs are falling hardest on girls and young women. It is deepening poverty and food insecurity, disrupting education, and increasing exposure to violence and exploitation. By 2050, an additional 158 million women and girls could be pushed into extreme poverty, with 232 million facing food insecurity.¹³ An estimated 12.5 million girls are forced out of school each year in climate-vulnerable countries to help find food and water or take on care responsibilities.¹⁴ The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is clear: adaptation efforts will fall short unless they address the structural inequalities facing girls and young women.¹⁵

Adaptation is not keeping pace with climate impacts. The finance gap, estimated at USD 187–359 billion per year, is widening.¹⁶ East Asia and the Pacific face the highest adaptation finance needs of any region globally.¹⁷ As a member of the Pacific family, Australia has both a responsibility and a shared interest in closing this gap.

Yet adaptation finance is not reaching those who need it most. Of the USD 28 billion reported by developed countries, only 3.4% targets gender equality as a principal objective — and around 40% is not screened for gender at all.¹⁸ This limits effectiveness and risks leaving women and girls behind.

Australia is well placed to lead on this. In 2022–23, Australia allocated 62% of its climate finance to adaptation — more than doubling funding since 2019, in line with the Glasgow Climate Pact. The task now is to ensure this finance is better targeted: reaching women, girls and frontline communities, and supporting locally led solutions.

As the Pacific's largest development partner, Australia's regional credibility rests on delivering against Pacific priorities. Strong, visible leadership on adaptation at COP31 will demonstrate that Australia is meeting its commitments, reinforce trust in the multilateral system, and support a credible handover of the COP Presidency from Brazil to Ethiopia.

What COP31 can deliver

Elevate adaptation as a political priority

COP31 is a critical moment to shift adaptation from commitment to action. While technical work on the Global Goal on Adaptation, the Baku Adaptation Roadmap and the Belém–Addis Vision is important, without sustained political leadership it will not translate to impact.

Australia should:

- Elevate adaptation as a political priority at COP31, including through high-level events such as the COP31 event on the climate finance needs of Small Island Developing States, and ensure outcomes prioritise gender- and child-responsive, locally led approaches.

Close the adaptation finance gap

Focusing on gender and child-responsive locally led adaptation is not just the right thing to do, it makes adaptation finance more effective. Australia should explore mechanisms to mobilise primarily public investment in adaptation — potentially through a platform aligned with National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) — to help close financing gaps and improve access at the local level.

Australia should:

- Support efforts to scale up public finance for adaptation to deliver the Global Goal on Adaptation and meet country needs, including improving access to finance at the local level to enable locally led, gender- and child-responsive approaches that reach girls and young women.

Strengthen implementation through National Adaptation Plans

NAPs provide a practical framework to guide adaptation investment and delivery. The Baku Adaptation Roadmap provides an opportunity to strengthen national coordination — aligning government systems, including budgeting processes, so that NAPs can drive investment at scale, and support the communities they are designed to serve.

Australia should:

- Focus COP31 on accelerating implementation of adaptation commitments by strengthening the role of NAPs in guiding investment and delivery.

Strengthen accountability through adaptation indicators

The Belém Adaptation Indicators, to be finalised at COP32, will be a key test of whether adaptation is delivering in practice. Australia has an opportunity to strengthen these indicators so they better reflect who adaptation is reaching and how finance is flowing — supporting disaggregation by gender, age, and disability across all targets, as well as placing greater emphasis on locally led adaptation and traditional knowledge and Indigenous knowledge.

Australia should:

- Continue to strengthen the Belém Adaptation Indicators, including improving the tracking of adaptation finance, particularly for locally led adaptation, and seek progress on disaggregating indicators by gender and age across sectors, and guided by traditional knowledge and Indigenous knowledge, to support a strong outcome at COP32.

“I use the river for bathing, washing clothes and even for drinking when the main source is closed. We had to walk a few miles to fetch water from the river. This poses a huge negative impact on my health and personal security as a person living with disability.”

– Filo, a 14-year-old girl with a disability living in a rural village in Fiji.¹²

Action for Climate Empowerment

The gap and the opportunity

Younger Australians are emerging as the strongest supporters of the energy transition; those under 35 are nearly twice as likely as those over 55 to support paying more for clean energy.²⁰ Investing in climate education is crucial to building the social licence needed to deliver Australia's energy transition.

The global picture is stark. In 2024, extreme weather interrupted the schooling of 242 million students across 85 countries.²¹ For girls, every year of education matters, not only for their futures, but for their country's resilience to climate shocks. Yet across 17 years of multilateral climate funding, only one project has focused primarily on education.²²

Even as climate impacts grow, young people remain largely locked out of the decisions that will shape their futures. Only

“When it rains, I had to walk 5km from my village to catch the six o'clock school bus. My mother wakes up at 1.30am to prepare breakfast and our lunch. I have to cross five bridges to catch the bus. When crossing these bridges my parents have to carry me across as the water flows over the bridge and also the water is very cold. I need to carry a torch as it is dark when I leave the village.”

– Elenoa, a 12-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji.¹⁹

five percent of adolescents surveyed across 37 countries understood how to engage in Paris Agreement negotiations.²³

Australia can lead. With an Australian Presidency Youth Climate Champion and inclusive, consensus-driven ACE negotiations, COP31 can position children and youth engagement and gender-responsive climate education as a signature element of Australia's co-Presidency.

What COP31 can deliver

For too long, climate education and children and youth engagement have been treated as add-ons, acknowledged in UNFCCC negotiations but under-resourced and disconnected from the decisions that matter. Climate funds like the Green Climate Fund remain difficult to access for climate education programs, particularly those focused on children and girls.

COP31 is the moment to change that: agreeing a new five-year ACE Action Plan that is ambitious, intersectional, and properly resourced — one that embeds ACE across mitigation, adaptation, and climate finance, and integrates it into the national frameworks that drive implementation, including Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and NAPs.

Australia should:

- Secure agreement at COP31 on a new five-year ACE Action Plan that is ambitious, intersectional, resourced, and implementable. The Action Plan should prioritise integrating climate education and meaningful children and youth engagement into national climate plans, including NDCs and NAPs.
- Commit to implementing the ACE Action Plan and the Belém Gender Action Plan domestically, through a federal roadmap on gender, climate, and education.
- Support young people to engage in ACE negotiations through open negotiations and workshops on the Action Plan.

Climate finance

From 2006 to 2023, just 2.4% of climate finance from major multilateral climate funds was child-responsive, despite children making up one-third of the global population and accounting for half of those living in extreme poverty.²⁴

The gap and the opportunity

Climate finance remains one of the central fault lines in the UNFCCC. With many pledges expiring in 2025, COP30 did not provide the clarity needed on future commitments. Trust is eroding and Australia is well placed to help rebuild it.

The stakes for our region are real and growing. Between 2000 and 2022, loss and damage from extreme climate events cost Pacific Island countries between USD 2.7 and 7 billion.²⁵ When finance does not flow, climate action is hampered and the costs of disaster relief, humanitarian aid, and displacement rise, further destabilising the communities least responsible for the crisis.

Recent withdrawals from the Paris Agreement create a vacuum, and an opportunity. Countries and coalitions of the willing are looking for leadership. Australia taking a leadership role on climate finance — particularly on gender-responsive, child-responsive, and locally led approaches — would position it as the credible, values-driven partner that Pacific and developing nations are looking for.

What COP31 can deliver

Australia's climate finance target

To demonstrate leadership as COP31 President of Negotiations, Australia should announce its new climate finance target, including tripling its contribution to AUD 11 billion over 2025–2030, in line with the global goal to scale up climate finance. This funding should be new and additional to the aid budget and delivered primarily as public, grant-based finance.

The new climate finance target should include a flagship investment focused on strengthening the resilience of adolescent girls to climate

change in the Asia-Pacific. Adolescent girls in the region are disproportionately affected by climate impacts and existing inequalities, and are also powerful agents of change. When their rights are upheld and their leadership is nurtured, they help build fairer, safer, and more sustainable communities.

Australia should:

- Announce a new climate finance target in 2026 by tripling Australia's contribution to AUD 11 billion over 2025–2030, in line with the global goal to scale up climate finance. This funding should be new and additional to the aid budget and delivered primarily as public, grant-based finance. It should include a flagship investment focused on strengthening the resilience of adolescent girls to climate change in the Asia-Pacific region.

Pledging COP

As COP31 President of Negotiations, Australia should champion COP31 as a pledging COP to help rebuild confidence on climate finance. Aligning pledges with key political moments, such as the Pre-COP or the UN General Assembly, would maximise impact and signal early leadership. With many developed country pledges expiring in 2025, there is a clear window to encourage new commitments, particularly to multilateral climate funds.

A pledging COP would align with upcoming replenishment cycles for key multilateral climate funds, including the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund, Least Developed Countries Fund, Special Climate Change Fund, and the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage. It will also be the first real test of the new climate finance goal: fulfilling the commitment to at least triple annual outflows from select multilateral climate

funds by 2030. Even modest contributions would send an important signal of Australia's commitment to climate action for the Pacific and other vulnerable countries.

Australia is a strong supporter of gender-responsive climate finance, and multilateral funds are important delivery channels. Research by the Children's Environmental Rights Initiative found that the Adaptation Fund performs most strongly on child-responsiveness, with around nine percent of projects meeting the threshold.²⁶ The Green Climate Fund ranks second at six percent of projects.²⁷

A pledging COP could align with the Article 9.5 reporting cycle, providing an opportunity to demonstrate progress towards implementing the new climate finance goal. As COP31 President of Negotiations, Australia could use bilateral engagement to shape expectations on future commitments and track early signals ahead of formal reporting.

Australia should:

- Champion a pledging COP to mobilise new climate finance commitments, including for multilateral climate funds and the Pacific Resilience Facility, with a focus on gender- and child-responsive finance.

Article 9 work programme

As COP31 President of Negotiations, Australia should help shape the Article 9 work programme to focus on delivering concrete outcomes that support implementation of the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) and rebuild trust in the UNFCCC process. Priority areas for the Article 9 work programme include:

- Public finance – Centring public finance within the Article 9 work programme, including meaningful engagement between developed and developing countries on how the minimum USD \$300 billion goal will be delivered across mitigation, adaptation, and loss and damage.
- Tracking and transparency – Strengthening accountability through key reporting processes this year, including Biennial Transparency Reports and the commencement of the second Global Stocktake. Australia should convene discussions enabling countries to share early

Article 9.5 commitments ahead of formal submissions.

- Adaptation finance – Clarifying the baseline for tripling adaptation finance and emphasising locally led approaches that are gender- and child-responsive to ensure finance reaches the most impacted communities.
- Access to finance – Prioritising access to finance for the most impacted communities, including by setting minimum targets for climate finance that reaches girls, children and young people.
- Monitoring and reporting – Strengthening methodologies to track climate finance flows, including transparency on definitions, counting, and reporting.
- Innovative finance – Exploring innovative approaches such as levies on fossil fuels and polluter-pays principles to generate new forms of climate finance.

Australia should:

- Shape the Article 9 work programme to deliver concrete outcomes that support implementation of the NCQG, with a focus on delivering the \$300 billion goal. The new work programme should strengthen transparency, improve the quality and predictability of climate finance, and help rebuild trust in the UNFCCC process.

Loss and damage

“Before when I go out fishing, I usually collect a lot of seaweeds, sea grapes, fish etc. but now it has [become] extinct...”

Ruci, a 15-year-old Indigenous girl living in a rural area in Fiji.²⁸

The gap and the opportunity

Girls and young women are among those most affected by loss and damage, yet their needs remain largely invisible in policy responses. Over 80% of people displaced by climate disasters are women and girls.²⁹ In drought-affected Ethiopia, child marriage rates rose 119% in a single year.³⁰ When climate disasters hit, and health services are disrupted, water scarcity forces girls to travel further, increasing their exposure to gender-based violence.

Loss and damage is a defining issue for the Pacific, and a critical test of Australia's credibility as a partner. When Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu in 2015, the country's debt doubled.³¹ The 2023 cyclones in Vanuatu disrupted the education of 58,000 children.³² In the Pacific, land is being lost to rising seas. Cultural heritage and Indigenous knowledges accumulated over millennia are disappearing.

As COP31 President of Negotiations, Australia should use its platform to elevate loss and damage as a political priority, with a clear focus on practical implementation and outcomes for those most affected, including girls and young women.

Australia's \$50 million pledge to the Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) at COP29 was a welcome first step. The architecture is in place; the priority must now be on ensuring finance flows quickly and reaches the communities that need it most.

Scaling up grant-based finance for loss and damage is essential. Over 70% of climate finance currently flows as loans, pushing countries deeper into debt.³³ When countries are forced to service debt before investing in health, education, and clean water, the consequences

fall hardest on those with the least resources. Without stronger action, these pressures will continue to affect stability across our region, and place increasing demands on Australia's humanitarian engagement.

What COP31 can deliver

Loss and damage has not been a political priority under the last two COP Presidencies. As COP31 President of Negotiations, Australia has a clear opportunity to change this – setting out a vision for progress that amplifies Pacific priorities, agreeing shared objectives with Türkiye inside and outside the formal negotiations, and identifying practical actions to support delivery.

Australia should increase funding for loss and damage to \$300 million over five years as part of its new climate finance target. This finance must be grant-based and must reach local communities, particularly girls and young women, rather than adding to the debt burden of countries already on the frontline of a crisis they did not cause.

The priority for COP31 is implementation. The architecture exists, but delivery remains limited and with few formal negotiation items on the agenda, practical outcomes are both achievable and necessary. Australia should use its co-Presidency and its role as an FRLD Board member to strengthen access to the FRLD and Santiago Network through diplomatic engagement, targeted capacity building, and support for national consultation processes that include girls and young women. As an FRLD Board member, Australia should champion gender- and child-responsive funding guidelines, and encourage coordination across the FRLD Secretariat, the

ExCom, and the Santiago Network, with a clear focus on directing resources toward loss and damage responses rather than administration. Australia should also call for clarity on the role of the private sector, recognising that public finance will remain central.

Australia should also champion early progress on a State of Loss and Damage Gap report, securing agreement on modalities and inclusive submission processes so it can inform the second Global Stocktake. A credible Loss and Damage Gap report would strengthen the case for loss and damage as a core pillar of climate action, reinforcing the legal and moral framework established by the ICJ Advisory Opinion.

Australia should:

- Champion loss and damage as a key political priority for COP31, setting out a clear vision that amplifies Pacific priorities and shared objectives with Türkiye.
- Increase funding for loss and damage to \$300 million over five years as part of its new climate finance target, prioritising grant-based finance that reaches local communities.
- Strengthen implementation through the FRLD, Santiago Network and the Warsaw International Mechanism to deliver gender- and child-responsive support to communities, including by championing direct access modalities for youth-led and community-based organisations.
- Support progress towards a State of Loss and Damage Gap report, including clarifying its modalities and ensuring inclusive submission processes, to inform the second Global Stocktake.

Acknowledgments

This submission was written by the Australian Youth for International Climate Engagement (AYFICE), the Oceania Youth Climate Negotiation Network (OYCNN), and Plan International Australia, and is informed by consultations with young people and experts:

- Joshna Baskar, OYCNN
- Caterina Bittendorf, COP30 Project Lead, YES-Europe
- Nkurunziza Jean Bosco, youth negotiator
- Amanda Cahill, CEO, The Next Economy
- Ruby Crandell, Global Institute for Women's Leadership
- Tara Daniel, Associate Director, Policy, WEDO
- Heidi Dumeisch, Youth Climate Policy Centre
- Ineza Umuhoza Grace, Co-global coordinator, Loss and Damage Youth Coalition
- Debbie Hillier, Head of Zurich Climate Resilience Alliance Programme, Mercy Corps
- Jeff Huang, UTAS, Action Research Centre, ReportOUT
- Demet Intepe, Climate Adaptation and Resilience Expert, Practical Action
- Shreya KC, Coordinator, Advocacy Working Group, Loss and Damage Youth Coalition
- Bianca Lau-Goodchild, Climate and Health Alliance
- Salomé Lehtman, Climate Advocacy Advisor, Zurich Climate Resilience Alliance and Mercy Corps
- Caleb Murphy
- Khu Nguyen, KPMG
- Kristen Ostling, Senior Advisor, Policy and Advocacy, Plan International Canada
- Mariana Paoli, Co-coordinator, CAN-International Climate Finance Working Group
- Izzy Rigda, OYCNN
- Urvee Sarkar
- Tisha Shah, ANU
- Mwanahamisi Singano, Director of Policy, WEDO
- Eezu Tan, Climate Writers
- Harshitha Senthilkumar, UN Youth Australia
- Isabelle Zhu-Maguire, OYCNN

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Published: April 2026

Cover image: Artwork by Plan International Australia Youth Activist Niranjana Ghosh @loveon35mm



Footnotes

1. Kiribati Climate Action Network, Plan International Australia and Edith Cowan University Centre for People, Place and Planet (2024) [Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate](#).
2. Children's Environmental Rights Initiative (2023) [Falling Short: Addressing the Climate Finance Gap for Children](#).
3. Kiribati Climate Action Network, Plan International Australia and Edith Cowan University Centre for People, Place and Planet (2024) [Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate](#).
4. Children's Environmental Rights Initiative (2023) [Falling Short: Addressing the Climate Finance Gap for Children](#).
5. Brookings Institute (2017) [Three ways to link girls' education actors to climate action](#).
6. Kiribati Climate Action Network, Plan International Australia and Edith Cowan University Centre for People, Place and Planet (2024) [Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate](#).
7. UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (2023) [Report on the doubling of adaptation finance](#)
8. UN Women (2025) [At a Breaking Point: The Impact of Foreign Aid Cuts on Women's Organizations in Humanitarian Crises Worldwide](#).
9. Kiribati Climate Action Network, Plan International Australia and Edith Cowan University Centre for People, Place and Planet (2024) [Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate](#).
10. Kiribati Climate Action Network, Plan International Australia and Edith Cowan University Centre for People, Place and Planet (2024) [Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate](#).
11. Plan International (2022) [Young People and Green Skills: Preparing for a Sustainable Future](#).
12. Kiribati Climate Action Network, Plan International Australia and Edith Cowan University Centre for People, Place and Planet (2024) [Pacific Girls in a Changing Climate](#).
13. UN Women (2023) [Feminist climate justice: A framework for action](#).
14. Malala Fund (2021) [A Greener Fairer Future: Why leaders need to invest in climate and girls' education](#).
15. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022) [Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#).
16. UN Environment Program (2024) [Adaptation Gap Report 2024](#).
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