



# WHERE THE OCEAN LEADS US: A PACIFIC WAY TO A FOSSIL FUEL FREE FUTURE



## Acknowledgements

Greenpeace Australia Pacific Limited acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Islands, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

**(Cover page)** The late Chief Timothy welcomes the Rainbow Warrior to Vanuatu, 2023. Chief Timothy, who died in 2023, was a deeply respected Elder, community leader, and environmental advocate.

© Greenpeace / Bianca Vitale

**(Inside cover)** In Vanuatu, Risu and other young girls from her village, have been working to rehabilitate and protect their local reefs.

**Coral reefs — a source of food, livelihoods and coastal protection throughout the Pacific — are profoundly threatened by climate change.**

© Arlene Bax



Explore the report online and view the exhibition *The Wayfinders' Roadmap*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## **FOREWORD 1**

---

## **LEADERSHIP FROM THE FRONTLINES 3**

A voyage of over 30 years	3
Grounded in our values	5

---

## **1.5°C AND THE TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS 7**

A survival line	7
Pulse of the Earth	8
What Tapu tells us about 1.5°C	9
Course correction	10
All in the same canoe	11
Law on our side	12

---

## **A BRIGHTER FUTURE: BUILDING SECURITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH THE TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS 13**

The liberating power of renewable energy	14
A Fossil Fuel Free Pacific	15
Justice in the transition: From extraction to sovereignty and equity	16

---

## **BY THE NUMBERS 21**

---

## **THE COURSE AHEAD 23**

Wayfinding the future	23
Where the currents converge	24

---

## **RECOMMENDATIONS 29**

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## **REFERENCES 31**

# FOREWORD



**As Pacific peoples we are descendants of the greatest navigators the world has ever known.**

For thousands of years, we have navigated the world's greatest ocean — guided by the wisdom of our ancestors, by knowledge systems woven across the vast Blue Pacific continent, and by values of reciprocity and collective responsibility.

Today we are navigating the greatest challenge of our time: climate change and the end of the fossil fuel age.

Pacific island countries have always played an outsized role in the world's response to climate change. This has not merely come from our moral authority, as a region on the front lines of sea level rise, destructive storms, ocean warming and other impacts of the climate crisis. Rather, it has been born of persistence, innovation, decades of technical expertise, and always showing up.

Our strength stems from the values we inherited, from our strong, diverse and enduring cultures, from our deep connection to our land and seas, and from an ability to see the interconnectedness of the ecosystem.

Today, we are bringing all this to bear as we chart the course to a fossil fuel free future.

This report, and the exhibition *The Wayfinders' Roadmap*, offers a Pacific perspective on the current moment — how we got here, the future we need, and the winds and currents that can lead us there.

For thousands of years, the ocean has been our source of life. It feeds us, teaches us and connects us together across vast distances. But today, that same ocean is carrying a stark warning. It is calling us to act with courage and urgency. We must listen and follow **where the ocean leads us.**

It is time to change course. We are ready. Join us on the Vaka.



**Shiva Gounden**  
Head of Pacific  
Greenpeace Australia Pacific





Kioan residents Samoi, Slafe and Taotao prepare for a traditional Tuvaluan Fatele in Kioa, Fiji, where a relocated Tuvaluan community responds to climate change through culture and resilience.

© Greenpeace / The Roving Rovas

# LEADERSHIP FROM THE FRONTLINES



## A voyage of over 30 years

**Three decades ago, the world united to confront the greatest challenge of our age: climate change and transitioning away from fossil fuels.**

The Pacific has been there at every step, playing a central role in shaping the global climate regime.

We have defended science, been a voice for ambition and justice, and delivered successive breakthroughs — from securing the 1.5°C goal in the Paris Agreement to taking the world’s biggest problem to the world’s highest court. Today we are spearheading efforts — both inside and outside the formal process of UN climate negotiations — towards a just and equitable transition away from fossil fuels.

The Uto Ni Yalo in Suva, Fiji — a traditional voyaging vessel revitalising traditional navigation and sustainable sea transport.  
© Greenpeace / Bianca Vitale



**1980s**

Pacific island countries first warn of the threats to physical and cultural survival from climate change.

**1990**

Together with island nations of the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean, the Pacific forms the **Alliance of Small Island States** (AOSIS).

**1991**

Vanuatu makes the first proposal for what we now call **loss and damage finance**.

**1994**

Nauru puts forward the first draft of what became the **Kyoto Protocol**.

**2009**

Pacific island countries **press for a binding agreement** that would limit warming to 1.5°C, with Tuvalu and AOSIS offering text for a new legal protocol.

**2015**

The Pacific plays a pivotal role in securing the **Paris Agreement** — including the all-important goal of **limiting warming to 1.5°C**, and a stand-alone article on addressing loss and damage from climate change.

**2022**

Vanuatu is the first country in the world to support a **Fossil Fuel Treaty**, followed shortly by Tuvalu.

**2023**

Pacific island countries help secure the **first ever reference to fossil fuels in a UN climate decision, with COP28 calling on countries to “transition away from fossil fuels”**. The Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage becomes operational.

**2024**

Following a request by Pacific and Caribbean island countries, the **International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea** clarified states’ obligations to protect the world’s oceans from the impacts of climate change.

**2025**

Following a campaign led by Pacific island students, a **historic ruling from the International Court of Justice** affirms that countries are legally obliged to limit warming to 1.5°C, and that continuing down the path of fossil fuels may be an internationally wrongful act.

**2026**

Pacific Ministers and civil society gather in Vanuatu to set the ongoing course of Pacific leadership towards a fossil fuel free future. The *Tassiriki Call* reaffirms the vision of a **Fossil Fuel Free Pacific** and agrees to establish an Inter-Governmental Taskforce.

# Grounded in our values

(tala - talk; noa - without judgement)

We are guided by the wisdom of our ancestors, and in values and knowledge systems that span the great Blue Pacific continent.

## Talanoa

**A process of inclusive, heart-centred dialogue and storytelling that builds trust and empathy.**

Climate change is a collective problem, solved only through listening to each other and creating shared understanding across differences.

Talanoa is a method based on love, respect and connection. It is the opposite of the ‘might is right’ approach to global problem solving. Rather, it helps us to learn about and respect each other’s unique strengths, needs and challenges, and to develop solutions that honor our relationships and move us forward together.

Talanoa is also about accountability and truth telling. In Samoa, it is understood as untying the knots, collectively and step by step.

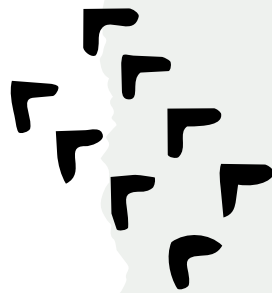
## Vā

**The relational space or interconnectedness between all things.**

Our people, communities, ecosystems, and the forces that sustain us are all bound together in a sacred balance — one that we nurture through tradition, language, family and cultural practices, including the principle of Tapu.

For the Pacific, climate change is about more than the economic costs of disasters and the threats to livelihoods and security. By threatening displacement from our lands and ocean, the loss of our cultures, and the balance of the natural world on which we depend, it threatens something far more fundamental – a rupture of Vā.

The fight for climate justice begins with actively nurturing Vā through building community and strengthening relationships between people, generations, nations and the ecosystems that sustain us.



## Tapu

**Through which a place, resource, or activity is marked as sacred and protected.**

Tapu shapes our behaviour and our relationship to our land, our ocean and our ancestors. It ensures the landscapes, species and ecosystems we love and depend on are respected and protected. It maintains ecological and social equilibrium and protects the Vā.

Tapu represents sophisticated ecological knowledge, accumulated across millennia of observation and lived experience. It encodes an understanding that ecosystems — and our Earth System at large — have limits and that there are thresholds that once crossed do not permit return.<sup>1</sup>

Tapu means respect for non-negotiable planetary boundaries and protecting — from the seabed to the sky — the web of life we belong to and the world entrusted to us by our ancestors. It reminds us that places, species and relationships are not resources to be exploited, but sacred responsibilities we are called to uphold and protect.



Activists from Pacific Island Students Fighting Climate Change (PISFCC), Pacific Islands Climate Action Network (PICAN) and Greenpeace Australia Pacific in Suva, Fiji, designing tapa and climate justice messaging ahead of the 2022 Pacific Islands Forum.  
© Greenpeace / The Roving Rovas

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Pacific Climate Action Network (2026) *Pacific Civil Society Statement: Port Vila II PSIDS Ministerial Dialogue — Fossil Fuel Transition and the Pacific Just Transition Agenda*.

# 1.5°C AND THE TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS

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## A survival line

By the 2000s, it was clear that warming beyond 1.5°C posed a profound threat to communities in the Pacific and worldwide.

Rising seas, destructive storms, extreme heat, shifting rainfall patterns, ocean acidification... no level of warming is 'safe'. Every fraction of a degree increases the risks to our food and water supply, our physical and mental wellbeing, our cultures, and our sovereignty.

Only when you have seen sacred land swallowed by the rising ocean and the graves of your ancestors washed out to sea, cared for elders suffering through extreme heat, watched the familiar rhythm of the seasons change before your eyes, or lied awake at night worried whether your children will still have a nation to call home, do you truly understand what is at stake. For some people and communities, 1.5°C is a point of no return.

*"We are not just fighting for our land.  
We are fighting to be who we are, where we are."*

— Pelenise Alofa, Kiribati

**In Paris, we held the line, and refused to negotiate away our futures. The result — a universal agreement to strive to limit warming to 1.5°C — became a lifeline for Pacific communities, and a gift to the entire world.**

Aerial view of Tuvalu — a beacon of climate leadership, and one of the most vulnerable nations on Earth to sea level rise and other impacts of climate change.

© Greenpeace / Bianca Vitale

## Pulse of the Earth

In the decade since Paris, the case for limiting warming to 1.5°C has only grown stronger.

Beyond 1.5°C, the risks grow from highly destructive to truly existential. How? The impacts of climate change do not merely increase in a linear fashion as the global temperature climbs. At a certain point we start to trigger far more severe and abrupt changes — such as the destabilisation of polar ice sheets, committing the world to much faster sea level rise, or the mass death of critical ecosystems we depend on for our sustenance.

Cross these ‘tipping points’ and we will set in motion changes at a pace to which it may be impossible to adapt, and which will continue to play out for millenia. We will have left behind the relatively stable climate of the last 11,000 years, in which today’s modern civilisations evolved, and which is the only Earth they have known. We will have tipped our Earth into a far more chaotic state, and our survival as a species will be by no means assured.

*“The salt spray of the Pacific Ocean is in my blood; I grew up watching the tides shape the shores of the islands of Tuvalu. But now, those tides are rising relentlessly, eroding lands, swallowing homes, decimating livelihoods and washing away the futures of communities.”*

— Dr Maina Talia, Minister for Home Affairs, Climate Change and Environment, Tuvalu<sup>2</sup>

We now know that even at today’s level of global warming, of just below 1.5°C, we may have crossed tipping points for the tropical coral reefs upon which millions of people in the Pacific and worldwide depend for their food and livelihoods, and for some of the world’s major ice sheets. At warming of beyond 1.5°C, crossing these and many other tipping points becomes not merely possible but a greater and greater certainty.

Let us make this urgent reality even clearer by speaking more about the ocean — the big blue beating heart of our planet. Like the blood in our veins, ocean currents distribute nutrients, oxygen and heat around the planet. Without this planetary pulse, life simply would not exist. As the world warms, these ocean currents are slowing. The planet’s pulse is becoming fainter. Ignore these planetary health warnings, and push our ocean currents beyond a tipping point, and that pulse may stop — unable to be resuscitated — with consequences for all life connected to the ocean, including our own. The ocean that raised us is now carrying a stark warning.

**We are already deep in the danger zone, and it is going to take all of us pulling in the same canoe to get back to safer shores.**

<sup>2</sup> Main Talia (2025) States now have a legal duty to prevent climate harm — justice is in reach. Nature. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-02752-y>

## What Tapu tells us about 1.5°C<sup>3</sup>



Humpback whale mother and calf in the Pacific Ocean.

© Jasmine Carey

Our communities have been observing our land and ocean for millenia. The logic of Tapu reaffirms what science now tells us — that living systems, whether a reef, a taro patch, or the global climate, have thresholds that shouldn't be crossed. When those limits are breached, the task is to allow the system to recover and return below that threshold as soon as possible, because once certain boundaries are crossed, the balance of the system can shift abruptly.

A reef that has been overfished must be placed under Tapu and allowed to regenerate. A forest may be placed under Tapu to protect certain species if signs of depletion or imbalance appear.

The more time spent above the threshold, the more damage accumulates and the harder it becomes to return to a stable, flourishing state. If pressure continues for too long, return may no longer be possible.

Today, we face a hard truth: The world's failure to heed the warnings about fossil fuels and the climate crisis means we are increasingly likely to temporarily overshoot the 1.5°C limit in the coming years. Some will say the goal is lost, or no longer relevant. Make no mistake — the 1.5°C goal remains a fundamental scientific, moral and legal imperative, and it matters now more than ever. Our task is now to minimise the duration and extent of any overshoot. In other words, to minimise the time above this dangerous threshold, and return warming to below 1.5°C as soon as possible.

**Ancestral knowledge and climate science have the same, urgent message: Respect the boundary, restore the balance of Vā, or risk a shift you cannot undo.**

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from: Pacific Climate Action Network (2026) *Pacific Civil Society Statement: Port Vila II PSIDS Ministerial Dialogue — Fossil Fuel Transition and the Pacific Just Transition Agenda*.

## Course correction

Our world is changing rapidly. Around the globe, solar panels now adorn millions of roofs and windfarms dot the landscape. Growth in renewable energy has outstripped all projections.

But here's the rub: despite remarkable progress with renewable energy, we have seen no slowdown in the burning of coal, oil and gas. Globally, our hunger for energy has been growing fast, and with it our consumption of fossil fuels, even as renewable energy has grown alongside. We are on track to be producing double the amount of fossil fuels in 2030 than would be consistent with limiting warming to 1.5°C.

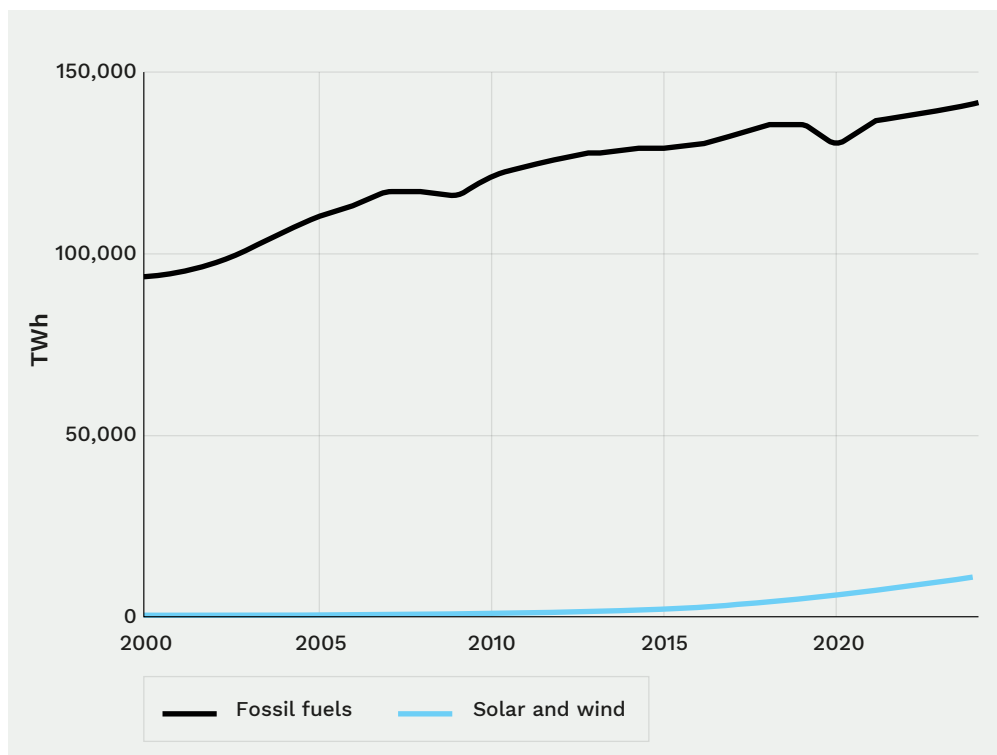
The lesson? We need, as a global community, to be far more proactive about transitioning away from fossil fuels. Merely betting on growing renewable energy is not going to save us. It is like trying to mop up a flooded floor while leaving the tap running — unless we turn down fossil fuel production, the flood only rises. In the decade since Paris, and in the three years since the world

agreed explicitly to transition away from fossil fuels, consumption has reached dangerous new highs, bringing us to the brink of all-out climate catastrophe.

We need roadmaps that help us remove the barriers to action, overcome technical obstacles, and help us finally break away from fossil fuels.

But we must also ask ourselves what we truly value. Today, so much growth in energy demand is coming not from meeting our basic needs, but from material excesses and overconsumption of energy among wealthy nations and corporations, or powering artificial intelligence and technologies that only separate us further from each other and the land and oceans that sustain us. Is this really the world we want?

**The Pacific has much to remind the world about what truly matters — family, connection, reciprocity, and living in harmony with our shared home.**



Primary energy consumption from fossil fuels compared to solar and wind 2000-2024.

Data from [Our World in Data](#).



Traditional paopao canoes in Kioa, Fiji, paddling out as part of a community welcome.

© Greenpeace / Andrew Quilty

## All in the same canoe

Together, we have the solutions, and it's time for those who are willing to work together to make the vision of a new world a reality. We will not be held back by those still clinging to the past.

In the coal port of Santa Marta, representatives of 57 countries including from the Pacific gathered with Indigenous peoples, civil society organisations, farmers, trade unions, scientists and thousands of others from around the world. Not to make political statements, but to start working in very concrete and practical terms on how we ensure a just transition away from fossil fuels, and to focus on the things we can do together that we can't do on our own.

We do not deny the challenges of this transition.

We know that for those major fossil fuel producers, the transition away from coal, oil and gas is a daunting task, and can only be solved by working together across borders — through deep cooperation between trading partners, and a focus on our common future.

In a fast changing world, some seek security by protecting only their own perceived interests, forgetting that the fate of one is bound to the fate of all. Others look for safety through cooperation. For us smaller nations, security has only ever come through banding together.

**The only way forward is to paddle together.**



Candlelit vigil on Rabi, Fiji for World Indigenous Peoples Day, in solidarity with the Banaban community and their history of forced displacement.

© Greenpeace / The Roving Rovas

## Law on our side

In 2019, a group of Pacific island students saw what so many others could not — that years of climate negotiations were drifting by, promises were being broken, and the world was failing to understand the brutal, lived realities of climate change in the Pacific. Politics was not going to save us. Law had to step in.

After years of grit and determination, what began in a classroom led in 2025 to an outcome of truly historic, world-shaping significance.

The International Court of Justice — the world's highest court — has made something unmistakably clear. The transition away from fossil fuels is not only a scientific and moral imperative — it is a legal one.

States have binding obligations to prevent climate harm, including from the production, licensing, and subsidising of fossil fuels. Those that choose to approve new coal, oil and gas projects must prove that these are compatible with limiting warming to 1.5°C — an impossible task in light of the science. Continuing to expand or support fossil fuel production may therefore constitute an internationally wrongful act.

Moreover, the Court clarified that those harmed by climate change may be entitled to reparations when other countries fail to act to prevent these harms.

**The era of climate accountability is upon us, and there is no going back. The law compels all of us to transition away from fossil fuels.**

# A BRIGHTER FUTURE: BUILDING SECURITY, SOVEREIGNTY AND RESILIENCE THROUGH THE TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS



The Community in Mele, Vanuatu, send a message ahead of the historic First International Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels, held in Santa Marta, Colombia in April 2026.  
© Greenpeace / Moemoana Schwenke

# The liberating power of renewable energy

2026 has brought the dangers and costs of fossil fuel dependence screaming to the fore. We have seen, in real time, the fundamental flaws of an energy system built on extraction, scarcity and competition.

Fossil fuels lead inevitably to conflict and instability, and leave communities hostage to volatile markets, expensive fuel imports and the whims of tyrants.

In the Pacific, we know this more than most. For some of our countries, fuel imports cost up to 25% of GDP. When prices spike, the fallout is severe. Soon after the illegal invasion of Iran, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands were forced to declare a state of emergency over concerns for fuel and power supply.

We are already facing the brunt of a global climate crisis. Now we face the compounding injustice of an energy crisis brought on by fossil fuel dependence. We did not create either of these crises, but are among the most exposed to both.

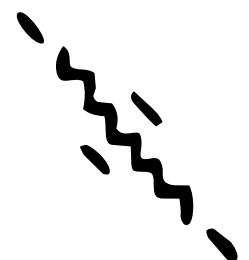
Renewable energy, on the other hand, offers the promise of affordable, reliable and homegrown electricity, and the path to a more peaceful world.

*“For Pacific Island Countries and Territories the energy transition is not solely an environmental ambition but an economic, sovereignty, security, affordability and survival imperative.”*

— *From the Outcome Statement of the Energy Ministers Meeting at the Sixth Pacific Regional Energy and Transport Ministers Meeting, May 2026*

Transitioning away from fossil fuels is not only fundamental to limiting warming to 1.5°C — a survival line for Pacific communities — but the path to greater independence, sovereignty, and resilience to whatever challenges the world may hold.

Working with ActionAid and other development partners, women in the remote village of Lawital in Tanna, Vanuatu, have brought reliable solar power to every home in the village as well as to community centres and other public spaces. Across the ocean in Kiribati, communities in remote Aranuka Island are meeting their urgent needs for clean water and reliable electricity through solar power. These are just two of the dozens of examples of how renewable energy is boosting health, security, local livelihoods and resilience for local communities.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Read more at: REnew Pacific (2025) *Clean energy powered by local leadership*. <https://renewpacific.com.au/clean-energy-powered-by-local-leadership/>



## A Fossil Fuel Free Pacific

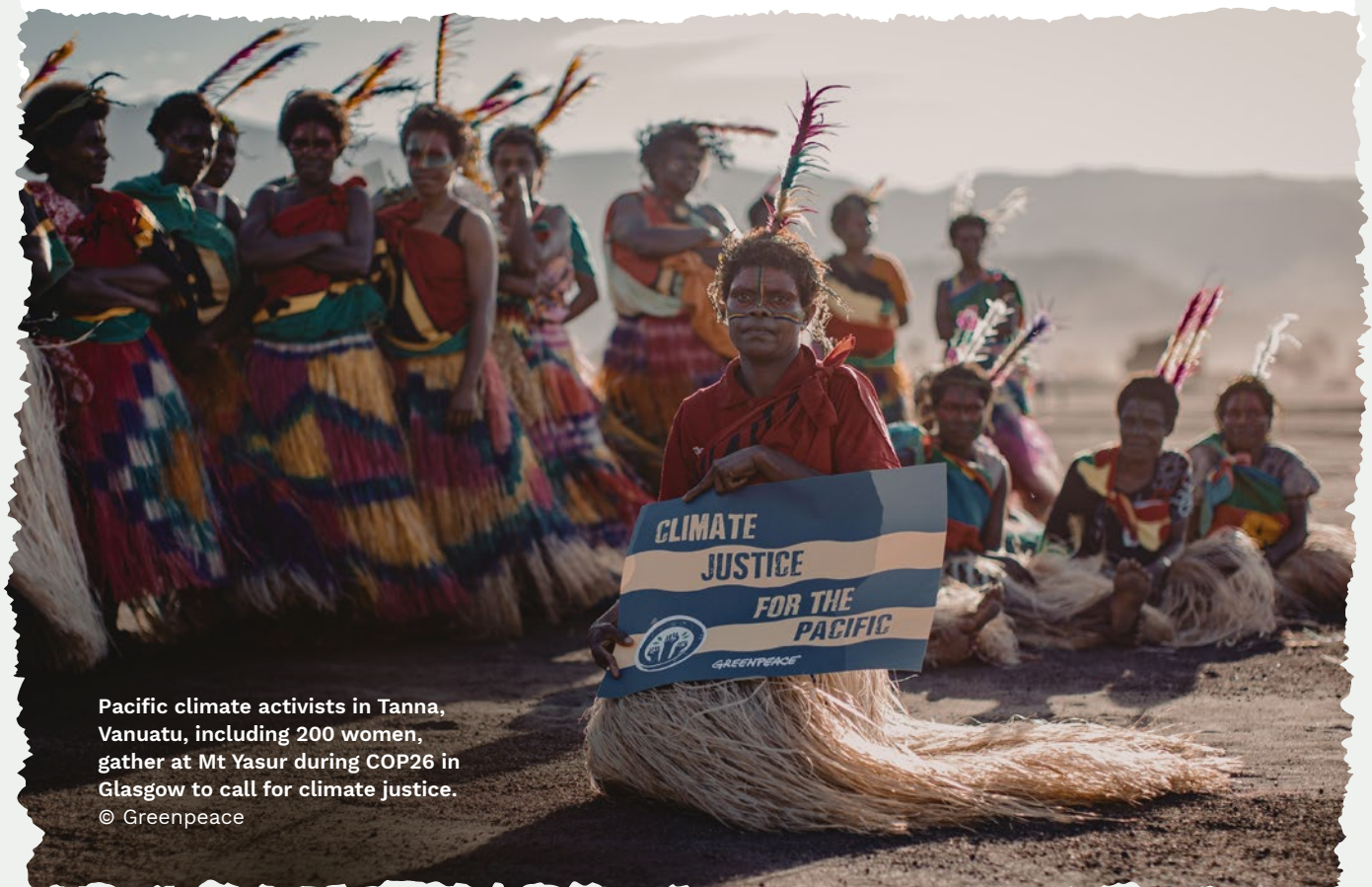
As the Pacific we chart our own course.

A fossil fuel free Pacific is a future where we no longer carry the weight of an extractive system we did not choose. It is a future where our communities, powered by the sun, wind and waves, own and control how their energy is produced, distributed and used. Where our livelihoods and food systems nurture our ecosystems rather than depleting them. It is a future shaped by Pacific values — by care, reciprocity and love for our land and ocean.

When it comes to climate change, we lead by example. A fossil fuel free Pacific will be more than the absence of fossil fuels. It will be a future of greater equality, sovereignty and dignity for all.

*“[We] Affirm our shared vision for a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific, in which our nations transition to resilient, just, renewable energy economies that honour indigenous and local knowledge and uplift communities.”*

— *The Tassiriki Call for a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific*



Pacific climate activists in Tanna, Vanuatu, including 200 women, gather at Mt Yasur during COP26 in Glasgow to call for climate justice.

© Greenpeace

## Justice in the transition: From extraction to sovereignty and equity

A just transition away from fossil fuels is about more than simply swapping coal, oil and gas for renewables. It is an opportunity to transform energy, transport, food, industrial and other systems so they are more secure and affordable, reduce inequality, protect ecosystems and shift power from elites and multi-billion dollar corporations to people. It is an opportunity to move from a system built on extraction and colonialism, to one built on regeneration and self-determination.

For the Pacific, the transition away from fossil fuels is part of a broader just transition — one that encompasses adaptation to climate change, addressing loss and damage, and meeting a range of development goals including increasing energy access and affordability. As for countries and communities the world over, the transition must be just, fair and inclusive — uplifting women, youth, Indigenous peoples, and any groups who may be vulnerable or at risk of marginalisation.

### Who pays?

Fossil fuels, by their very nature, have led to an immense concentration of power and wealth. Reserves of coal, oil and gas are concentrated in a few areas of the planet. They work only for centralised energy systems and drive a one-way flow of wealth from energy users to fossil fuel producers and energy companies. While some countries, corporations and individuals have grown spectacularly wealthy, the rest of us have borne the cost.

Renewable energy, on the other hand, allows any country or community to own how its energy is produced, distributed and used. Solar and wind power, coupled with batteries, are also helping bring electricity to those who previously lived without it, particularly in outer islands, with benefits for health, education and wellbeing. It is a great leveller that promises to redistribute power and enable us to build a better future, on our own terms.

However, the Pacific cannot realise these benefits on our own. The transition needs to be funded.

The Pacific contributes less than one three-thousandths of global greenhouse gas emissions yet pays a massively disproportionate price from the impacts of climate change.

We require the support of those countries who have accumulated wealth off the back of fossil fuels and the industries who for years have taken from us but not given back. Indeed, it is their legal responsibility to provide this support.

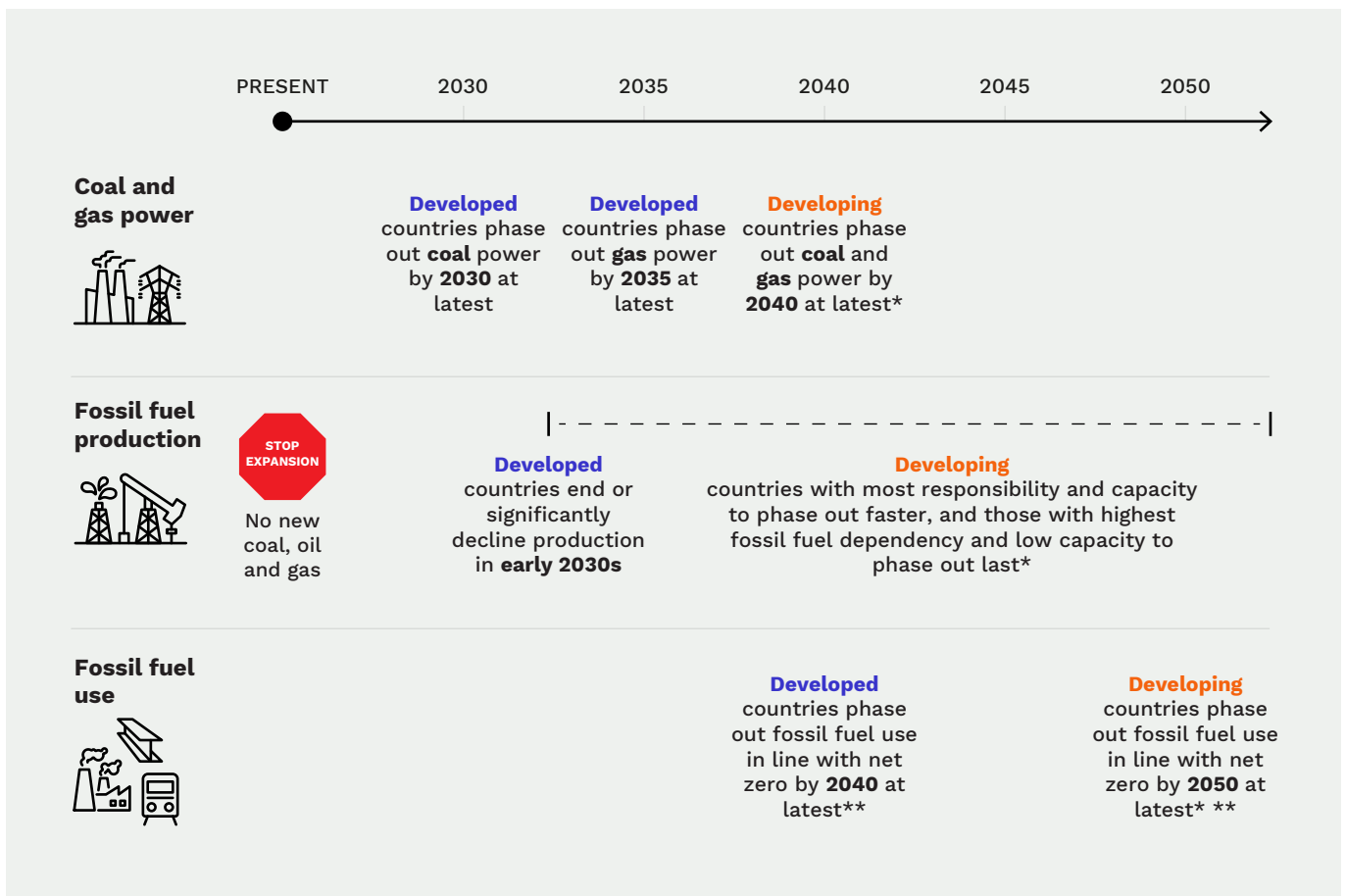
Funding must be both adequate in scale and accessible to the countries and communities that need it most. It must not create new forms of dependency. This means an increase in grants-based finance, direct budget support, and debt relief.

## Some must paddle faster

While we must paddle together, some countries must move faster and provide greater support to others.

The urgency of the crisis demands every country transition away from fossil fuels as rapidly as their capabilities and circumstances allow. The pace will vary between countries in accordance with their level of development, historical responsibility for emissions, economic strength, and availability of solutions. And will depend on the adequate flow of funding from wealthy nations.

Below are indicative timelines for developed and developing countries<sup>5</sup> for (a) the phase out of coal and gas from power generation, (b) the full phase out of fossil fuel production, and (c) the full phase out of fossil fuel use.<sup>6</sup> For all countries, the transition away from fossil fuels must begin with an immediate halt to expansion of fossil fuel production.



\* With international climate finance and other means of implementation support for countries that need it.

\*\* Net zero pathways must prioritise rapid, absolute emissions cuts, with use of removals at later stages restricted to genuinely hard to abate sectors (such as agriculture) and not used to delay the phase-out of fossil fuels.

5 The terms ‘developed’ and ‘developing’ countries have limitations given the diversity of characteristics between countries in these groupings. However, we have retained these terms for consistency with international frameworks including UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, where they remain in common use and have obligations and commitments associated with them.

6 Timeline diagram adapted from: Greenpeace (2026) *Policy Brief: A just transition away from fossil fuels*. <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-international-stateless/2026/04/e4040a7b-a-just-transition-away-from-fossil-fuels.pdf>

## Who is steering the canoe?

The question of who designs solutions and who shapes decisions is at the heart of whether the transition will be just, or merely prolong the colonialism of the fossil fuel era.

The voyage to a fossil fuel free Pacific will be steered by Pacific people themselves — by our governments, communities, traditional leaders, youth, women’s movements, scientists and civil society, and guided by Pacific knowledge and values.

These are the navigators who have carried the region’s wisdom, clarity and lived experience into global forums, shaping the way the world sees the climate crisis.

Locally-led solutions ensure that communities can build on their strengths and ensure their needs are met, and that decisions are informed by the sophisticated ecological knowledge that has enabled communities to flourish in harmony with their land and ocean for countless generations.



Delegates at the Kioa Climate Emergency Declaration meeting in Fiji, advancing regional dialogue on climate issues and Pacific-led solutions. © Greenpeace / The Roving Rovas

## Avoiding the undertows

Today we face new challenges from those determined to prolong the life of fossil fuels and the extractivism that plunders our land, ocean and communities.

Time and again we find fossil fuel companies pushing false solutions including offsets and carbon capture and storage.

In digging and burning fossil fuels, we have released into our atmosphere and ocean, over a matter of decades, an amount of carbon that had taken thousands upon thousands of years to slowly accumulate in the Earth's crust. We are profoundly altering the Earth's carbon cycle, and to suggest this can be balanced out through planting trees or restoring coastal wetlands — as important as these activities may be — is to wilfully misrepresent the way our planet works. Even with efforts to 'offset', the carbon released through the burning of fossil fuels will continue cycling between land-based ecosystems, the upper ocean and the atmosphere, where it contributes to the thickening blanket of greenhouse gases that is heating our planet.

Meanwhile, efforts at carbon capture and storage have wasted billions that could have been spent on transitioning away from fossil fuels, and delivered almost nothing.

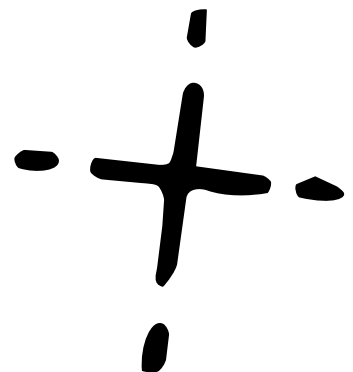
The message is simple — we must cut emissions at the source. We must leave coal, oil and gas in the ground.

We are also told we must mine the sea bed for minerals needed for the world's clean energy and industrial transformation. To do so would only repeat, on the ocean floor, the same cycle of destruction, with the Pacific once again bearing the cost. Science tells us we can transform the world's energy system without opening up this new frontier of extraction. A just transition away from fossil fuels must include a permanent ban on deep sea mining.

## One system, many harms: Fossil fuels and plastics

As the Pacific, we see the system as a whole. We cannot separate the drivers of fossil fuel production from the forces that have choked our ocean with plastic or left us living with the poisonous legacy of nuclear testing. Liberation from one requires liberation from all.

The fossil fuel industry provides the feedstock for plastics production. As use of fossil fuels for energy declines, we risk plastics becoming an enabler of ongoing fossil fuel production, prolonging the industry and continuing to pollute our ocean. Indeed, plastics have become a survival strategy for the fossil fuel industry. The world needs a strong, legally binding plastics treaty — one focussed on reducing plastic production, not just managing waste. As the world works to break the shackle of fossil fuel energy, it must also wean itself off plastic. For the sake of our ocean, and to break free from the extractive economy that poisons our bodies and our ocean and takes without return.





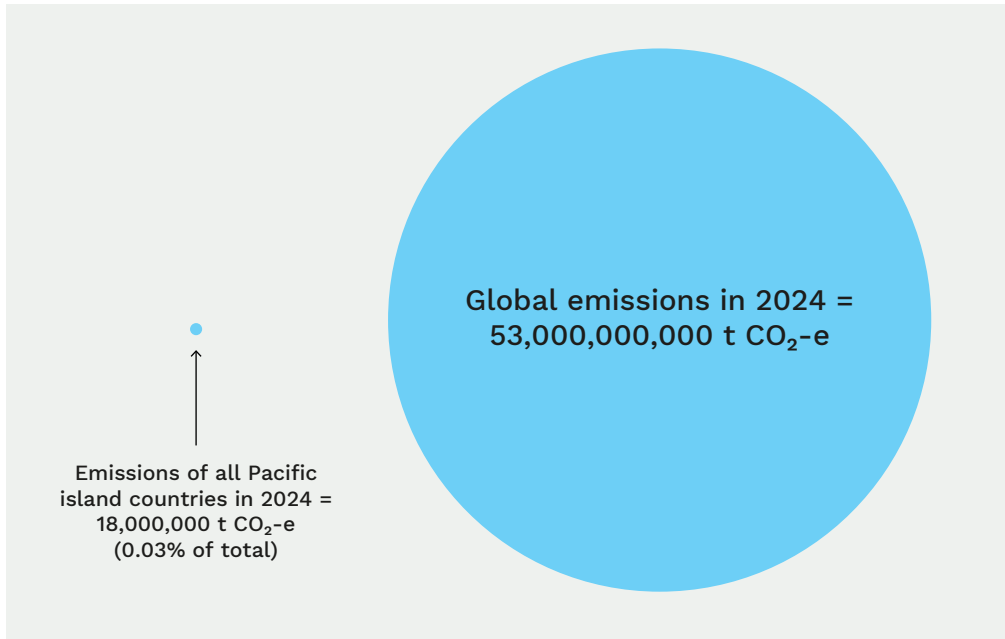
8 year old Tokabwebwe Teinaura from the village of Te O Ni Beeki, Tarawa, Kiribati, helping local fishermen carry their catch ashore. Just like his father and grandfather, Tokabwebwe Teinaura wants to be fisherman when he grows older.

© Greenpeace / Christian Åslund

# BY THE NUMBERS

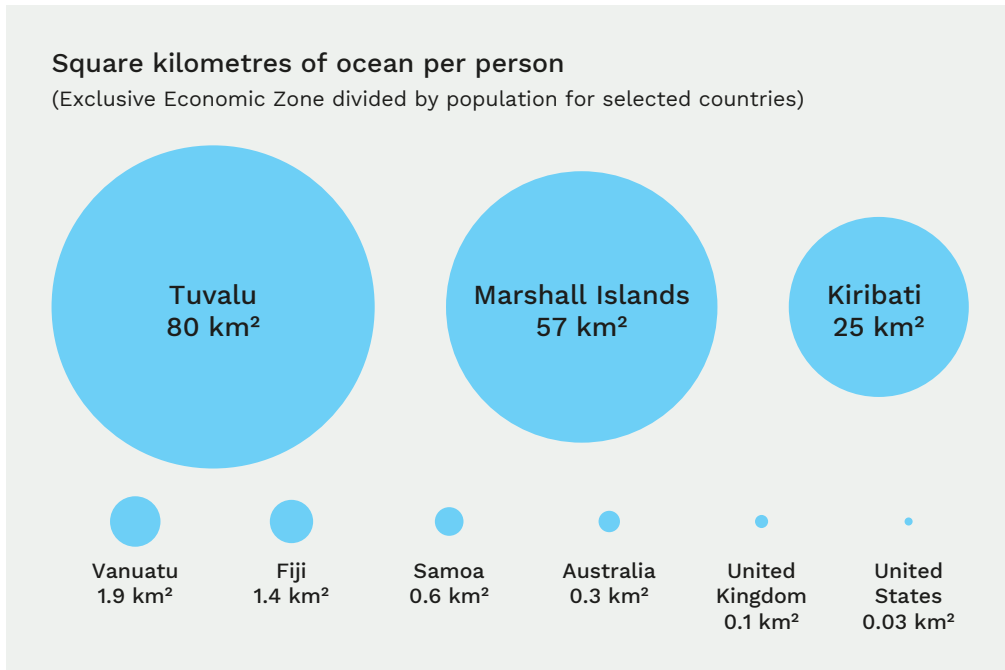
## The Pacific contributes less than one three-thousandths of global greenhouse gas emissions

Emissions data from [EDGAR](#).

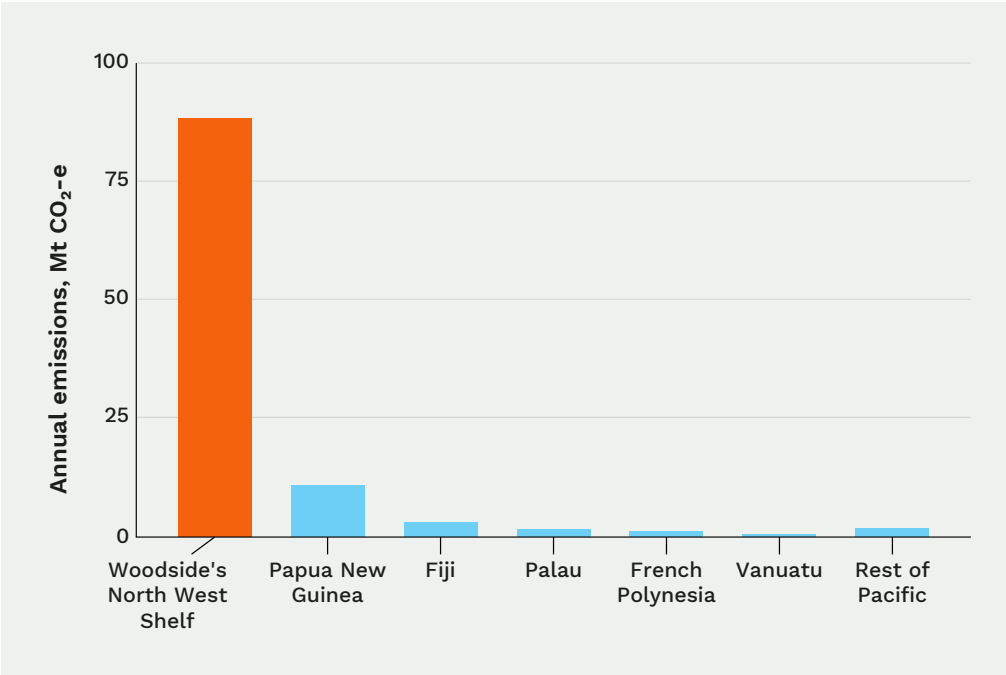


## Large Ocean States: Pacific islanders care for vast areas of the world's ocean

Data on EEZs from [Flanders Marine Institute](#), population data from [Worldometer](#).

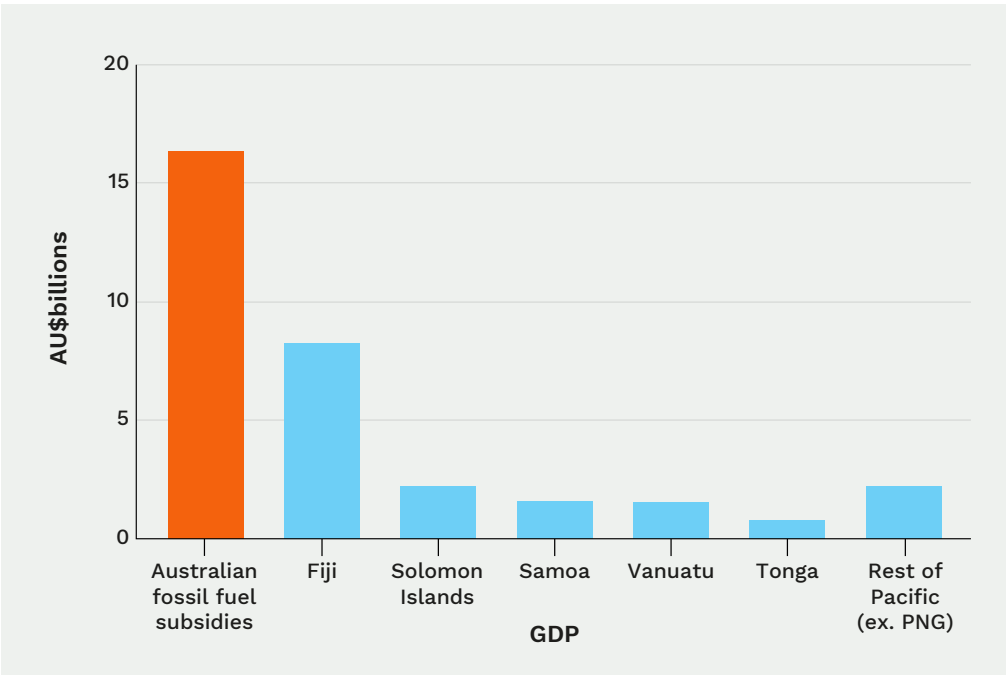


**Projected annual emissions from Australia’s largest gas project are nearly five times those of all Pacific island countries combined**




Annual emissions from the North West Shelf as reported in [The Guardian](#), country emissions data from [EDGAR](#).

**The value of Australia’s fossil fuel subsidies is more than the GDP of all Pacific island countries combined, excluding Papua New Guinea**



Estimate of fossil fuel subsidies in Australia from [The Australian Institute](#), GDP data from [World Bank](#).

 Redirecting Australian fossil fuel subsidies would provide more than enough money to repower the Pacific with renewable energy.

# THE COURSE AHEAD



Traditional voyager and navigator Alson 'Tuak' Kelen in Majuro, Marshall Islands, preserving Marshallese voyaging culture and knowledge.  
© Greenpeace / Bianca Vitale

## Wayfinding the future

*Like our great ocean, the way to a future free from fossil fuels has many currents.*

*There is the Paris Agreement, the great oceanic current that carries us all slowly on our grand voyage together. There are the smaller, swifter currents that those nimble enough and willing to pull harder can catch to get ahead — the regional collaborations, the 'coalitions of the willing'..*

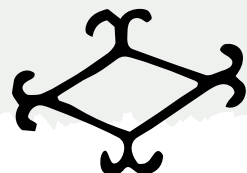
*Some choose to paddle against the currents, but ultimately will be carried along, arriving later, having missed the opportunity to shape the course.*

*The voyage can be fraught and frustrating. Too often we become trapped in eddies, frantically shouting on the deck but going only in circles. And there are the undertows, to be avoided at all costs — the false solutions that will drag us under.*

*As Pacific islanders we are master navigators. Our canoes were always nimbler than the slow, cumbersome vessels of our colonisers.*

*Today we are wayfinding toward a better future.*

*And we invite you to join us.*



## Where the currents converge

Moments of crisis can lead to positive transformation, but only if countries act together. Multilateral cooperation is more important now than ever before.

In a simpler time, we had only the UN climate negotiations to guide us on our voyage.

Today, out of necessity, has come a more complex ecosystem of processes and coalitions. Each of these matters — none is sufficient on its own, none works against the other, and each has a role in driving the change we urgently need.

### UN climate negotiations

The **Paris Agreement**, its underlying Convention, and the ongoing process of negotiations on its implementation, provide legitimacy, universality and accountability. They offer the only forums where every country has a seat at the table. They provide the legally binding framework for our common but differentiated responsibilities, and the obligation of advanced economies, whose wealth was built off the back of fossil fuels, to support the majority world in transitioning to renewable energy, adapting to the impacts of climate change, and addressing loss and damage from climate change.

But we now know that this is not enough. The greatest strength of this all-in process is also its weakness. The process of consensus decision-making provides legitimacy and durability, but also puts a brake on ambition. At best, it offers the lowest common denominator. At worst, it allows the process to be held hostage by one or more regressive forces.

### The COP30 Presidency's roadmap away from fossil fuels

When COP30, despite positive momentum, failed to adopt a consensus decision to develop a **roadmap on transitioning away from fossil fuels**, Brazilian COP30 President André Corrêa do Lago launched a voluntary Presidency-led process to develop the roadmap, with engagement and input from willing countries and non-state actors.

After the close of COP30, André Corrêa do Lago acknowledged the limitations of the consensus-based process of the UN climate negotiations, and that additional, parallel and complementary processes are required to ensure the more rapid implementation of commitments — including the transition away from fossil fuels.

*“To keep pace with global warming, multilateralism must learn to operate at more than one institutional speed.”*

— André Corrêa do Lago, January 2026

This process has opened space for dialogue, outside the heat of COP negotiations, and with a focus on identifying and overcoming barriers to the transition. While it is not a legally binding process, it may help build momentum towards COP31, and surface ways to formally operationalise the COP28 decision to transition away from fossil fuels. It may be adopted through a COP decision and/or considered in the second Global Stocktake. It may also help guide countries in developing their own national roadmaps away from fossil fuels (see below).

## The Santa Marta conference and its follow-up in the Pacific

Meanwhile, those countries who are ready to forge ahead with the transition must work rigorously together to problem-solve and support each other. The First Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels was a first step in building a powerful coalition of governments, Indigenous peoples, civil society organisations, scientists and others who are determined to get on with the job of transitioning away from fossil fuels and will not be held back.

The second conference, to be held in Tuvalu in 2027, will be an even more concrete step in deepening cooperation and action across regions, and ensuring that voices from the frontlines are shaping solutions.

## National Roadmaps

A global roadmap may help to guide each country's efforts, but ultimately we must each chart out our own course based on our unique strengths, needs and capabilities. For a wealthy fossil fuel producing nation like Australia, the course looks very different from that of a large ocean state like Vanuatu.

Each country must ensure its plans for transitioning away from fossil fuels align with the global action required to limit warming to 1.5°C, recognising that under the Paris Agreement, our climate commitments must reflect our "highest possible ambition". Each will need to identify the specific barriers they may face, and the options for transitioning their energy, food, transport and industrial systems. Each will need to identify the investment required, and what will need to come through international finance. And all countries will need to understand the measures needed to ensure their citizens' rights are protected and that their communities are able to shape their own futures with no one left behind.

## Regional cooperation

None of us can transition in isolation. Our economies are linked through supply chains, development partnerships, trade and shared vulnerabilities. But for some countries, their energy and economic futures are particularly intertwined with one another.

An exporter of coal, oil or gas may face pressure from its buyers to keep producing, or fear losing revenue if it winds back production faster than the market demands. Bilateral or regional partnerships among buyers and sellers can help these countries decarbonise together — managing the shift in a predictable, mutually supportive way. This may involve moving longstanding trade relationships away from fossil fuels towards trade in clean energy, products and services. It may also mean working with partners to wind down those legacy trading relationships as each country moves towards greater economic and energy independence.

## Fossil Fuel Treaty

The Fossil Fuel Treaty initiative proposes a new multilateral instrument that would complement the Paris Agreement and fill a gap in the formal global climate regime by establishing binding commitments on fossil fuel supply.

The Treaty would commit countries to ending the expansion of fossil fuel production and to a managed, phase-out of existing projects in line with science and each country's capabilities and circumstances. It would ensure a just transition for countries, communities and workers, including through international finance, debt relief, and reform of trade and fiscal arrangements that entrench fossil fuel dependence.

Vanuatu was the first country in the world to support a Fossil Fuel Treaty, followed shortly by Tuvalu. More Pacific island countries have since added their support.



Traditional weaving in Vanuatu using natural pandanus fibres.  
© Greenpeace / Island Roots

## The Courts

Lastly, when governments or corporations come up short, or worse actively work to undermine the transition, we have the law on our side. Failing to transition away from fossil fuels is not merely a failure of policy, courage and the ability to imagine a better future — it can be a breach of legal duty.

Following the landmark ruling by the International Court of Justice, expect many more countries and communities to look to the courts to accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels and to hold those who harm us accountable.



**From Bonn to Antalya and beyond, the growing coalition of committed nations will forge ahead against autocrats and the death throes of the fossil fuel industry. We will build on the positive momentum from Santa Marta as we voyage together towards the Second Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Tuvalu in 2027.**

**We will build a fossil fuel free Pacific, shaped by Pacific values. We will continue to be the voice of science, ambition and conscience in UN climate negotiations, and we will seek justice through the full implementation of the landmark ruling from the International Court of Justice.**





Aftermath of a severe cyclone and landslide in Vanuatu, where extreme weather has uprooted trees and reshaped the landscape.  
© Greenpeace / Pedro Armestre

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1.5°C as our guiding star

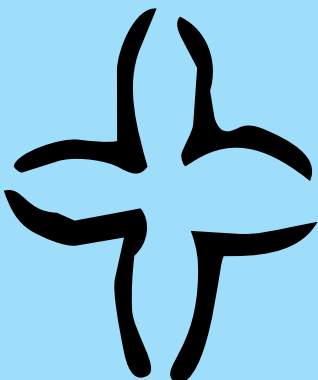
- The transition away from fossil fuels must be anchored to the fundamental scientific, moral and legal imperative of limiting warming to 1.5°C. This means timelines, targets and trajectories that **minimise the duration and extent of any overshoot**, and return the long-term average temperature rise to 1.5°C as soon as possible.

## Strengthening global cooperation

- The COP31 Presidency of Negotiations, to be held by Australia, must be a **meaningful partnership with the Pacific**. This means elevating the voices of our leaders, backing Pacific-led solutions, and maximising the opportunity of the Pacific pre-COP to ensure the 1.5°C imperative and the transition away from fossil fuels are central to the agenda at COP31 in Antalya.
- COP31 must **operationalise and accelerate the commitment to transition away from fossil fuels**, building on the momentum from COP30 and the Santa Marta conference.
- Alongside and complementary to the UN climate negotiations, willing countries should work to **accelerate implementation through parallel initiatives** such as the Brazilian COP30 Presidency-led roadmap, the follow-up to the Santa Marta conference, bilateral and regional collaborations, and implementation of the advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice.

## National roadmaps that promote justice

- All governments should develop national roadmaps for a just transition away from fossil fuels, aligned with their **fair share of the global action** needed to limit warming to 1.5°C, and identify needs for international support.
- National roadmaps should include an immediate commitment to **no new fossil fuel expansion**, rule out false solutions, set timelines to **phase out production and consumption** — with developed countries moving fastest — and maximising the opportunities for **increasing energy sovereignty, access and security**.



## From extraction to regeneration

- The transition away from fossil fuels must also aim to **reduce future energy use and demand for transition minerals**. This means focussing on energy efficiency, a return to regenerative approaches, and reorienting our energy, transport, food systems and built environments away from material excesses and over-consumption, aligning instead with the values, wellbeing and long-term interests of our communities.
- The transition must not lead to new industries that harm our environment and communities, and that repeat and compound the injustices of past extractive models. In particular, governments should put a **permanent ban on deep sea mining**.

## Funding

- Developed countries must provide **adequate and accessible finance** for transitioning away from fossil fuels, adapting to the impacts of climate change, and addressing loss and damage. This should include an increase in grants and direct budget support, be accompanied by **debt relief**, and be enabled through **taxing polluters** and **ending fossil fuel subsidies**.



Pacific climate activists in Tanna, Vanuatu with a message for delegates at COP26 in Glasgow.  
© Greenpeace

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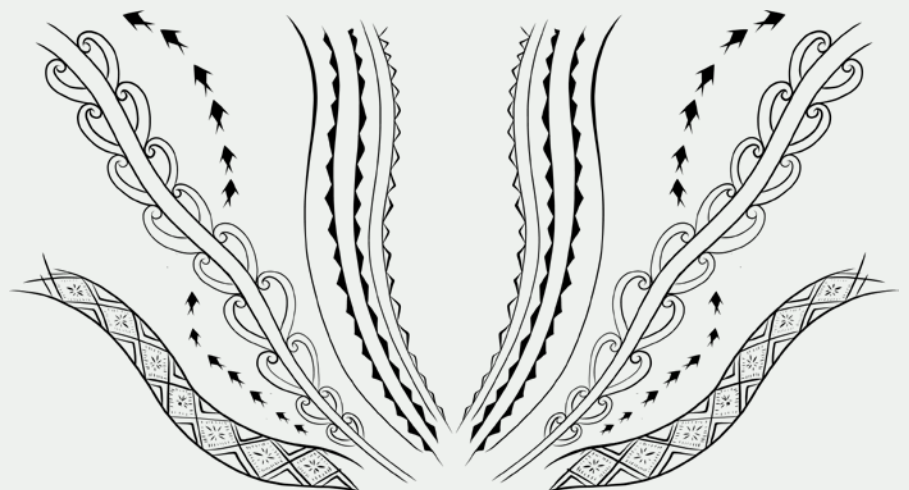
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In Tuvalu, a young boy overlooks the Pacific Ocean, reflecting the strength, culture and identity of Pacific communities.

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