**Taking Action on Climate Change**

Rachel Hay

**Individual actions**

At ‘Action for Climate: How can lutruwita/Tasmania be a real leader?’ we heard how climate change will, and is already, having disastrous effects on our planet. I know when you hear these facts it can make you feel upset at the losses that will occur, and powerless to stop them. But I urge you to follow in the example of young people and maintain your hope through individual and collective action to mitigate the worst effects of climate change. I’m going to run you through some things that you can do below.

* **Divest from fossil fuels**

Market Forces have a complied a long list of [banks](https://www.marketforces.org.au/info/compare-bank-table/) and [superannuation](https://www.marketforces.org.au/superfunds/) funds which don’t invest in fossil fuels that you can move your money to. When you close your old account, don’t forget to tell your financial institution that you’re moving away from them until they take climate action seriously!

* **Electrify your home**

Take steps to ensure that your home runs on renewable energy. This could be done by transitioning away from gas heating, cooking and hot water systems. You can also instal solar panels in your home.

* **Switch to an electric vehicle**

There are some incentives to help you switch to an electric vehicle, as the Tasmanian Government has waived the stamp duty on electric vehicles purchases. The [Good Car Company](https://www.goodcar.co/) is a really good option for electric vehicle purchasers looking for a cheaper vehicle.

* **Reduce your carbon footprint while travelling**

For those who can’t afford an electric vehicle just yet, I’d encourage you to ride, walk and catch the bus more. Reducing the amount of times you fly is another good way to reduce emissions.

But a lot of us still have to travel using fossil-fuel-centric methods. You can offset the carbon emissions you put into the atmosphere by buying carbon reductions elsewhere. If you give money to companies such as [Greenfleet](https://www.greenfleet.com.au/), they’ll plant trees which will reduce the carbon in the atmosphere. But beware, carbon offsets are unreliable – the forests which are planted to soak up our carbon can become a carbon emitter if they are impacted by bushfire, for example. In other words, offsets are not a get out of jail free card and the best way to prevent climate change is to reduce our emissions.

* **Buy local**, **low-emission and ethical**

The [Farm Gate Market](https://farmgatemarket.com.au/) in Hobart is a great example of where you can buy local food with low carbon mileage. Reducing meat and dairy consumption is another great way that you can reduce the carbon intensity of your food.

In terms of clothes, there are now great local markets like the [Reloved Market](https://re-lovedmarket.com/) where you can purchase second-hand clothes. There’s also plenty of op-shops and second-hand boutiques across Hobart. You can check how sustainable fashion brands are on websites such as [Good on You](https://goodonyou.eco/).

* **Educate yourself and the people you know**

Keeping up on the news regarding climate change from independent and trusted news sources can help inform yourself – and those around you – about climate change.

**Collective actions**

Above are some really easy and effective ways to reduce your personal carbon footprint. But the idea of individual carbon footprints was actually coined in the early 2000s by BP, as a way to shift the blame for the creation of carbon emissions from the major emitters to individuals. So the most important individual thing that we can do is to become a part of a group of people, who collectively have the power to push our governments and businesses to act.

* **Join a local group**

There’s now climate action groups for every age, lifestyle, context and your skills set. You might also like to band together with your co-workers to lobby your workplace to make more sustainable choices, such as divesting from fossil fuels or changing the company car to an electric vehicle.

* **Donate**

Also consider donating to groups. When donating, first consider how you can also support First Nations, people of colour and young people. Climate for Change has also made a [list of climate organisations](https://www.climateforchange.org.au/climate_movement), most of whom advocate for policy changes for climate change on the national level.

* **Contact your politicians**

You can also become a part of the collective demanding climate action by exercising your rights as a citizen. You can write, phone or visit your [federal](https://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Parliamentarian_Search_Results?q=&sta=TAS), state [lower house](https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/ha/pdf/halists.pdf) and [upper house](https://www.parliament.tas.gov.au/lc/pdf/LCLists.pdf) politicians and express your concerns about climate change, and the need for mitigating and adapting to climate change through better government policies.

* **Make a submission to the Climate Change Act public consultation**

And last but not least, the public has a really important opportunity to show the Tasmanian Government that they want action on climate change by [making a submission](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/climatechange/Climate_Change_Priorities/amending_tasmanias_climate_change_legislation) to the public consultation on the Draft Bill to amend Tasmania’s Climate Change Act. Climate Tasmania and the Tasmanian Independent Science Council’s have developed a [paper](http://www.tassciencecouncil.org/events) that you can draw from when doing so.

If you have any questions please get in contact with us at [info@tassciencecouncil.org](mailto:info@tassciencecouncil.org).