

Intervention on Climate Change Impacts in the Torres Strait, To be delivered on Friday 28 June at

Plenary Session: Women's Rights and Climate Change 4pm-6pm

June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner,

Australian Human Rights Commission

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I am Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner. I make this statement on behalf of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Australia's 'A status' NHRI.'

I want to acknowledge the OHCHR for its report and for highlighting some of the adverse effects of climate change on Indigenous women.

I would also like to acknowledge the Australian Government for supporting my Wiyi Yani U Thangani project which is enabling Indigenous women and girls to have their voices heard at the national level for the first time in 33 years.

Our visit to the Torres Strait allowed us to hear about the unique set of strengths and challenges facing Torres Strait Islander women and their communities.

A very grave concern to the women of the Island of Saibai is the issue of climate change and rising sea levels.

Women fear that within their lifetimes they may need to relocate, to leave the place of their birth and the resting place of countless generations that have gone before them.

They fear that the connection to their traditional lands will be severed, not only for them but for generations yet to come.

Full and equal participation and leadership of Indigenous women in decision-making, planning and implementation of climate action is essential.

At the International level, we have the tools to act on climate change - they lie in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement.

We need action, ambition and political will. I urge leaders to rise to this challenge at the Climate Action Summit in September this year.

Thank you.