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| Brimbank City Council |
| How Do We Talk About Climate Change? |
| The Psychology of Environmental Messaging |
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| **Sam Keast** |
| **7/14/2016** |

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| Conveying the need for action on climate change continues to be a challenge for environmental communicators. It is both the diversity of communities and the particular psychological features of climate change that makes environmental messaging so challenging. For climate change communicators the challenge is to understand the issue through a social lens. How do people relate to climate change? What are the shared beliefs and values of community groups around climate change? How do the social norms within groups connect people and drive action or behavior change? The objective of effective environmental messaging is to move people to a level of concern which promotes positive action. The research presented here strongly supports that even broadly using audience segmentation to identify groups, and tailoring the messaging accordingly, can have a positive impact on the efficacy of environmental messaging. |

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How Do We Communicate The Message of Climate Change and Adaptation?

# Introduction

Conveying the need for action on climate change continues to be a challenge for environmental communicators. It is the complexity of establishing climate change communications that not only inform people and communities of the issue and its impacts, but also influence behaviour change, identify and promote enduring local solutions, and bolster community support for local government action. Given their existing connections to communities, local governments are uniquely placed to influence the how communities engage with climate change and adaptation information.

It is both the diversity of communities and the particular psychological features of climate change that makes environmental messaging so challenging. This report outlines some of the unique features of climate change and highlights how people relate to climate change information. This report also considers some of the ways in which local government might think about identifying and communicating with their residents and community groups.

While science and scientists have been a central element of climate change communication, there is evidence to suggest that knowledge alone will not motivate action. [[1]](#footnote-1) It has been well recognised in studies of the general population that simply presenting the scientific evidence for climate change is insufficient to increase engagement or overcome scepticism. [[2]](#footnote-2)

This science driven aspect of the climate change debate also assumes that science is a central interest to people and community groups, which it is not, and can serve to confuse or even alienate people from relating to it as an issue. Recent research has identified that councils who stood out in adaptation planning were those who recognise the more psychological elements of climate change such as the social and emotional vulnerabilities of communities. [[3]](#footnote-3)

For climate change communicators the challenge is to understand the issue through a social lens. [[4]](#footnote-4) That is, how do we put people first in terms of climate change? How do people relate to climate change? What are the shared beliefs and values of community groups around climate change? How do the social norms within groups connect people and drive action or behaviour change?

‘Utilise the power of human connection…If you join with others to change your city or the laws or your land, then it won’t just be the issue that keeps you going, it will be the relationship with those in your group’ [[5]](#footnote-5)

A more social perspective prompts communicators to profile groups and tailor messages that ‘speak’ to those groups in a way that is meaningful to them, and connects to their worldviews. It also promotes the notion of a relationship in which sharing of information, allowing for stories, promoting sustainable ways of living are essential to enact changes. All of these have been identified as ways to enhance climate change communications. [[6]](#footnote-6)

# The Psychology of Climate Change Communication

## Psychological Distance

It has been noted that climate change has a number of unique psychological characteristics; [[7]](#footnote-7) Characteristics that when presented to people in certain ways can result in psychological distancing. Psychological distance is the subjective experience that something is close or far away from the self. It can be thought of as four types of distance: It is the distance between, yourself and other people (social distance), the present and the future (temporal distance), your physical location and faraway places (spatial distance), or imagining something and experiencing it (experiential distance). We also know that when information or events are perceived to have less psychological distance, it tends to be perceived in more concrete terms, whereas when there is greater psychological distance, it tends to be construed more abstractly. [[8]](#footnote-8) And if one of the reasons for psychological distancing is to manage or mitigate a sense of risk or threat, we can perhaps more clearly see why people deny the reality of climate change. It is not necessarily a lack of education, or a lack of knowledge, but it may be a way for people to manage the sense of risk or threat that climate change can speak of.

This not to say that communicators should never mention the dangers of climate change, but rather to be aware of the characteristics inherent in the issue of climate change that may increase the likelihood that people may need to deploy defensive mechanisms such as psychological distance. Some of those characteristics are:

**Invisible causes** – a number of the environmental elements of climate change are not necessarily directly observable and this ‘invisibility’ creates a lack of immediacy and a sense that there are no direct or immediate implications for heath.

**Distant impacts** – related to invisible causes, this dimension suggests that because the actual signs of significant climate change largely occur away from where people live (e.g. the Artic, coral reefs), people are able to create a psychological distance between what they experience day-to-day and the reality of climate change.

“Psychological research shows that direct experience and immediate demands trump vicarious experiences or abstract data almost every time. It is for this reason that a particularly cold winter can undermine the conviction in lay people that global warming is happening” [[9]](#footnote-9)

**Delayed or absent gratification for taking action** – given the incremental, cumulative nature of climate change, it means there can be a perceived lag between action and positive change. This can make it difficult for people to see the benefit of undertaking mitigating action.

**Complexity and uncertainty** – It can be hard for people to grasp the full scientific complexity of climate change and is therefore often placed in the too-hard basket (particularly in the face of more pressing day-to-day issues).

Research shows that people are more likely to be willing to act on climate change if they think that it will impact them, or people they care about and who are similar to them, in the immediate future. [[10]](#footnote-10) Often this is interpreted as the need to simply localise climate change information, however this can easily also trigger denial, “Well it’s not happening in my area”. [[11]](#footnote-11) An important distinction here is that simply providing local information doesn’t necessarily bring the issue closer to people’s lives. Finding local information that is personally important, or connects to people they care about or who are similar to them, reduces the need for defence mechanisms like psychological distancing.

Some key elements that can help communicators localise climate change information without triggering defence mechanisms have been identified as: [[12]](#footnote-12)

1. **Communicate Solutions** - describe clear, plausible and meaningful actions that people can take in response to climate risks –as well as acceptable, feasible and effective solutions to the overall problems depicted
2. **Don’t over simplify or trivialise people’s position** – For example, by asserting that people simply don’t know enough about climate change disregards how they see themselves in relation to the issue, and reduces their worldview to one of lack of knowledge which ultimately alienates people from the information. One campaign sought to address this by asking people, ‘What do you love that is threatened by climate change?’ [[13]](#footnote-13)
3. **Use the right images –** There is already evidence to support the use of image in climate change communication, however there is a need to consider what images are used. Successful images tell a multi-layered story, are not clichéd, tell a powerful localised story, but are also coupled with images of solutions (see Appendix A for examples of campaigns).
4. **Tell human stories -** Stories are extremely powerful, and a simple, coherent story can easily trump a complex, scientific jargon filled report. The stories told should be human stories, and ones that convey meaningful specific actions that the individual /community can take. Communicators will need to understand this if they are going to compete with climate denial narratives.

## The Power of Stories / Narratives

‘Stories are both ways for us to transmit our goals and actions and to be inspired by the goals and actions of others’ [[14]](#footnote-14)

Stories have two key elements which may be worthwhile considering when developing environmental messaging strategies. Firstly, is that stories are easily passed on; people naturally tell them and listen to them. In fact, people are quite psychologically compelled by them. Secondly is that they distinctly relate to day-to-day lives; stories aren’t an abstraction of information. Generally they relate to actual an event which means they become an important way in which people can hear, on a practical, personal level, what living differently might be like. Hearing the story of how somebody lives more sustainably provides a practical, evidenced picture of what that change might look and feel like, which becomes powerful source of information for change. Also because stories have an emotive element; they are more likely to hook people in, and they increase the chance of information being remembered [[15]](#footnote-15)

Another useful element of stories is that generally tell-able stories are ones with a pro-social foundation. This means, that the messages in stories tends to stir emotions that direct people toward a common good. An added benefit of pro-social stories is that people are also more likely to pass them on. This speaks to the challenge outlined from the outset, and that is to try and locate climate change within personal relations. One of the major factors that influence people’s attitudes and behaviour is contact with others and the conversations that are shared. [[16]](#footnote-16)

Research looking at why narratives might be particularly effective in linking climate change science to environmental policy found that narratives may hold potential for bolstering the feedback between climate change data and policy, and motivating regional responses to other environmental problems. [[17]](#footnote-17)

‘Narratives have the power to raise and personalize the perceived costs of inaction’ [[18]](#footnote-18)

## Fearful Communication

People will interpret the emotional message in climate change communication and process it accordingly. Central to the issue of climate change is threat, and therefore how people process threat is an important consideration in environmental messaging. When faced with threating information that gives rise to fear, most often people will try and discount it, or reframe it in a way that serves to dispel the negative feelings around threatening information.

Fearful communications are seen as being much more complex, harder to target, and difficult to ensure that fear will in fact engender action in individuals or communities. Research suggests that fear based communication is likely to be useful to deliver new information with some seriousness, however, continually drawing attention to the threatening aspects can have the opposing effect of increasing people’s sense of disconnect from and helplessness about the issue. [[19]](#footnote-19)

‘The continued use of fear messages can lead to one of two psychological functions. The first is to control the external danger, the second to control the internal fear’ [[20]](#footnote-20)

If the external danger, (i.e. the impacts of climate change), is perceived as uncontrollable, then individuals will move to control their internal fear. This is usually achieved via: denial of the issue, apathy, and psychological distancing, all of which represent barriers to meaningful engagement with climate change information [[21]](#footnote-21)

Often fear is employed as a communications device to grab people’s attention, and this is one of the reasons it widely used in mass media, but one of the issues it that fear based campaigns don’t seem to have long-lasting impacts. [[22]](#footnote-22) There is also evidence that continual exposure to fear based information can result in people becoming desensitised. [[23]](#footnote-23)

This is not to suggest that communicators should never deliver information which outlines risk, but rather, not relying solely on fearful communications. While fear of a negative outcome can be an effective way of promoting behavioural changes, the link between the threat and the behaviour must be personal and direct. [[24]](#footnote-24) Typically, climate change is perceived as neither a direct nor a personal threat – and so shocking people into action is not necessarily the right idea.

‘Unless carefully used in a message that contains constructive advice and a personal and direct link with the individual, fear is likely to trigger barriers to engagement with climate change, such as denial’ [[25]](#footnote-25)

## Groups and Social Norms

Humans are essentially social beings, and their identities in social groups play a seminal role in the development of their attitudes and behaviours. People process information differently in groups and communicators can harness groups to get people engaged on climate change.

One of the benefits of communicating with people in groups is that people will often consider a wider range of possible options and show deeper engagement with arguments and courses of actions being proposed. [[26]](#footnote-26) This is because people’s affiliation or membership with a group is a strong source of social identity, and there is a vested interest in maintaining affiliation. Tapping into group affiliation can lead to greater engagement and cooperation among group members because it connects to the social norms of the group [[27]](#footnote-27)

Social norms are the ways in which people take inferred information about a setting or situation, which in turn influences how they adjust their behaviour. So rather than looking to try and change individual behaviours, there may be more value in approaching communication which seeks to promote social norms.

‘Implying that pro-environmental behaviour is normal has been shown to be a more powerful way to encourage that behaviour than direct pleas to protect the planet’ [[28]](#footnote-28)

This is highlighted by research which looked at the difference in compliance rates of hotel guests for requests to reuse their towels; whereby they found significantly more towel re-use when the message was worded that it was normal for guests to re-use towel [[29]](#footnote-29). The first was a standard environmental message:

HELP SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT. You can show your respect for nature and help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

The second message stated that it was normal for guests to reuse their towels:

JOIN YOUR FELLOW GUESTS IN HELPING TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT. Almost 75% of guests who are asked to participate in our new resource savings program do help by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests in this program to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

This suggests that promoting a behaviour or action as the norm can encourage meaningful shifts in how people react to climate change information.

‘The more that sustainable practices are in the air, the more salient they become and the more likely individual people and groups of people (organisations, city councils, nations) are to replicate them’ [[30]](#footnote-30)

Maximising the influence of social norms is particularly important when there are conditions of uncertainty.[[31]](#footnote-31) When conditions have changed, (this may be because of new information about climate change, or a new process or understanding such as adaptation, or a new law), people become particularly attentive to how others are dealing with it. [[32]](#footnote-32) This provides a unique opportunity for those involved in implementing environmental messaging to leverage social norms at this time.

In addition to this, people are particularly influenced by those who are similar to them. That is, we are most trusting of others who appear to be most like us. When communicating normative information not only is it important to communicate that many others are engaging in the particular behaviour, but that many others who are similar to your audience, are engaging in that behaviour. [[33]](#footnote-33)

## Identity and Action

Social norms serve to align people with specific groups and the values and worldviews of those groups. As a result, people generate a social identity in-line with their relationship to a group (or groups), and the values that people hold and their views about climate change largely become informed by their social identities. [[34]](#footnote-34)

‘People do not only assess information objectively, but instead pass it through identity filters that ask if it fits with their worldview and the social groups they belong to. Only then do they decide if they will listen to it carefully or dismiss it without thinking’ [[35]](#footnote-35)

Social identities are connected to people’s self-worth, sense of belonging, and this affirms their membership to a given group. Social identities are not only a marker of who people are, but it also serves to define who they are not. In an effort to create and maintain social groupings, people enlist categories of, ‘people like us’ and ‘people who are not like us’. It is worth climate change communicators considering what constitutes a ‘people like us’ group as it is where the norms, beliefs, and attitudes lie for a group; and this can help build a more accurate group profile.

Those groups whose beliefs and values are in conflict with sustainability and climate change are perhaps the more challenging to target and require different considerations when looking at communications strategies. Some of those considerations are: [[36]](#footnote-36)

1. **Allow for uptake:** Messages may be initially rejected, but people will still be processing them over time. Just because something doesn’t seem to go down well, does not mean the message has failed.
2. **Use reality:** If your message is consistent and based on “facts” rather than “opinions” it is more likely to be taken seriously by those you are trying to persuade. Facts doesn’t necessarily mean scientific information, but rather, experiences and impacts that people know to be incontrovertibly real and relatable to their existence, and that can be related back to the issue at hand in a relevant way.
3. **Be supportive:** By being consistent and reasonable you may provide someone with the support they need to take action.

Essential considerations when communicating with groups who may be resistant to climate change information are: to be calmly persistent, to genuinely understand the values of those you are communicating with, and to tailor messaging in a way that draws on their values. [[37]](#footnote-37)

‘While people’s identities are powerful gatekeepers of their beliefs and values, people do change. We should certainly not give up on enticing (not forcing, manipulating or threatening) people to take up our values and worldview’ [[38]](#footnote-38)

# Identifying Groups & Communities

As already mentioned, groups and communities are intertwined with social identities and these are deeply personal, so any messaging or information which disregards the power of people’s sense of belonging to a group will face a difficult road. This is not to say environmental messaging should only seek to work ‘with’ groups, as there will be times when it is necessary to work toward change ‘in’ groups, but rather there is a need to be mindful of the type of change sought and the nature of the group.

Communicators need to consider ways in which they can segment or cluster people and communities according to their beliefs, attitudes and values related to climate change. Australian research has identified three main segments and evaluated how each of these responded to climate change messaging. The three segments are outlined in Table 1 below[[39]](#footnote-39):

*Table 1 – Audience segments and their corresponding characteristics*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Segment** | **Characteristics** |
| Dismissive (20%) | * Very little belief in climate change
* Effects perceived as remote in space and time
* Very low levels of distress, concern, perceived risk, environmental values, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy
* Low levels of outrage and knowledge
* Negative attitudes toward clean energy
 |
| Uncommitted (45%)  | * Moderate belief in climate change
* Effect perceived as moderately close in space and time
* Moderate distress, concern, perceived risk, attitudes toward clean energy, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy
* Moderately low levels of outrage, environmental value, and knowledge
 |
| Alarmed (34%) | * Strong belief in climate change
* Perceived effects to be very close in space and time
* High levels of distress, outrage, concern, perceived risk, knowledge and self-efficacy
* Strong environmental values, trust in climate change authorities, and attitudes toward clean energy
 |

When the patterns of responses to climate change adaptation messages were analysed among these three ‘climate change communities’ or ‘interpretive communities’, it is not surprising that it was found that people who were in the category, ‘very concerned about climate change’, were most receptive to adaptation messages [[40]](#footnote-40) An encouraging finding is that none of the interpretive communities rejected the adaptation messages unthinkingly, which indicates that there is still very much an opportunity to reach these groups. Perhaps the greater challenge highlighted by this research is how to reach those groups identified as ‘uncommitted’ or ‘dismissive’. Possible messaging options and effective message characteristics that target these communities are outlined in Table 2 below[[41]](#footnote-41):

*Table 2: Audience segments and recommended messaging strategies*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Segment** | **Messaging options and Policy Strategies** | **Effective Messages** |
| Dismissive | * Avoid direct references to climate change and sustainability
* Develop strategies that emphasise other valued outcomes (e.g. economic development or a caring society)
 | * Use simple language
* Do not emphasise messages which describe how people SHOULD think or behave
* Provide specific advice about what actions to take
 |
| Uncommitted | * Provide motivational messages to increase self-efficacy and concern
 | * Have a strong emotional component
* Are framed in terms of preventing losses
* Provide specific advice about what actions to take
 |
| Alarmed | * Provide information about:
* effective ways to minimise personal carbon footprint
* how to lobby industry and government
* where to access relevant means and resources
* Remove structural barriers preventing translation from intention to action
* Provide feedback that climate change views are shared by others (as ‘social proof’)
 | * Emphasise local impacts
* Emphasise collective responsibility
* Provide specific adaptation advice about what actions to take
 |

Some notable examples of more effective messages relating to each group are outlined in Table 3 below[[42]](#footnote-42). For links to specific examples see Appendix A.

*Table 3: Audience segments and messaging examples*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Segment** | **Message Example** |
| Dismissive | * Brochures that used simple language coupled with instructive illustrations
* Information that was low-fear, but contained clear, practical ‘how-to’ information such as: the right way to prepare and survive a bushfire.
 |
| Uncommitted | * A particularly evocative bushfire TV

commercial had a high effectiveness rating for this group* A brochure detailing in words and photographs how Australians can protect themselves during severe thunderstorms
* A brochure about bushfire protection which began with an atmospheric description and photos showing what it is like to experience a bushfire
 |
| Alarmed | * a documentary style 4.5 minute video on how scientists are devising solutions to manage the effects of climate change on Australia’s residents, wildlife, and infrastructure
* A brochure describing climate change effects on the Great Barrier Reef and strategies to manage them
* an information sheet describing the effects of extreme weather on mental health and community wellbeing
 |

Audience segmentation offers a starting point for environmental communicators to think about some of the attributes present in community groups, and how they might receive certain messages about climate change. What has been conclusively highlighted in this and other research is the need to appropriately tailor climate change messaging, and that even having just a basic knowledge that there are three main segments to target can be sufficient to develop more effective interventions. [[43]](#footnote-43)

An evaluation sheet based on this audience segmentation accompanies this report (see [Appendix C](#_Appendix_C_–)) and has been used to evaluate a number of WAGA council environmental messaging campaigns (see [Appendix B](#_Appendix_B_–)). This evaluation sheet is designed to generate discussions about the key elements of environmental messaging and how we might address those elements more clearly, and to direct future communications around climate change and adaptation more effectively

# Communicating with Specific Audiences

In trying to highlight some of the factors for consideration when trying to reach target groups, following are two examples which potentially represent groups at either end of the climate change spectrum: politically conservative groups, and young people.

## Example 1: Politically Conservative

As with the groups and communities mentioned above, political ideology is not a definitive way to categorise people or community groups. However, there are identifiable characteristics, worldviews and values attached to certain political ideologies, and this can add important information for climate change communicators when trying to target groups. Generally speaking the more conservative groups are more likely to be represented in the categories of dismissive or uncommitted toward issues of climate change. [[44]](#footnote-44)

The Climate Outreach Program in the U.K. undertook a process of targeted research to, ‘develop an evidence base of the frames and narratives that would resonate most strongly with centre-right audiences around renewables and energy efficiency’. [[45]](#footnote-45) As a result of their qualitative research they have recommended a number of principles for engaging in productive conversations with those people who identify politically as being centre-right.

1. **Speak from a ‘values up’ rather than a ‘numbers down’ perspective.** Statistics on energy and climate change will not be taken at face value, especially if delivered by a source with low credibility. Instead, use the language identified below to ground conversations in conservative values.
2. **Frame energy efficiency in terms of ‘avoiding waste’.** Testing finds that this is a very effective framing and speaks more strongly to centre-right values than preventing ‘fuel poverty’.
3. **Use trusted communicators.** Because of the widespread distrust and cynicism towards individuals and organisations who promote renewable energy technologies and campaign on climate change, it is crucial that engagement with centre-right audiences happens through credible and authentic centre-right networks.
4. **Be moderate and balanced in describing the efficacy of renewable technologies**. ‘Big claims’ about the transformational potential of large-scale wind and solar are distrusted and may backfire.
5. **Make a clear distinction between younger and older centre-right audiences.** Scepticism about climate risks is much rarer among conservatives who are under 30. Communications about climate change should focus on this younger generation, who ‘get’ the problem but want it presented with distinctly centre-right language solutions.

## Example 2: Young People

One of the reasons for communicators to think about young people as a group is because generally they are more likely to be less fatalistic about combating climate change, and they generally perceive climate change as a serious but ‘solvable’ problem. [[46]](#footnote-46) This means there is an opportunity for communicators to use young people as advocates or champions for their messaging, which has been noted as an effective communication strategy. [[47]](#footnote-47)

Information-based interventions alone are unlikely to effectively engage young people, and strategies to reduce the psychological distance of climate change are as important for younger people as they are in the general population. [[48]](#footnote-48) A large body of international research has shown that young people are more likely to act on climate change if they can engage with it directly and experientially, through some form of educational, outreach, or social activity. [[49]](#footnote-49)

Another important consideration when trying to engage young people is that peer-to-peer interaction and communication has been shown to be more effective. [[50]](#footnote-50) Australian research has also identified the need to broaden the scope of environmental and climate related education to introduce a more inter-disciplinary approach that includes:

* the economics and politics of climate change
* negotiation, analytical, and scientific skills
* localized, solutions-based approach in schools

In general the suggestion is that the focus for education should hinge on impacts that young people can relate to their own lives combined with positive, constructive messages of alternative visions and the capacity of humans to adapt. [[51]](#footnote-51)

## Example 3: Uncommitted or Unconcerned Groups: The case for co-benefits

Co-benefits are the accompanying benefits for society from acting on climate change. They refer to community benefits resulting from mitigation behaviours. While some co-benefits directly relate to planning and economic benefits, less obvious co-benefits are those which relate to community functioning where climate change action contributes to a more empowered and caring community. [[52]](#footnote-52) For environmental communicators, co-benefits can be an important way to appeal to uncommitted people as they are not hinged only on the belief that climate change is real or important. [[53]](#footnote-53)

‘Communicating climate science and co-benefits of acting should be complementary, not competing, strategies’ [[54]](#footnote-54)

Large scale, cross-cultural research has identified that next to believing climate change is important, there were two key co-benefits identified: development and benevolence. [[55]](#footnote-55) Development (such as economic development, or scientific progress) was defined as a dimension which addresses the social ‘conditions’ in which people live, whereas benevolence was defined as a dimension which referred to the ‘character’ of people in society. [[56]](#footnote-56)

While co-benefits showed clear effects for those in alarmed groups, they also showed to be a significant driver for those in uncommitted groups. Specifically, it was found that development was a particular motivator for uncommitted people. [[57]](#footnote-57)

‘Communicating the co-benefits of addressing climate change could provide a way to foster public action, and thereby influence government action, even among those unconvinced or unconcerned about climate change’ [[58]](#footnote-58)

An interesting example here is the relationship between indigenous communities and carbon offset schemes in Australia. Research which identified the co-benefits which lead to indigenous communities participating in carbon offset schemes found that they fell in both benevolence domains (i.e. build community wellbeing and strengthen cultural resilience through increased involvement in decision-making and management of commercial activities on Indigenous land) and development domains (i.e. build community capacity focused on the development of legal and administrative structures and the sourcing and collation of specialist knowledge related to legislation and carbon rights). [[59]](#footnote-59)

# Conclusion

This report has highlighted some of the characteristics of climate change as an issue and the ways in which people and groups relate to climate change information. For local governments the challenge lies in trying to effectively deliver information so as to affect change, garner support and educate residents and communities around the issues of climate change and adaptation. The main finding here is that people and groups need to be understood and identified in terms of their values, beliefs, and identities, and that any environmental messaging needs to genuinely speak to those in order to have an impact.

The objective of effective environmental messaging is to move people to a level of concern which promotes positive action. While ‘buy-in’ can be achieved momentarily though appealing to people’s non-environmental concerns such as economic (e.g. increasing power prices is a reason to get solar), really what is trying to be achieved is a shift in the way people perceive the world and themselves in it. While this may seem an insurmountable task, the research presented here strongly supports that even broadly using audience segmentation to identify groups, and tailoring the messaging accordingly, can have a positive impact on the efficacy of environmental messaging. Concomitant to identifying groups is use of stories and narratives as an important way to localise and personalise climate change information, in effect reducing psychological distance.

Ultimately the success of environmental messaging lies in the ability to put oneself in the shoes of another, and to understand how they relate to the issue of climate change. Communicators cannot expect to simply provide more information about climate change and hope to engender change across diverse communities. More clearly identifying who environmental messages are trying to ‘speak’ to also ensures a more purposeful allocation of limited resources, rather than trying to speak to everyone and in fact speaking to no one.

# Key Summary Points

1. People create ‘psychological distance’ from threatening issues, such as climate change, to protect themselves, and to create a sense that their world is ok. Reducing psychological distance needs to be a key strategy of climate change communication by making climate change here, now and for sure. Show people how the places and things that they love are threatened by climate change
2. There needs to be a move away from just providing *more* scientific data and information. It does not engage with large sections of communities and can serve to increase psychological distance.
3. Climate change communication needs to embrace stories. They are powerful transmitters of positive, affirming information, and they offer people a way to hear how a path of action (perhaps different to their own) plays out in a day-to-day sense.
4. Careful consideration needs to be given when utilising potentially fearful messages as they can have counterproductive effects if they are not framed with helpful instructions, and targeted to the right groups.
5. Identifying audience segments is crucial to messaging success as it increases the likelihood of engagement with the information, and therefore the likelihood of engendering behaviour change.

# Appendix A – Campaign Examples

## Campaigns Targeting Uncommitted Groups

The campaigns that follow were rated highly [[60]](#footnote-60) for ‘uncommitted’ segments for the community.

**2011/12 Victorian Government FireReady campaign.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SDYnIIylTB4>

This advertisement focuses on knowing your trigger to leave. It has a very high emotional content that is coupled with a very simple strategy component, and offers a link to a resource which will help in planning.

**"Prepare. Act. Survive." TV commercial promoting bushfire preparedness. CFA\**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXIZNdekx0k&feature=relmfu>

This advertisement is centred on highly personal and emotive stories about experiencing bushfire and the horror of them. They are followed with very specific instructions about how to prepare a rural property to be prepared for bushfire.

**Australian Bureau of Meteorology: Severe Thunderstorms, webpage**

[http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thunder/#precautions](http://www.bom.gov.au/info/thunder/%23precautions)

This quite simple webpage has a few interesting components. Firstly there are images of the effects of severe storms, and many of the images are personalised (with people in them) or are clearly taken by amateurs. This gives a ‘real life’ feeling to the images, not a sciency feel, and I suspect this is the emotive aspect. It looks like it could have happened in anyone’s backyard or town.

 In addition to this there is some basic information about the impact of severe thunderstorms, some examples of storms through history in Australia. It is all followed up with information about how be alerted, how to be prepared or protected from storms.

**Tasmanian Fire Service - Bushfire - Prepare to Survive –**

**Four page extract (Pages 6, 13, 16, 17)**

<http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/userfiles/tym/file/NEW_CPP_PAGES/Final150513TFSBushfireSurvivalPlan2015_16_v3.pdf>

These specific parts of a larger document highlight ‘what it is like in a bushfire’, ‘why people have died in bushfires’, and ‘Why houses burn down in bushfires’. There are highlighted sections which draw attention to the alarming, emotive aspects of bushfires, such as, “On catastrophic days, winds will be strong enough to blow roofs from houses, and bring down trees and power lines. These winds may occur well before a fire threatens, and cut off your means of escape, so plan to leave early.” But as can be seen in the example above, these emotive elements are linked to very clear statements of what to do.

**Storm Guide, Australian Government**

<https://www.ag.gov.au/EmergencyManagement/Community/Community-Safety-Action-Guides/Documents/community-safety-action-guide-severe-storm.pdf>

This single page cartoon seeks to message communities for whom English may be limited. It does so by using limited text (and simple sentences when it does) and some more culturally diverse representations of people. It lacks the same level of obvious emotive content of the other examples, but it does offer simple do’s and don’ts in severe storms.

## Campaigns targeting multiple segments

**The Check, Clean, Dry Campaign, New Zealand**

Created in 2005, the campaign simply asks waterway users to Check, Clean and Dry equipment and clothing when moving between waterways to prevent the spread of an invasive aquatic weed.

This is a particularly interesting campaign as its approach sought to speak to different audience segments using a variety of different communication mediums.

Detailed information about the campaign can be found at:

[http://www.cbsm.com/cases/the+check+clean+dry+campaign\_171](http://www.cbsm.com/cases/the%2Bcheck%2Bclean%2Bdry%2Bcampaign_171)

Key points from this campaign are:

* Identifying the behaviour required
* Recognising the diversity of audiences and designing a multi-levelled approach
* Initially communicating the issue via ‘broad brush’ approach
* Looking at what would motivate the variety of users – which ultimately was personal consequences, that is, how it impacted the sport and leisure activities and the regions in which they lived
* It was important for target audiences to see that the Government were taking an active role in the campaign so that waterway users didn’t feel the burden was too great and the cause futile.
* The primary target group was ‘high-risk’ water users via the people and organisations they regularly come into contact with, the publications they read, at the waterways they use and events they attend
* Engagement with the ‘high-risk’ (or frequent waterways users) was through existing organisations in their own communities, delivered via channels they trust and at times and places where Check, Clean, Dry is relevant to them.
* The secondary target group was other waterways users, including the general public and visitors to New Zealand. The strategy was to reach this audience through mainstream media, traveller publications, locations and events.
* Social norms were fostered among sporting and recreation clubs where they held demonstrations of cleaning down equipment. Other clubs supplied cleaning equipment to prevent cleaning being a barrier. Others have set up cleaning stations for water users to use after events.
* Powerful norms were established among clubs and they helped make it taboo for members to not, Check, Clean, Dry, and members were influenced by other members not by direct instructions from the government.

# Appendix B – WAGA Councils’ Environmental Messaging Case Studies

### Moonee Valley – Green Precinct Project

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| <http://www.mvcc.vic.gov.au/~/media/Files/Environment/GreenPrecinct_Factsheet.pdf><http://www.mvcc.vic.gov.au/about-the-council/environment/green-precinct-project.aspx> |
| **Audience Segment - Dismissive** • Very little belief in climate change • Effects perceived as remote in space and time • Very low levels of distress, concern, perceived risk, environmental values, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Low levels of outrage and knowledge • Negative attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Simple language, avoids scientific terms/technical jargon |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Does not emphasise how people SHOULD think or behave |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| **Comment:** There is very clear, simple language used with very little jargon or technical words used throughout the document. There is nothing that emphasises how people should think or behave and there is no ‘moral tone’ to the document. There are extremely clear instructions about ‘what you can do?’ on each page which outlines very specific actions people can take to positively influence the area highlighted in each section. It wold seem as though this messaging speak very much to this group.  |
| **Audience Segment - Uncommitted** • Moderate belief in climate change • Effect perceived as moderately close in space and time • Moderate distress, concern, perceived risk, attitudes toward clean energy, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Moderately low levels of outrage, environmental value, and knowledge |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Has a strong emotional content  | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Messages are framed in terms of preventing losses |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| **Comment:** There is no emotional content in this document per se. That is, there is nothing to raise levels of concern on an emotional level. There are a number of messages which speak to loss prevention and as previously mentioned, very clear instructions on ‘what to do’. Given the lack of emotional content (and the lack of people narrative) this messaging may not raise awareness / alarm enough for this group.  |
| **Audience Segment - Alarmed** • Strong belief in climate change • Perceived effects to be very close in space and time • High levels of distress, outrage, concern, perceived risk, knowledge and self-efficacy • Strong environmental values, trust in climate change authorities, and attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Message emphasizes local impact |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Message emphasizes collective responsibility |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| Provides specific adaptation advice about what actions to take |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| **Comment:** Whilst the document emphasises local impacts, and the advice on actions to take, it only moderately emphasises collective responsibility. Messaging for this group requires a kind of affirmation of the green identity and alliances they have, and messages should speak more clearly those collectives and the things they can do, rather than just speaking about what individuals can do. While there may be useful information in terms of what council has done in the document, it may lack the strong environmental values / tone to connect to this group entirely.  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Stories / Narratives** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| There are obvious 'people' stories (images or text) |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| They relate to day-to-day lives or events |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| There is a positive, pro-environmental narrative |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| **Comment:** There is definitely very pro-environment message about what council is doing and what they have achieved. There are only a few images which create a sense of locality and people, and there’s a sense that it does relate to people’s lives. However, there’s no real text or imagery that develop narratives about how people have done or are doing things.   |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Accessibility**  | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Is information presented visually (non-text) |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Is there multi-lingual messaging | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Is it available in multiple formats  |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| **Comment:** There is not much evidence on the pdf to highlight the availability of other language support which means it possibly excludes non-English speaking communities. It is also unclear as to whether the information is available in hardcopy and where that may be.  |

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| **Overall Evaluation - Which audience segment does it speak to? How well does it do this?**Based on the above evaluation it seems as though this particular message speaks mostly to the dismissive group and it does so with clarity and simplicity. However, there are a few notable issues identified. Firstly there is a lack of narrative which could help personalise the information and provide clear examples of ‘how others are doing it’. It may have been pertinent to include some stories alongside the ‘what you can do information’ to provide people with a more clear vision of what it looks like to adopt those strategies. It should also be noted that there doesn’t appear to be support for a non-English version of this (although it may be available from council, it isn’t made clear on the document or website). It is also unclear as to whether the information is available in different formats for those who don’t have computer access or printer access.  |

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| Hobsons Bay – Witness King Tides |
| Witness King Tides is a community photography project that helps visualise the potential future impacts of sea level rise.<http://www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/Environment-Waste/Our-Sustainable-Community/Witness-king-tides> <http://www.witnesskingtides.org/> |
| **Audience Segment - Dismissive** • Very little belief in climate change • Effects perceived as remote in space and time • Very low levels of distress, concern, perceived risk, environmental values, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Low levels of outrage and knowledge • Negative attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Simple language, avoids scientific terms/technical jargon |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| Does not emphasise how people SHOULD think or behave |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** While there is evidence of simple, easy to understand information and it does not seek to impress how people should think or behave, it does not really provide easily identifiable information about what actions to take. There are clear instructions about how to participate in the project, but it could be argued that these are not actions which directly influence climate change per se.  |
| **Audience Segment - Uncommitted** • Moderate belief in climate change • Effect perceived as moderately close in space and time • Moderate distress, concern, perceived risk, attitudes toward clean energy, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Moderately low levels of outrage, environmental value, and knowledge |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Has a strong emotional content  |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| Messages are framed in terms of preventing losses |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** There is obviously an emotional content implied by the rise of sea levels, it is not very prominent, and it certainly doesn’t seem to create an elevated sense of concern. There is mention of the importance of monitoring and that it perhaps gives people a sense of what ‘could’ happen, but it doesn’t clearly flag the dangers and the preventing of losses due to certain action.  |
| **Audience Segment - Alarmed** • Strong belief in climate change • Perceived effects to be very close in space and time • High levels of distress, outrage, concern, perceived risk, knowledge and self-efficacy • Strong environmental values, trust in climate change authorities, and attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Message emphasizes local impact |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Message emphasizes collective responsibility |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Provides specific adaptation advice about what actions to take | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** This is very clearly a local project and also emphasises the benefits of collective action in monitoring the tides. Again, while there is very specific advice about how to participate in the project, there is not really any advice which may directly impact change to sea level rise.  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Stories / Narratives** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| There are obvious 'people' stories (images or text) |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| They relate to day-to-day lives or events |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| There is a positive, pro-environmental narrative |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| **Comment:** The project and messaging is very obviously centred on people’s stories about tides in their local area and the images evoke a strong sense of places that people are observing the changing tides. There is a kind of inferred pro-environmental narrative, but not specifically around climate change or adaptation. The generally narrative seems to be that documenting king tides gives you an idea of what sea level rise might look like. There is even a section which specifically says king tides are not related to climate change, which may in fact serve to distance climate change as an issue. There is also some disconnect between the photos documenting tides and any explanation of what they are showing or the significance of the image.   |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Accessibility**  | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Is information presented visually (non-text) |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Is there multi-lingual messaging | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Is it available in multiple formats  | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** As this is specifically a photo based project there are a number of stills and video. As this is a specifically web-based project there is no suggestion that the narratives are offered in any other format, nor is there evidence of there being non-English speaking support.  |

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| **Overall Evaluation - Which audience segment does it speak to? How well does it do this?**Overall this project speaks mostly to the alarmed group. It seems as though it would be project that people who already ‘invested’ in a green identity might take part in. While there are very clear instructions about how to participate in the project of collecting images, it could be argued that these in and of themselves do not represent action against climate change. That is, someone could happily participate because they are interested in photography and really remain detached from the notion of climate change or in fact sea level rise (as king tides are a natural occurrence regardless). That being said, there seems to be some real value established in the communal gathering of images and the connections and narratives that that may develop.  |
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| Greening the West – Urban greening for a healthier west  |
| Greening the West is a regional initiative that aims to deliver positive health and social outcomes inthe western suburbs of Melbourne through urban greening.<http://greeningthewest.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Greening-the-West-Strategic-Plan-overview.pdf> |
| **Audience Segment - Dismissive** • Very little belief in climate change • Effects perceived as remote in space and time • Very low levels of distress, concern, perceived risk, environmental values, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Low levels of outrage and knowledge • Negative attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Simple language, avoids scientific terms/technical jargon |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Does not emphasise how people SHOULD think or behave |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** Despite declaring that the project seeks to “to inspire the implementation of urban greening in all forms, from pot plants to rooftops, walls”, there is no information or advice about how people can do this. It is noted that this is a strategic plan overview. There is not enough information regarding what actions to take to clearly speak to this segment. |
| **Audience Segment - Uncommitted** • Moderate belief in climate change • Effect perceived as moderately close in space and time • Moderate distress, concern, perceived risk, attitudes toward clean energy, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Moderately low levels of outrage, environmental value, and knowledge |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Has a strong emotional content  | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Messages are framed in terms of preventing losses |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment**: Although there is a lot of information about preventing losses, there is no real emotive content to help stir the level of concern for this segment. In addition, there is also no specific advice about how people can act to increase the level of self-efficacy.  |
| **Audience Segment - Alarmed** • Strong belief in climate change • Perceived effects to be very close in space and time • High levels of distress, outrage, concern, perceived risk, knowledge and self-efficacy • Strong environmental values, trust in climate change authorities, and attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Message emphasizes local impact |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Message emphasizes collective responsibility |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Provides specific adaptation advice about what actions to take | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** This messaging is very clearly about the local impact, however there is not really a message about collective responsibility, i.e. ‘what WE can do’, and in line with this there is no specific adaptation advice for people.  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Stories / Narratives** | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| There are obvious 'people' stories (images or text) |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| They relate to day-to-day lives or events |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| There is a positive, pro-environmental narrative |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| **Comment:** There is a strong visual narrative and text with a very pro-environmental message, but there are not really any actual stories of people’s lives and how they may have adapted or faced challenges of greening.  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Accessibility**  | **Not Present** |  | **Some evidence** |  | **Very evident** |
| Is information presented visually (non-text) |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| Is there multi-lingual messaging | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| Is it available in multiple formats  | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** There are a number of clear, colourful diagrams, but mostly this is a text based document.  |

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| **Overall Evaluation - Which audience segment does it speak to? How well does it do this?**This messaging uses a lot the co-benefits of greening, which would generally speak to the uncommitted group; however, there is not enough emotive content to raise levels of concern. Nor is there enough practical advice about what to do to equally raise self-efficacy. While there is good visual imagery which locates the narratives locally, there aren’t any ‘people’ stories which may help people relate to the challenges or see the success of individuals.  |
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| Brimbank - Living with Climate Change: A Story of Many Told by a Few |
| **Description of campaign / message**: explores the knowledge, skills and practices relating to sustainability in the Burmese, Indian, Sudanese and Vietnamese communities in the City of Brimbank. <http://www.livingwithclimatechange.com.au/> |
| **Audience Segment - Dismissive** • Very little belief in climate change • Effects perceived as remote in space and time • Very low levels of distress, concern, perceived risk, environmental values, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Low levels of outrage and knowledge • Negative attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| Simple language, avoids scientific terms/technical jargon |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Does not emphasise how people SHOULD think or behave |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| **Comment:** As this is largely narrated by community members there is no scientific jargon or alienating language. There is some evidence of telling people how they *should* behave which is not helpful to this dismissive segment; Although it is not the overall message, some of narratives do emphasise it. While there is no clear overall message of what actions to take, there are some very useful stories about what actions people have taken.  |
| **Audience Segment - Uncommitted** • Moderate belief in climate change • Effect perceived as moderately close in space and time • Moderate distress, concern, perceived risk, attitudes toward clean energy, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Moderately low levels of outrage, environmental value, and knowledge |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| Has a strong emotional content  |  |  | **X** |  |  |
| Messages are framed in terms of preventing losses |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| **Comment:** There are elements of emotional content, but it perhaps only relates to CALD communities (or those who have experienced similar). A few people tell stories about how their actions toward climate change are to prevent loss of some sort, but it is not a main theme. As above, there are some very useful stories about what actions people have taken. |
| **Audience Segment - Alarmed** • Strong belief in climate change • Perceived effects to be very close in space and time • High levels of distress, outrage, concern, perceived risk, knowledge and self-efficacy • Strong environmental values, trust in climate change authorities, and attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| Message emphasizes local impact |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Message emphasizes collective responsibility |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Provides specific adaptation advice about what actions to take |  |  |  | **X** |  |
| **Comment:** The message in the film very much emphasises local impact and a collective responsibility which speaks clearly to an alarmed segment. However, while there are some stories of adaptation, there perhaps isn’t a clear enough theme running throughout for this segement.  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Stories / Narratives** | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| There are obvious 'people' stories (images or text) |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| They relate to day-to-day lives or events |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| There is a positive, pro-environmental narrative |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| **Comment:** This is very clearly focussed on the people’s stories and how climate change relates to them culturally, personally, and in a day-to-day sense. There is also a very clear pro-environmental message overall and many of the narratives establish what people are doing in their day-to-day lives to help climate change. This could have the benefit of establishing pro-environmental social norms among CALD communities.  |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Accessibility**  | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| Is information presented visually (non-text) |  |  |  |  | **X** |
| Is there multi-lingual messaging |  | **X** |  |  |  |
| Is it available in multiple formats (web/print) | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** While there is some subtitling for sections of this video, it is unclear as to why the people telling their stories were not able to explain them in their first language. There were a few moments where they explained notions of environmental care in their own language. It raised the question, who is this film for? Is it for other CALD community members, and if so is English the language which will connect them best? There is also the issue of translation, could these people in fact deliver their pro-environmental message more clearly, more emotively in their own language? |
| **Overall Evaluation - Which audience segment does it speak to? How well does it do this?**This message has the narrative components to transmit some great information. It perhaps could clarify its audience a bit more in terms of providing some clear ‘how to’ advice. It also needs to establish whether it is pitched at a non-English speaking audience. It would be useful if the messages were also available in print form (for hearing impaired and no-internet access). As is, it seems to suit an alarmed (CALD) community group best.  |

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| Appendix C – Environmental Message Evaluation Sheet |
| **Description of campaign / message** |
| **Audience Segment - Dismissive** • Very little belief in climate change • Effects perceived as remote in space and time • Very low levels of distress, concern, perceived risk, environmental values, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Low levels of outrage and knowledge • Negative attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| Simple language, avoids scientific terms/technical jargon |  |  |  |  |  |
| Does not emphasise how people SHOULD think or behave |  |  |  |  |  |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** |
| **Audience Segment - Uncommitted** • Moderate belief in climate change • Effect perceived as moderately close in space and time • Moderate distress, concern, perceived risk, attitudes toward clean energy, trust in authorities, and self-efficacy • Moderately low levels of outrage, environmental value, and knowledge |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| Has a strong emotional content  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Messages are framed in terms of preventing losses |  |  |  |  |  |
| Provides specific advice about what actions to take |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** |
| **Audience Segment - Alarmed** • Strong belief in climate change • Perceived effects to be very close in space and time • High levels of distress, outrage, concern, perceived risk, knowledge and self-efficacy • Strong environmental values, trust in climate change authorities, and attitudes toward clean energy |
| **Effective Message Characteristics** | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| Message emphasizes local impact |  |  |  |  |  |
| Message emphasizes collective responsibility |  |  |  |  |  |
| Provides specific adaptation advice about what actions to take |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Stories / Narratives** | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| There are obvious 'people' stories (images or text) |  |  |  |  |  |
| They relate to day-to-day lives or events |  |  |  |  |  |
| There is a positive, pro-environmental narrative |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Accessibility**  | **NotPresent** |  | **SomeEvidence** |  | **Very Evident** |
| Is information presented visually (non-text) |  |  |  |  |  |
| Is there multi-lingual messaging |  |  |  |  |  |
| Is it available in multiple formats (web/print) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Comment:** |
| **Overall Evaluation - Which audience segment does it speak to? How well does it do this?** |

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2. Whitmarsh L, O’Neil S, Lorenzoni I., ‘Public engagement with climate change: what do we know, and where do we go from here?’, *Int J Media Cult Polit ,* 2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Jestribek, H., (2016), ‘Database reveals huge variability in local government adaptation responses’, The Fifth Estate, retrieved from, <http://www.thefifthestate.com.au/politics/local-government/database-reveals-huge-variability-in-local-government-adaptation-responses/81881> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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