



# **Climate Health WA Inquiry**

## **Inquiry into the impacts of climate change on health in Western Australia**

**Inquiry Lead:  
Dr Tarun Weeramanthri**

**Witnesses:**

**Ms Erin Fuery  
State Manager — Emergency Services (WA), Australian Red  
Cross**

**Ms Fiona Tarpey — Head of Influence and Advocacy  
(Internal Programs), Australian Red Cross (By Telephone Link)**

**Thursday, 5 December 2019**

[09:00:12]

HEARING COMMENCED

5 PROF WEERAMANTHRI: I would like to begin by acknowledging  
the traditional custodians of the land we are meeting on, the Wadjuk people,  
and pay my respects to elders both past and present. Ms Fuery, Ms Tarpey,  
thank you both for your interest in the Inquiry and for your appearance at  
today's hearing. The purpose of this hearing is to assist me in gathering  
10 evidence for the Climate Health WA Inquiry into the impacts of climate change  
on health in Western Australia. My name is Tarun Weeramanthri and I have  
been appointed by the Chief Health Officer to undertake the Inquiry. Beside  
me is Dr Sarah Joyce, the Inquiry's Project Director. If everyone could please  
be aware that the use of mobile phones and other recording devices is not  
15 permitted in this room, so if you could please make sure that your phone is on  
silent or switched off.

This hearing is a formal procedure convened under section 231 of the *Public  
Health Act 2016*. While you are not being asked to give your evidence under  
20 oath or affirmation, it is important you understand that there are penalties under  
the Act for knowingly providing a response or information that is false or  
misleading. This is a public hearing and a transcript of your evidence will be  
made for the public record. If you wish to make a confidential statement  
during today's proceedings, you should request that that part of your evidence  
25 be taken in private. You have previously been provided with the Inquiry's  
terms of reference and information on giving evidence to the Inquiry. Before  
we begin, do either of you have any questions about today's hearing?

30 MS FUERY: No questions.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Ms Tarpey?

MS TARPEY: No, no questions from me.

35 PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Thank you. I would like to state for the  
record that I have been paid-up member of the Australian Red Cross since  
2017. In early 2019, I joined the International Humanitarian Law Advisory  
Committee to the WA branch of the Australian Red Cross as its medical sector  
representative on a volunteer basis. For the transcript, could I ask each of you  
40 to state your name and the capacity in which you're here today, and if you  
could just briefly state your name when you speak through the hearing?

45 MS FUERY: Erin Fuery, and I'm here as the State  
Manager for Emergency Services for Western Australia.

MS TARPEY: Fiona Tarpey, I'm the Head of  
International Advocacy for International Programs Department of Australian  
Red Cross.

50 PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Thank you. Ms Fuery, would you like to  
make a brief opening statement?

[09:02:46]

MS FUERY: Yes, thank you. For the record, Erin speaking. Thank you for inviting us and taking interest in our submission. I'd like to just start by talking about some of the services that we offer in Western Australia. So Australian Red Cross has been supporting vulnerable and at-risk individuals in communities across WA for over 100 years. And today, Australian Red Cross delivers a wide variety of services in the state, including Lady Lawley Cottage, which provides respite services to children and young people from zero to 23 years with a disability. Services provided from the Cottesloe site include day short-stay and high needs programs. We also provide a post-school program for young people aged 18 to 23, as well as early years program from ages zero to four.

We have migration support programs, so we provide a suite of migration support programs, working with people from all stages of the migration experience. This includes refugees, people seeking asylum, people in detention centres, people who may have been trafficked or forced into marriage, and people who have been separated from loved ones. We also provide community programs in and around Perth, Broome, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury. So we provide a number of services in and around Perth and the regions dedicated to the advancement of the health, wellbeing and resilience of individuals, families and communities. So this includes support for families with young children, serving hot nightly meals for people doing it tough, making daily phone calls to check on isolated community members, providing safe accommodation at our short-stay facility in Kalgoorlie and working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations to support their healing and self-determination.

The emergency services programs, which I represent in Western Australia... So we support, educate and advise individuals, communities and agencies before, during and after emergency, including with regard to the impacts of climate change across the state. So the focus of our emergency services programs are on minimising the human impacts of these disasters. And our programs include educational programs for primary and secondary students to get prepared for emergencies, as well as community-wide preparedness sessions. We provide support to impacted community members in evacuation centres and on the phone during an emergency, and manage the national registration and reunification system called Register.Find.Reunite..

We also work alongside recovering communities, provide support services, community outreach, training programs and advice to recovery organisations. And all our services are supported and delivered by volunteers. And our voluntary mobilisation hub is a team designed to support, develop and engage people who want to act to help others, improve the volunteer experience that we offer and develop new ways to engage the wider community with regard to humanitarian causes. We have 1,849 active volunteers in Western Australia.

[09:05:49]

5 And we also deliver a number of national functions from WA, including our international humanitarian law or IHL services, which work towards building the capacity of Red Cross people to understand IHL, but we also have our IHL committee, the members of which educate and disseminate IHL knowledge to their stakeholders and communities to raise awareness.

10 PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Thank you. And we really appreciated your comprehensive written submission as well. And I think we'll try and focus in this hearing on your organisation's practical experience assisting the community, as you've outlined, and vulnerable groups in particular. But before we go to that, your written submission contains a lot of helpful evidence and policy as well. So could we start with your statement that climate change is a force multiplier for many of the existing challenges in the humanitarian sector? What does that term mean?

20 MS FUERY: Thanks for the question. I'm going to defer to Fiona on the phone to answer that one. Fiona?

25 MS TARPEY: It's Fiona Tarpey speaking. Yes, we used the term force multiplier in the submission. There are several similar terms we are using in our international humanitarian work – threat, risk or force multiplier. And this term has been adopted by a range of humanitarian actors, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, to really try and articulate the role that climate change is having as a multiplier of existing vulnerabilities, particularly in times of crisis, such as in conflict. And I'll just reference a report that came out earlier this year, put together by ICRC, the Climate Centre, which stated that climate change is making humanitarian work harder, less predictable and more complex,<sup>1</sup> but that the most severe impacts of climate change are not necessarily in areas exposed to the greatest changes in climate, but where people's capabilities to cope with these changes are lacking.

35 From our perspective, good examples of this are, say, in the Lake Chad Basin in Africa, where there has been protracted crisis from conflict for many years. And hence there are fewer institutional and personal resources to cope with the impact of climate change as it [conflict] exacerbates those existing vulnerabilities. So why we're using that term, is that it really helps with articulating that intersection between climate change and vulnerability, rather than articulate solely the impact of climate change on conflict.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peters, Katie, Mayhew, Leigh, Slim, Hugo, van Aalst, Maarten and Arrighi, Julie, *Double vulnerability: the humanitarian implications of intersecting climate and conflict risk*, ODI Working Paper 550, March 2019, ICRC, the Climate Centre and the Overseas Development Institute. See: <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12647.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ms Tarpey further advised that the intersections between climate change, conflict and vulnerability are dynamic.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: That's very helpful, thanks, Ms Tarpey. And we'll come back to some of that international dimension possibly towards the end of this hearing.

5 MS TARPEY: Yes.

[09:08:58]

10 PROF WEERAMANTHRI: But you provided us with a context for understanding the approach Australian Red Cross is taking here. Ms Fuery, I'd like to go to the emergency services program. We've already heard, in this Inquiry, from the Commissioner of Fire and Emergency Services, from the Chair of the State Emergency Management Committee, from the Western  
15 Australian Local Government Association, about all the partnerships in the emergency services sector. And you talked about Australian Red Cross's work in the recovery phase. But how do you work in partnership with all of those other levels of government?

20 MS FUERY: Erin speaking. So we sit on a number of local emergency management committees across the state – so they're obviously run by local government – where we provide advice on, I guess, the humanitarian impact before, during and after a disaster. We also sit on the State Emergency Management Committee Subcommittee for Recovery and  
25 Community Engagement, recognising our role in that space as well. And practically, we work with local governments and recovery agencies after a disaster. We're actually written into the state framework to provide services in response. So that's Register.Find.Reunite and support services in evacuation centres. And in preparedness, we work with a number of agencies. And if I  
30 can talk to some of the examples that we provided in our submission.

So in 2017, we successfully applied for Natural Disaster Resilience Program funding to support the delivery of a preparedness project in partnership with the City of Swan, the Shire of Nannup and the City of Rockingham. While the  
35 aim of the project was to improve community preparedness and resilience to targeted communities, the key focus was the importance of collaboration across all agencies and sectors working in that community to improve messaging and support. So agencies involved in the project included volunteer firefighters, community service organisations who are operating in these locations, and the  
40 Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. So the project ran from July 2017 to June 2018, and over the project, we ran RediPlan sessions – which is our key preparedness program – preparedness conversations, preparedness outreach – which just means we go door-to-door with local fire brigade members to discuss with residents preparedness – education sessions  
45 with primary and secondary schools and joint preparedness awareness sessions with those partners to improve community participation. And we conducted market research at the beginning and at the end of the project to understand

where the community was at with regard to their preparedness and their resilience levels, and, of course, whether the project was successful at all.

5 While we saw increased levels of people taking preparedness action and connecting with their communities and families to build their resilience, the twelve-month time frame was a challenge. So we applied and successfully received another Natural Disaster Resilience Program grant earlier this year to run a similar program, but across three years, with the City of Swan, Shire of [09:12:06]

10 Mundaring and the City of Kalamunda. And two key changes for this project include giving ourselves more lead time to recruit volunteers needed to deliver those programs, and to establish an overarching steering committee to assist with agency collaboration across the three local government areas. And we've held one meeting for that overarching steering committee, and we have multiple members, including the Department of Health, WA Police, Department of Fire and Emergency Services and the Bureau of Meteorology. And this project will finish in June 2022.

20 PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Terrific. Can we pick up the issue of the door-to-door knocking? The reason I ask about that is that was mentioned in a previous hearing, as well, that this was – I think it was in the submission from The Commissioner of Fire and Emergency Services, or the Department – that that was a particularly good way of getting people to individualise and personalise the risk. And we hadn't heard about that before. Could you describe that process in a bit more detail?

MS FUERY: So, traditionally, outreach, we provide this service in recovery, so after an emergency has occurred, recognising that people aren't always willing to come to a centre or to service providers for that support, whether they aren't available or that they don't realise that have a need. A lot of people affected by disasters don't usually, I guess, access services. So they don't even know how to interact with us in the first place. So outreach is when we have two volunteers, and sometimes we partner with local government too, to go door-to-door to people to check on their wellbeing, primarily, and then to see what their needs may be and to let them know the services that are available.

40 We also provide this service on the phone, and we get that information from local government rate information. And we used this last year with the severe flooding throughout the state, particularly for the Shire of Lake Grace, where farmers were stuck on their properties for over a month and couldn't leave, and also didn't want to because they had other priorities. So we called them to check on their wellbeing and let them know that there were services available. 45 So for preparedness, we're using the same thing, which is going door-to-door, and recognising that not everybody realises they're at-risk, to even put up their hand or join a session to become more aware to take action. This is going to them, and with, I guess, a trusted voice, which could be a local community

member, in this case a volunteer firefighter, to talk about issues which are important to them, what other people in the community are doing and then what they can do about that. So that's been very successful, and we utilised that quite a few times. And, I think, the first time was 2015, with the Shire of Manjimup.

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PROF WEERAMANTHRI: So to a related point around volunteers. [09:15:17] So there's the sense of volunteers in the Red Cross organisation and movement, which you've talked about. There's also a whole group of emergency service volunteers, SES volunteers et cetera, firefighter volunteers. And we've, again, heard from other agencies about the increased burden on volunteers, for example, with the lengthening fire season. So could you talk a little bit about the role of volunteers, how important that is, but also whether that model is getting stretched a bit?

MS FUERY: Okay, couple of things in there.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Yes.

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MS FUERY: Let me just write that down. So with regard to our volunteers and emergency services, they're a little bit different to emergency services volunteers as we know them, especially coming from the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. So traditionally, when we talk about – or we hear in the news – it's the SES or the volunteer firefighters, there are actually a lot of volunteer members in our community, providing community services. So in an evacuation centre, we have multiple agencies, not just ours. We've got community members, whether that's CWA or the Salvos providing this support. And often, those numbers aren't captured.

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And we are finding it challenging to get volunteers sometimes. And sometimes, that's the nature of the sector itself. When we don't have disasters, people who want to give their time may find another agency to volunteer for, and sometimes... you know, we say that's a good thing, not having disasters, but what it means is that we don't always have the capacity to provide that support. And in smaller disasters, sometimes state agencies are providing that support themselves, rather than activating volunteer agencies for small disasters. But what that is, is actually eroding volunteer capacity.

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I think one of the challenges for us is around increasing professionalism, training requirements. When we talk about aging population, we have a requirement that everyone's online, that everyone can access computers, and that can be a real challenge for people's participation. But we do find that we have a core group of volunteers who do all and everything for us. And it can be draining when we provide multiple services at the same time, and that really limits our capacity. We do take fatigue very seriously at Red Cross, and we've done a lot of internal investigations. So that is quite serious when we're talking about prolonged disaster that we're supporting.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: You mentioned that you work with educational institutions. I think you said primary and secondary schools. It's actually quite hard to, you know, get stuff into a curriculum. What are you actually doing in that space? Is your material or programs in the curriculum, and how did you achieve that?

[09:18:25]

MS FUERY: It's not in the curriculum, but it's aligned to the curriculum. So our key educational program is called the Pillowcase Project. It's an international program, and we deliver it throughout Australia, and it's for primary school children. And it was co-developed and supported by Disney. And we have also been involved in university projects, which is looking at the value of disaster risk reduction education in primary schools. And we also sit on a number of committees with the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, which has a disaster risk reduction education network. So we're an active member of the national group, as well as the state-based group.

And what we do to get to those schools is we contact... we have target areas. And we started with recovering community. So these are the schools who recognise that there is a need, and that their students need to be engaged in this preparedness space because they've already gone through a disaster. So, for example, that might be around the Shire of Harvey, up in Mundaring, following the Parkerville, Stoneville, Mount Helena bushfire. And we contact teachers directly, and every year, of course, it grows and we reach out, but people want the program again. So yes, we're quite active in the conversation, as well as with the Department of Education, making sure that they recognise the program and the value of it, and we're building that relationship. They're also on that multi-agency steering committee for our project that's starting this year.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: We might move on to learn about initiatives in other states, if we could, that may be applicable in WA. You've mentioned a number of those initiatives in your written submission, including some that have been established in South Australia. But without wishing to confine you to that, are there any lessons from other states that we could use here?

MS FUERY: Well, I'll happily talk about South Australia, because they are definitely advanced in terms of, you know, climate change conversation and state level adaptation frameworks. So Telecross REDi, which we did talk about in our submission, is a service that supports people by calling them daily during declared heatwaves. So Telecross REDi is activated, actually, by the South Australian Department of Human services when an extreme weather event is declared. And the reason for it is in January, and February 2009, South Australia suffered a heatwave. And it was reported that, during this time, up to 80 people had died, and the deaths were reported in the twelve-day period from the 27 January to 7 February 2009. And at this



time, there was no service being offered to provide support to vulnerable people who were suffering as a result of extreme heat events.

5 So on 31 January 2009, the Telecross REDi service first started, and has been assisting vulnerable and isolated people to cope with extreme heat events, and providing assurance for clients, their families and carers, who know that their [09:21:46]

10 loved ones are regularly contacted during these events. And this is based on a service that we provide every day of the year called Telecross, which is making connections with people who may be isolated in their homes. And if they don't answer their phone, we have an escalation procedure, whether that's to call family or to call an ambulance. And, I guess, the difference with Telecross REDi is by checking on their wellbeing in these extreme heat events, but also giving them advice over the phone about how to look after their wellbeing.

15 And I'll talk about their Climate-Ready Communities project. So in 2007, Red Cross in South Australia released the *Climate-Ready Communities: A Guide to Getting Started*.<sup>3</sup> And it was developed with an aim to support communities to have conversations about how the things that they value will be impacted by climate change, and what they can do to continue to thrive under these threats. And it recognises that because of the many different ways that climate change will impact on society, governments alone cannot shoulder the full responsibility for climate change adaptation, and we all have a role to play in understanding what climate change will mean for us, and the actions that we can take now and into the future. So it was developed as a practical tool, using a values-based approach to climate change conversations, recognising that if people understand what the impact is on the things that they value, they're more likely to take action.

20 And so the Climate-Ready Communities project was a pilot project funded, again, through the Natural Disaster Resilience Program, but obviously in SA, and it's supporting communities to be better prepared for the impact of climate change both now and into the future. And this is within a framework of a local government collaborative grouping in South Australia, and they're using this tool and Red Cross to undertake this work. And so over the past year, 62 trained volunteers, or Climate-Ready Champions, are using the *Climate-Ready* guide and localised risk information to have climate change conversations with 5,600 people. And volunteers, after this training, have mobilised to run events, stalls at festivals, apply for grants and produce resources. And a multi-agency steering committee ensures that speakers have all relevant information and support, and that all agencies are connected to each other. And volunteers, their networks and community participants have also taken further adaptation actions beyond the intention of the original project. So it's really exciting, particularly this volunteer model, which is train people up and go forth and inspire others, which is very exciting.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.redcross.org.au/getmedia/b5b004b5-e572-4d9d-a1a1-c8fb5d1be5e3/climate-ready-communities-a-guide-to-getting-started.pdf.aspx>.

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PROF WEERAMANTHRI: I'm getting some nuts and bolts, and just to try and make this really understandable for, you know, people who aren't familiar with the language and stuff. You mentioned the connection in your submission between energy poverty and social isolation. Can you give some simple examples of how the changing climate might impact individuals or groups in this regard?

[09:24:54]

MS FUERY: So some examples include increased heat will reduce people's mobility and restrict them to their home. If they're unable to use cooling because of fear of energy costs, this, of course, has health impacts. People without access to transport are at greater risk during fast-moving emergencies such as bushfires, if they don't have money for petrol or evacuation. And we saw this play out in New Orleans, for those who died or were left behind were many who couldn't really afford to leave at all. An increase in bushfires and heatwaves will place stress on household budgets, through stretching people's ability to fund preparedness activities and mitigation measures, such as air-conditioning or heating, and safety measures such as evacuation options. So those options aren't always available to everybody.

And ACOSS and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, in their report, *Tackling Climate Change and Energy Affordability for Low-income Households*,<sup>4</sup> which is in 2018, suggest that people who experience poverty and disadvantage will be worse off because they pay proportionately more of their income on essential services and have less choice and control to reduce their costs.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: You mentioned right at the beginning about the Lady Lawley disability service, or home. And we are talking later today with People with Disabilities. Is there anything from your particular experience in terms of providing services to people with disability that you'd like to mention at this point?

MS FUERY: Not through our Lady Lawley service, but we have seen in events people who aren't prepared, particularly for evacuations, when they do have high needs. Or if they're being evacuated and they haven't told their support network where they're going... causes quite a lot of distress. We also are concerned about at-home carers or people who provide community outreach, whether they're going into dangerous situations, and whether people are actually prepared to evacuate, particularly if they're isolated in their homes. A lot of community service organisations who may be providing, say, disability services, aged care facilities, may not always be tapped into the emergency management structure, so they don't always have the best information. They may evacuate to a place which may not be ideal.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.acoss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/ACOSS-BSL-Report-Tackling-climate-change-and-energy-affordability-for-low-income-households.pdf>.

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So a lot of the planning that we're talking about is how we're connecting those services to make sure that they are aware, so they can also guide a lot of emergency planning, which, you know, is a great first step for everyone becoming aware of what their needs may be.

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PROF WEERAMANTHRI: You also mention migrants and diasporic communities in Western Australia. And I'll just mention for the record that we held a consultation forum with people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds earlier this week.

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[09:28:04]

From your experience, why is climate change an issue for these communities and how might it affect their physical and mental health?

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MS FUERY: So like the rest of the population, migrants who settle in Western Australia will be exposed to an increase in hazard risks, including bushfires and heatwave. However, migrants who come into the country may not be familiar with these weather and disaster-related hazards and the health implications that these effects may be experienced by migrants... these effects may be experienced by migrants differently to others. So newly arrived migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, in particular, may not have access to information, community networks or financial resources. And their ability to access warnings in their own language can also be a barrier. And equally, those from a refugee or asylum seeker background may have pre-existing traumas that can be exacerbated by both the uncertainty posed by the hazard risk, for example, bushfire or heat, as well as not trusting official warnings by uniformed agencies, given their experiences in their home countries.

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So without additional support specific to their needs and circumstances, they may not have the capacity to prepare for an emergency or have the resources to recover from an emergency. So we're trying to tap into our client networks, through our migration support programs, to get people aware and educated, but also to talk to their own networks as a step one. And that network could be as simple as their own family to make them aware, but it's an important first step.

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PROF WEERAMANTHRI: We might go to asking you to give a brief overview of the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre. And, you know, I noted with interest and hadn't known before that this centre was established in 2002. So if you could tell us something about, you know, why it's been there for so long and what's triggering that, and what work it's doing.

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MS FUERY: Okay. I'll defer to Fiona on the phone for that one.

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MS TARPEY: So Fiona Tarpey. So yes, the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre has been around for a long time, since 2002. It is, essentially, a reference centre to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies and partners.<sup>5</sup> And its approach is largely to provide technical support and research and policy support to Red Cross national societies, but as the Australian Red Cross or Fiji Red Cross. But looking at the intersection of science, policy in practice; hence being able to provide a lot of technical advice and research and support on innovative and emerging approaches to disaster management and to areas such as forecast-based financing, forecast-based action, which is a really significant [09:31:14] emerging trend in bringing together climate-based information to inform practice in disaster response.

15 The Climate Centre operates globally, but in a very networked way. So it has technical advisors based around the world. There has been one in the Pacific for many years – I couldn't quite put my finger on it, but certainly, at least, the last six or seven years – and in Asia and in other regions. Those technical advisors work very closely with the International Federation, [Red Cross] delegations across the region and with Australian Red Cross. It's received funding from both the Australian and New Zealand governments, and also from the German Government over a number of years. It really does focus, primarily, on providing quite practical guidance and tools to the Red Cross, in that intersection of disaster risk management and climate, and particularly in ways that help us address vulnerability. And finally, the other point I want to make is that it has a very strong voice in international policy dialogue, and really does facilitate access to the Red Cross actors in policy dialogues, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and annual climate talks. And also really develops policy and advice on humanitarian and climate financing initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: That's really helpful, thank you for that. I do know the recent publication from the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre, titled *Heatwave Guide for Cities*.<sup>6</sup> This is obviously of interest to Australia and I think we're understanding more, though, the kind of urban heatwave effect, or the urban heat island effect, and people are responding. We've heard some submissions that have gone to, kind of, early responses, I would still say. Could you talk about that publication and how big an issue this is in Australia, but also in other countries?

40 MS TARPEY: Fiona Tarpey here. Look, on the domestic side, I'll hand over to Erin on how that publication is being utilised.

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<sup>5</sup> Collectively, these societies and partners are known as the Red Cross Movement.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.climatecentre.org/downloads/files/IFRCGeneva/RCCC%20Heatwave%20Guide%202019%20A4%20RR%20ONLINE%20copy.pdf>

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MS FUERY: Thanks Fiona, Erin here. So the impact of disasters in the urban areas is, of course, of interest to Red Cross. As Australia is one of the most urbanised nations in the world, with nearly 90 per cent of Australians living in urban areas, and with the projected increase in the size of capital cities – which can only come from either the development of greenfield sites or urban infill – which is increasing the urban heat island and increasing flash flooding effect, we’re interested in how we can assist communities in building resilience in cities. So we’ve supported both Resilient Melbourne and Resilient Sydney in the development of their strategies. And Resilient Sydney has supported Red Cross’s Disaster Preparedness Week campaign through the Sydney metropolitan area. And one of the key ways they’ve done that is by promoting our Get Prepared app as the key tool for people to take action and get that information.

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In Western Australia, we have partnered with the city of Perth to deliver preparedness sessions to residents in high rise buildings to raise awareness of emergencies that may affect them, and increase their connectedness to neighbours and community members. So we’re particularly concerned about isolation in urban areas, as well, not just the health impacts of climate change, as connection is a really great indicator of resilience and people's ability to, I guess, bounce back and recover from emergencies.

25 PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Ms Tarpey, did you want to talk about outside Australia?

MS TARPEY: Yeah, Fiona Tarpey. Look, I think that publication has been critical to draw attention to the impact of heatwaves on urban communities, and has been picked up, you know, in a policy dialogue, certainly over the last six to nine months, as it has been a under-researched area around climate change. So it’s certainly shone a spotlight on this issue. And the Climate Centre will be able to support national societies and their dialogues with our host governments around how to practically take forward the recommendation into domestic regulation or domestic partnerships, as well.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Okay, thank you both. We’ve just got under 10 minutes left and I’d just like to ask a couple of, kind of, broader questions which are, you know, slightly less well defined. One is around messaging and communication, and just, you know, whether the, kind of, standard model of messaging, kind of, works for other... you know, in your own experience, with disasters or thinking through to the impacts of climate change on health. Because there are recommendations that some kind of public awareness or communication campaign be run in this area, to increase the awareness of the links. But how should that be done? How effective would that be? Just reflecting on, both of you, your own experience about comms and messaging.

MS FUERY: I'm happy to start, Fiona. Erin. It depends on the purpose of the campaign or the education awareness program, as you said. Awareness is one thing, but do we want people to take action? Do we want behaviour to change? That is completely different. So why will  
5 people change their behaviour? You'd think that maybe the first step is for people to realise that they are at risk, and that climate change impacts are a real thing. But we know that that's not always the case. For example, there was a bushfire this week in Forrestdale, and that same community was impacted by a large bushfire earlier this year, and still there are members of that community  
10 who didn't take action when it was quite clear that they are at risk. So if that's not enough for people to take action, what will prompt action?

So my concern about an awareness campaign, without really tapping into how do we change behaviour, how do we work on what people value, which is  
15 [09:38:21]

worth protecting, without that conversation, our experience shows that change is unlikely to happen. So therefore, it can't just be one-way. We're talking about a two-way campaign, multi-pronged at all different levels. So that's  
20 generally where we work at a community level, which is understanding networks, how people get connection. Who do people trust with that information? So if we're talking about the Department of Health, is the Department of Health known in this space as a trusted source for this information? How do people take action? What have their neighbours done, or their friends have done in this space to inspire action? Ultimately, what  
25 does it mean to them? So there's a lot of research around behaviour change, but we tend to work on the values. First, you know, making people realise what's important to them, what the impact may be on those things that are important, and then understanding what their risk is and then how they can take  
30 action.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Ms Tarpey?

MS TARPEY: So Fiona Tarpey. Yes, it's an interesting  
35 point. So I think, particularly, actually, through the work of the Climate Centre, you know... very customised, very specific campaigns that they've developed to try and communicate the scientific information, and calibrate it out to different groups in Pacific communities. So a lot of time in matching the different needs of stakeholders and really cutting and slicing that  
40 communication messages in different ways. And that just means that some information is being presented in cartoons or on YouTube or other different communication methods. I think the other part of the work the climate centre is doing that is really interesting and relevant is what I talked about forecast-based action. And that is the matching of financial instruments to  
45 taking action.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ms Tarpey clarified that forecast-based action is the matching of financial instruments to taking action in advance of a disaster.

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There's been a number of files around this in the Asia Pacific area, like an example would be, say, in Bangladesh. It's a relationship between government and the Red Cross, whereby the Red Cross – the Bangladesh Red Crescent, actually – would work with the government<sup>8</sup> around scientific warnings around an upcoming monsoon, and then identify and work with communities around preparedness actions, and disperse funds in advance of the actual hazard taking place, so that people could take action. And that might mean funds – there's been, for example, in Bangladesh, there's been the release of cash transfers in advance of the hazard, so that people can take actions such as moving to higher ground or using that cash to reinforce their buildings or moving stocks to higher ground. So there's an interesting set of initiatives underway whereby you're combining incentives, financial resources, as well as communications. And it's a good partnership, I think, between governments and communities to make that work.

MS FUERY: And if I can just add – Erin here – it's a great link to the question around energy poverty, recognising that we might [09:42:02]

want to take action, but we don't always recognise what the barriers may be for people. It's not that simple. So by acknowledging that a financial incentive can be a great way for people to take action, that's addressing some of those concerns.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Final question. This Inquiry will make a number of recommendations for Government to consider, including ones on governance and leadership. Can you reflect on your general experience of the value of partnerships between civil society organisations such as yourself and government, and whether such a partnership model should be considered in addressing this complex issue that involves a range of sectors, not just health?

MS FUERY: So Red Cross is partnered with governments across Australia to deliver a number of services, and I can talk about the emergency services space. And these include the Telecross REDi model in South Australia, as I mentioned, the delivery of evacuation centre management in the Northern Territory, and the development and delivery of the Register.Find.Reunite system and its predecessor, the National Registration Inquiry System, which is a 40-year partnership between the Australian Government and state and territory governments. And these partnerships recognise the expertise that sits with community organisations, and the desire of governments to strengthen networks and services that already exist, and not to duplicate effort. And it also recognises the importance of volunteer service provision and community participation.

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<sup>8</sup> Ms Tarpey advised that a relationship is developed between the government and the local Red Cross, which allows the local Red Cross to work with government and donors in relation to developing preparedness actions and fund dispersal in advance of a hazard, such as flooding, occurring.

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5 So we're also a partner in the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience with  
Emergency Management Australia, and our consortium of partners, the  
Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) and the  
10 Bushfires & Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre, to deliver  
emergency management doctrine and professional development. And while  
not a partnership with government, Red Cross has successful partnerships with  
Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer  
Communities, which works closely with the Australian Government to promote  
a greater action and investment in disaster resilience and risk reduction. And  
15 other partners on the roundtable include IAG, Munich Re, Westpac and Optus.  
And Fiona, if I can defer to you to finish.

MS TARPEY: Yes, Fiona Tarpey here. I thought I'd  
15 refer to, sort of, two different levels of partnerships. The first one here in  
Australia is the partnership agreement that Australian Red Cross have had with  
the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for a number of years. And it's a  
partnership where we have regular dialogue at, you know, the senior and  
operational levels. And the partnership allows us to really be flexible and  
20 provide support around climate and disaster work in a tailored way, and in a  
flexible way, to all the Red Cross national societies in the Pacific and in Asia.

[09:44:54]

25 It also provides seed funding and testing funding for initiatives, such as I  
mentioned around forecast-based action.

30 And then in the Pacific itself, there are good relationships between Australian  
Government-funded instrumentalities, such as CSIRO and the Bureau of  
Meteorology and Red Cross institutions. And again, it comes together in areas  
such as forecast-based action where, you know, it's utilising that value of  
scientific data that comes through those agencies, together with specific  
Bureaus of Meteorology, but knowing that they are aligned on community  
groups such as the Red Cross to actually get that information out to community  
35 level.

PROF WEERAMANTHRI: Can I thank you both very much for your  
attendance at today's hearing. It's been particularly helpful to be able to  
discuss state-based, national and international issues in one hearing. A  
40 transcript of this hearing will be sent to you so that you can correct minor  
factual errors before it is placed on the public record. If you could please  
return the transcript within 10 working days of the date of the covering letter or  
email, otherwise it will be deemed to be correct. And while you cannot amend  
your evidence, if you would like to explain particular points in more detail or  
45 present further information, you can provide this as an addition to your  
submission to the Inquiry when you return the transcript, though I note that  
your original submission was very comprehensive. Once again, thank you very  
much for your evidence.



MS FUERY:

Thanks for having us.

MS TARPEY:

Thank you.

5 PROF WEERAMANTHRI:

Thanks a lot, Fiona.

HEARING CONCLUDED