

MEDIA RELEASE

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Nation unprepared for game changing security and economic threats as global defence climate expert arrives in Australia

Australia risks billions of dollars and economic insecurity as climate disasters become more severe, according to the Australian Security Leaders Climate Group (ASLCG).

In launching a climate and security action plan for Australia entitled "[Protect, Prevent and Prepare](#)", Admiral Chris Barrie (Retd) said Australia was turning a blind eye to climate disruption that will, in future decades, turn the world upside down.

Climate, not China, he said, is the biggest security issue: "All the billions of resources being put into confronting China will not help one iota in dealing with the greatest threat to our future security in Australia and the region — and that is climate disruption."

"We have just seen Hurricane Helene in the US cause damage estimated at \$A230 billion in costs—equivalent to nearly 40% of Australia's annual federal budget. In just one storm! And with only 2-6% of affected properties insured, the financial and social toll is immense."

Scientists warn that climate change amplified Helene's impact, increasing rainfall by up to 50% and making the storm 20 times more likely.

"Large parts of northern Australia could become uninhabitable within 30-40 years, threatening military bases, communities, and the economy. Yet there is little recognition of this level of threat to Australia, leaving the nation severely exposed to the devastating costs."

The Australian Security Leaders Climate Group's "[Protect, Prevent and Prepare](#)" [action plan](#)" calls on the government to make climate the cornerstone of its regional policy by:

- Understanding that global cooperation rather than conflict is key to responding to the climate crisis, and acting accordingly by building alliances with both large and small Asia-Pacific governments for a regional climate mobilisation.
- Increasing support for developing nations to facilitate their preparedness and prevention plans.
- Partnering with nations in the region to deploy a monitoring system to identify potential food insecurity hotspots and fund enhancements of food, supply chain, and energy resilience in the region.

The plan is being released as a world-leading figure on climate and security, General Tom Middendorp, arrives in Australia to address the **National Climate Security Summit** in Canberra this week. General Middendorp (Retd) is the former Chief of Defence of the Netherlands and Chair of the International Military Council on Climate and Security.

"Climate change is undoubtedly the biggest game changer of this century. It affects not just our environment, but also our economies and security in profound ways. For Australia and its region, the escalating climate impacts—ranging from food and water insecurity to displacement and conflict—demand urgent, coordinated action. Our security challenges are increasingly being shaped by climate risks, and how we respond today will define the future stability of our region and beyond. This Summit marks an important step forward in Australia assessing the full level of risk," said General Tom Middendorp (Retd).

The Summit will examine detailed evidence on how climate warming will drive a deepening regional food and water crisis that will destabilise nations and cause the mass displacement of people. The Summit's briefing paper, [Australia's Climate Security Challenge: Examining the Physical Basis for a Potential 3°C+ Warming Future](#), highlights that large parts of the tropics will suffer “near-unliveable” extreme heat conditions.

New climate extremes — of rainfall and heat, flooding and drought — beyond human experience will occur, with a committed sea-level rise of several metres. The paper concludes that: “There’s no evidence that we can support humanity at this level of warming and there is a very big risk that we will just end our civilisation.”

Adm Barrie said: “The analysis we have done is so shocking people don’t want to believe it, but that is what the evidence from senior security experts as well as the world’s best scientists is telling us, and I think they are right. A national conversation about the need to ‘Protect, Prevent and Prepare’ is beyond urgent.”

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About the Australia Security Leaders Climate Group

The ASLCG is a coalition of former security, defence, and policy experts committed to raising awareness of the risks posed by climate change. The group advocates for comprehensive strategies to address the implications of climate disruption on Australia’s security landscape. aslcg.org