

Open Letter to COP 28

on behalf of
South Australia's
young people

Lilli

DEE

OLIVIA

Anjali 

Emma

Bodhi


Poppy


NATISH 



Denzel

Lenia

YAE 

Erin

As children and young people, we are particularly vulnerable to climate change, despite being least responsible for contributing to it. Climate change adversely impacts our rights and is both a threat to our future, and a problem that requires efforts that are 'beyond our individual spheres of influence'.

Samaira

Fereshte

ELEANOR

Niji 

Lejla

Our concerns about climate change are far reaching. It is unfair that climate change increases social and economic inequalities, and disproportionately impacts people who have the least resources to respond and cope, including children and young people living in families with low incomes and in regional and remote communities.

We are frustrated by the lack of action being taken to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and the lack of consideration for the wellbeing and interests of present and future generations. We want to share our thoughts with global leaders and ensure that even though we are from a minor state in Australia, we are heard.

We are a representative group of school students who came together in October to discuss climate change and food security, expressing our ideas for change both at local and global levels.

We see, that as a relatively unpopulated state, with a rich mix of farming, fishing, food manufacturing and winemaking, South Australia is uniquely positioned to be a leader in the development and introduction of sustainable food systems.



montaigne



Kasey



PERCY



Jada



ALICIA



Della



MATALA



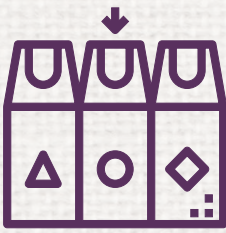
We would like to make you aware that as young people the things we love about food sustainability in South Australia include...

- Community gardens.
- Grocery stores that are now putting oddly shaped fruit and vegetables on shelves.
- People who are using recycled water for agriculture production.
- Schools teaching about sustainability as part of the school curriculum.
- Increased production and availability of organic food.
- Schools embracing sustainability by growing their own fruit and vegetables, and more schools having livestock on school grounds.
- Putting 'Made in SA' icons on food labels.
- Farmers markets that bring communities together and help people understand where food comes from.
- Having smaller landfill bins than recycling and green bins, and the landfill bin being collected less frequently.
- More opportunities to support local farmers and their produce, so that 'buy locally' is becoming part of our state identity.
- Our sustainable energy production, which is increasingly used in food production.



We are, however, aware of the impacts of climate change on food security through...

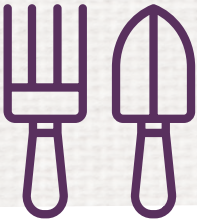
- Droughts and floods impacting farmers' ability to produce fresh produce, causing higher prices in shops and school canteens.
- The water wastage created in meat production.
- Packaged food being the most accessible option for many people as it's cheaper, causing us to pick unhealthy options and therefore become less healthy.
- Remote and rural communities being more affected by food insecurity due to transport and other costs.
- The decline in native animals and vulnerable bee populations crucial to the food production system as pollinators.
- Rising temperatures causing people to use their air conditioners more often, spending more on electricity to leave less money available to buy food.
- The impact of climate anxiety on the day-to-day lives of all living creatures.
- The cost of water acting as a barrier to people growing their own fruit and vegetables.
- People living in deserts who have limited opportunities to purchase fresh food.
- Oversupply of fast food.



We want more ‘real world’ relevance in what we are learning, and for our schools to be more committed to...

We acknowledge that schools have a role to play in increasing climate literacy, which is an important aspect of addressing our concerns related to climate change.

- Taking a whole school and community approach to waste management that enables recycling and composting.
- Considering energy efficiency and sustainability in all major works on school buildings, infrastructure and facilities.
- Encouraging staff and students to bus, train, walk, or cycle to school, and supporting ‘active’ or ‘fuel-efficient’ transport choices to become the norm.
- Implementing tree-planting programs to address local heat issues and supporting low carbon food production on and off site.
- Implementing programs that measure, monitor, compare, and reduce each school’s carbon footprint.
- Taking a policy approach to having green bins for disposal of food waste in all schools.
- Education on food sustainability, nutrition, and food systems to be included in school curriculums.
- Establishing school vegetable gardens and gardening clubs.
- Taking a state-wide approach that sees canteens consistently applying sustainable practices and make affordable quality food available across all schools.
- Promoting greater awareness around possible careers in food security and sustainability.



What we need from our local communities...

- Community gardens in every suburb with local council support.
- Environmental programs for young people at a neighbourhood level.
- More education on how waste systems impact the wider community.
- Accessible local composting facilities that give the compost to local farms at reduced or no cost.
- Rainwater tanks for all new buildings.
- Climate efficient housing standards for all new buildings.
- All food packaging to be made biodegradable.
- More community events to educate people and raise awareness of food sustainability.
- Support for sharing different cultural practices, and ways to embrace different approaches to tackling climate change from people of different cultures and religions.
- More reward systems such as SA's 10 cent recycling scheme, introduced across a broader range of products.
- Support for people living in food deserts to establish community gardens that will deliver fresh food for their whole community.
- More support for climate action and climate change education in schools and local communities, consistent with Australia's national and international commitments and obligations.



To make this a reality, we need Australian and world leaders to...

- Give effect to children's fundamental human rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- Promote children and young people's access to information and public participation in addressing climate change.
- Develop and implement educational programs on climate change and its effects, as per Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (particularly Targets 4.7, 12.8 and 13.3).
- Make curriculum changes to include food sustainability and climate change.
- Introduce and monitor stricter regulation on the use of fertilisers and pesticides.
- Legislate consistent use of green bins.
- Introduce a similar scheme to 10 cent recycling for organics and other recycling.
- Promote use of vertical farming.
- Remove subsidies for big cattle farms.
- Rethink architecture and sustainable buildings, and introduce more policies on the impact of design and architecture on human health.
- Regulate anti-competitive farm takeovers to better support small enterprise farmers.
- Establish more robust recycling systems.
- Fund more research into sustainable agriculture.