

Coastal communities must plan for sea level rise

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Coastal communities could be significantly damaged if authorities don't plan ahead for sea-level rise, according to University of Queensland experts studying coastal inundation.

UQ's Dr Megan Saunders is a post-doctoral researcher at the Global Change Institute, investigating the impacts of sea level rise on the Great Barrier Reef and South East Queensland as part of the Australian Sea Level Rise Partnership.

The Moreton Bay area is one of the key focal areas of the four-year research program.

"Sea level rise is happening already," Dr Saunders said. "The scientific consensus is that seas could rise by as much as one metre by 2100.

"Four out of five Australians live within 50 kilometres of the coastline. To ignore the vulnerability of coastal communities to inundation would be to expose them to unnecessary levels of risk.

"The Climate Council recently released a report indicating that \$200 billion of Australian infrastructure is already at risk from sea level rise as a result of climate change."

"Sea level rise threatens marine ecosystems, it threatens [coastal communities](#) and it also threatens local economies. The cost of ignoring the science is far greater than the cost of incorporating [scientific](#)

[evidence](#) into coastal planning."

Dr Saunders said the study was the most up to date and detailed body of scientific evidence about the impacts of [sea level rise](#).

"This work has been done to ensure councils are reliably informed in their decision-making processes," she said.

"It would set a dangerous precedent to ignore this work."

Provided by University of Queensland

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