

New ways to motivate climate change action around the world

September 29 2015, by Rose Trapnell



Clouds over Australia are shown. Credit: NASA

New international research has found a way to help the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change promote their message for more urgent action around the world.

QUT's Dr Paul Bain, from the School of Psychology and Counselling, led a three-year research program, published in *Nature Climate Change* today.

Dr Bain said the research examined the views of over 6000 people in 24 countries.

"The results could be valuable for the upcoming UN [climate change](#) summit in Paris," Dr Bain said.

"Put simply, in many places around the world climate change is losing ground to other issues in capturing the public's attention and priority.

"The question is how to find new ways to motivate action, especially for those who are unconvinced or unconcerned about climate change. I guess our approach is a bit like the old saying 'if the mountain won't come to you, you must go to the mountain'.

"Rather than trying to convince these people to care more about climate change, perhaps they would act if [climate change mitigation](#) could produce other benefits that they cared about.

"Things like reducing pollution, promoting new economic opportunities, or even just helping us see ourselves as people who care for one another and the planet.

"Research has examined some of these benefits in the past, but ours is the first to look at a wide range of benefits in an integrated way and to determine which benefits motivate action around the world.

"If government policies and communications addressed these benefits, they are more likely to gain widespread public support."

Dr Taciano Milfont from Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand, who also coordinated the project, said two types of benefits were strongly linked to action: promoting economic and scientific development, and helping foster a more caring community.

Another project coordinator, Professor Yoshi Kashima from the University of Melbourne, said: "The motivating effects of economic development varied across countries, but the belief that acting on climate change promotes a more caring community was a universally motivating belief across the countries we studied".

"If a global message is to be sent to motivate everyone, it is the potential of climate change action bringing people together for a better world," Professor Kashima said.

More information: "Co-benefits of addressing climate change can motivate action around the world." *Nature Climate Change* (2015) [DOI: 10.1038/nclimate2814](https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate2814)

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