

Is climate change worry reducing the desire to have children?

May 9 2022



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

New research is asking whether Australian women consider the world a safe and promising place for children and the next generation to flourish.

The [national study](#) is seeking input from mothers and potential mothers about how the impacts of climate change, including Australia's recent bushfires and major floods, is shaping their feelings and potential decisions about child-bearing and motherhood.

The 2022 pilot study aims to reflect upon reproductive and child-rearing sentiments, decisions and practices in the "age of climate change," says Flinders University researcher and "Maternal Futures" chief investigator Associate Professor Kris Natalier.

"We are living through an era in which climate-fueled crises increasingly demand our attention," Associate Professor Natalier says.

"For women who foresee a future in which climate change accelerates and disasters worsen, it has become increasingly problematic to bring new life into this troubled horizon of crises becoming even more frequent and elongated."

Sociology researchers Associate Professor Kris Natalier at Flinders and Professor of Emotions and Society Mary Holmes from the University of Edinburgh, UK, will work with University of Tasmania historian Dr. Carla Pascoe Leahy to develop a [conceptual framework](#) for further studies.

"This framework has been tested through analysis of testimonies from women whose fertility decisions were unsettled by climate covered on the US Conceivable Futures website," says Dr. Pascoe Leahy.

"We are already seeing rising numbers of women deciding to abandon or postpone their desire to have children.

"Others have decided to limit family sizes and still others who are already mothers reconsidering the best ways to raise their children for a

future climate that is uncertain as parenting practices are disrupted by disasters that up-end everyday family life," she says.

The study will seek to assess and measure the links between [environmental studies](#) and [family studies](#) and help quantify the flow-on effects upon society and family of the climate crisis.

"Government policy and [media coverage](#) has focused on the impacts of climate change on health, illness and death, the economic ramifications on employment and working conditions, and physical changes on buildings and infrastructure," adds Associate Professor Natalier.

"But we seek to document, measure and find responses to the profound changes occurring at a community level—in the experiential, emotional and cultural effects of these climate catastrophes."

People wishing to take part in the study can contact:
carla.pascoe Leahy@utas.edu.au or Kris.natalier@flinders.edu.au.

Provided by Flinders University

Citation: Is climate change worry reducing the desire to have children? (2022, May 9) retrieved 21 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-05-climate-desire-children.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--