

## **Pacific Island Nations Call out**

Australia and New Zealand's neighbours in the Pacific: the Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu are asking for our solidarity as they face the consequences of human-induced climate change. The Torres Strait Islands at the northern tip of Queensland face similar threats.

Low lying islands acknowledge that they need to address population and unemployment issues, better manage their environmental resources, improve food security and protect their fish resources from poaching. What they want us to realise is that greenhouse gas emissions from polluting countries like Australia and New Zealand are exacerbating these problems and creating new ones.

They are experiencing increasingly severe storm surges and higher king tides resulting in coastal erosion and receding shorelines. Longer droughts and more frequent inundation of salt water is damaging soil and leading to the death of important food sources such as bread fruit, taro and coconut. Fresh water supplies are also threatened. As with Australia's Great Barrier Reef, warmer ocean surface temperatures threaten to bleach coral reefs and thus damage coastal fishing supplies. As the climate changes some islands will see an increase in diseases like dengue fever and malaria.

Green house gas emissions need to be drastically cut back and the islands need more substantial assistance than is already being provided to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

At the Pacific Island Forum in Cairns in August 2009 the Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tuvalu restated their adoption of the position of the global Association of Small Islands States that asks developed nations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2020 and 85 percent by 2050.