

Climate change

in the Wet Tropics

Scientists predict that climate change (or global warming) will increase average temperatures between 2 and 4.5 degrees in the next 100 years. This is likely to have a dramatic impact on the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, even in the next 20 years.

- There may be less rainfall and the moist clouds that drape the rainforests may move higher up the mountains.
- Cyclones, storms and droughts may be more frequent and more severe. There might also be more floods or bushfires.
- Sea levels may rise by up to 90cm.
- Lots of animals and plants that live in the cooler mountainous areas may not survive if the climate becomes hotter and drier.
- Disrupted and damaged rainforests will get more weeds, feral animals and diseases.

What can you do to help Wet Tropics animals and plants?

- Plant vegetation corridors so animals and plants can move around when the climate changes. For example, they might need to move up the mountains where it is cooler or move inland away from rising sea levels.
- Growing trees can also help use up carbon dioxide in the air and reduce climate change.
- Educate your friends and family about the dangers of climate change in the Wet Tropics.

Activities

- Make a list of some animals that live in cool mountainous areas like the Tablelands. See the pictures on this page for some clues. Do you know which ones are endemic (only found in the Wet Tropics)?
- Draw a picture of the rainforest during a cyclone or during a drought. Include some rainforest animals and the food they need to survive.

Class discussion

- Where could your class help plant some trees for rainforest animals? What trees might provide food for these animals?
- Think about how you and your family might be affected by climate change.

