

# Climate Change and Sea Level Rise

A PCYE report

By ANDREW STANTON

For many Pacific Islanders, climate change and sea level rise are not unproven forecasts or worrying scientific theories to be debated by experts and politicians. These phenomena have daily consequences for the way people live their lives. Tawati Uati, delegate from Kiribati to the recent Pacific Youth Caucus on the Environment (PYCE) in Wollongong, explained how villagers are forced daily to adjust to rising tides.

“Every day the tides come up under some houses in the villages. My people have to move their cooking equipment inland just to eat. We are afraid our island is disappearing,” said Tawati.

Other effects include:

- Increased storm and cyclone events with increased severity
- Coastal erosion and subsequent reduction in landmass
- Increased salinity of fresh water and soils
- Coral bleaching and loss of biodiversity

In the wake of increasing global concern about climate change and global warming, and the difficulty in arriving at international measures to reduce greenhouse emissions, there has never been a greater need for action at all levels to alleviate symptoms like those reported by Tawati.

Climate change was a priority issue identified by the Pacific Youth Environment Network (PYEN) during the PYCE, as they called for increased action regarding a conclusive global climate change agreement:

“We the Pacific Youth Environment Network call for a binding, long-term agreement amongst the International community to mitigate the detrimental effects of climate change upon our region.

We hope that this document will incorporate specific protocols that address greenhouse gas emissions and the other causes of climate change.

We call for immediate global action!

The recent withdrawal of the USA from the Kyoto protocol makes the need for action more urgent.

The Pacific region is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with the islands of the Pacific already suffering from the rising sea levels, increased incidents of severe weather events, and the disruption of agriculture, marine industries and eco-tourism.

The health and well being of our people is dependent upon the health of our environment.”

The failure by the global community to act on the issue of climate change was seen by many delegates as a violation of their human rights, particularly for those small atoll countries like Kiribati, Tuvalu and Cook Islands. If sea level rise does indeed claim these islands, they will lose not only their land but also their heritage and cultural identity.

“We don’t want to see these people become refugees in their own world because some big bully decided that the economy is more important than the lives of the people,” Nacanieli Cakacaka, delegate from Fiji, said.

The PYEN used the opportunity created by the PYCE, the inaugural meeting of the network, to produce several position statements relating to environmental issues in the Pacific. The Wollongong Declaration and a Climate Change Declaration will be used as inputs to the Rio + 10 process, to be read out at next year’s Earth Summit in Johannesburg in South Africa.

Climate change is not only a concern for the small island developing states of the Pacific, but also Australia and New Zealand. A CSIRO commissioned report released recently, states that on average, temperatures in Australia will rise by six degrees by 2070. The report also identifies some of the likely impacts this will have on Australian climate and ecology. Predicted effects include increases in mosquito born diseases like malaria, and a general decrease in rainfall and moisture. For more info see <http://www.csiro.au/>

# Don’s Party

## A look at the new unibar

by CHRIS PORTELLI

The new Unibar has been summed up by one of the more insane members on campus as being “hightech neo dumbness”, aimed purely to awe people with its flashy, contemporary design, but not actually satisfying students needs. Is it just that, a yuppie look for a yuppie generation? Or does it actually cater for more of a diverse crowd? Ultimately the decision is up to you. Each of us has our own tastes, likes and dislikes, so naturally some may love the new Unibar, while others may despise it. That’s why everyone should take a look for them selves.

The old Unibar has been described as being dim, dark, smaller, crowded and having more of a pub atmosphere. The new Unibar, on the other hand, allows for more sunlight in the day, has adequate lighting at night, is more open and spacious, and also acts as an extended cafeteria during the day and more like a club at night. It immediately attracts more of a crowd. Somehow the \$3million worth of steel, wood, glass and plastic which has been moulded together to build this place, helps it look like a desirable. Don Beale, University Of Wollongong entertainment bar manager says that the new Unibar is successful because it can facilitate more students, both

in the daytime and at night.

During the daytime the Unibar becomes just another place to hang out, although it is more interesting to be there rather than the cafeteria, games room, duck pond lawn and definitely more interesting than the library. It’s a place to hang with friends, a place to eat, a place to play, as there are pool tables there and also a place to study. Of course for those who love to drink, it’s a place to do that as well. You lucky people. The brilliant thing is that you can do most at the same time. So next time you have to cram for a test or have a major assignment due, just come to the Unibar and drink the nerves away. Sounds like a study plan to me.

The night life has a different atmosphere. Its success depends on what the individual is into. For those who like the techno and dance style of music you probably won’t get it at the Unibar, at least on a Thursday night anyway. It does have a stage and Don Beale plans to use it...all the time. The chance that the band will be ‘famous’ is possible but unlikely most weeks, which is a good thing because it gives local up and coming bands a good chance.

The music varies from night to night and from week to week. Don’t forget your

student ID card on Thursday nights however, otherwise you’ll be slugged with a \$5 entry fee. There is also a bus that travels between the unibar and Wollongong City via some campuses which starts at 11:30.

The end of semester party will be a good innauguration into the Unibar. It will be held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June with Superhiest and Sick Puppies headlining. Word of warning though, apparently there is a looooooong line up for drinks. To make it worse the line travels right through, which seperates one part of the Unibar from the other. Beale says the first few weeks of opening are being closely monitored, to see what improvements are necessary. So if the long line up is still occuring don’t fear, it will be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

No matter whether you think it’s good or not is your own business. The University should be thanked though as it has shown the students it is thinking about their needs. If you do like the place then good on you. If you have a problem with it, however, don’t just whine to your friends, write to either the Tertangala or speak to Don Beale whom you can find in the entertainment office on the ground floor of building 11, or at the unibar serving. He’ll make it all better.



Don Beale (left) and Gerard Sutton at the official Unibar opening; May 24.

Photo by Ariane Lewis