

I write from the remote Northern Territory community of Tennant Creek where I have lived and worked in the Aboriginal Health sector since 2004. Exceptionally hot weather here, made more uncomfortable by high humidity, has made the summer unpleasant.

The population of Tennant Creek is about half Aboriginal, a visible and extremely disadvantaged community. We have the highest rate of renal disease in the country, needing a 40 bed dialysis unit for a town of 3000 people (and with much more demand). The extent to which dehydration contributes to renal disease should be considered. The price of electricity is an important determinant of the livelihoods of people living on a tight budget. Without electricity people face discomfort and days of torpor and lethargy. People who are less well may experience serious threats to health and some have been admitted to hospital as a precaution against days in open houses.

The weather radar in Tennant Creek was recently dismantled, reducing the capacity of the Bureau of Meteorology to predict storms and other extreme weather events, and increasing our sense of isolation. A glimpse of the radar images in NT shows a huge distance - 800km - without radar images between Alice Springs and Katherine. There is no image of Tennant Creek.

Our Aboriginal people will be the worst affected by climate change due to their links to country, and monetary poverty. To my disappointment my organisation is not encouraged to monitor and report on our greenhouse gas emissions. Incentives from funding bodies to report and reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions could lead to this sector taking leadership in this important future endeavour.

Thank you for the opportunity to have my voice heard.  
I would like to see urgent and whole of government action on climate change.

Rosalie Schultz