

SENATE ENQUIRY SUBMISSION:

Implications of Climate Change for Australia's National Security

Submission by:

Name: Michael Nolan

SUBMISSION:

I would like to draw to the attention of this Senate Enquiry, the document and excerpts in **'The Global Risks Report 2017, 12th Edition, Insight Report'** published by the **World Economic Forum**.

In the **'Executive Summary'** the Report states:

"Further challenges requiring global cooperation are found in the environmental category, which this year stands out in the GRPS (Global Risks Perception Survey). Over the course of the past decade, a cluster of environment-related risks - notably *extreme weather events* and *failure of climate change mitigation and adaptation* as well as *water crises* - has emerged as a consistently central feature of the GRPS risk landscape, strongly interconnected with many other risks, such as conflict and migration. This year, environmental concerns are more prominent than ever, with all five risks in this category assessed as being above average for both impact and likelihood".

Page 16: "This shows that ineffective management of the "global commons" - the oceans, atmosphere, and climate system - can have local as well as global consequences. For example, changing weather patterns or water crises can trigger or exacerbate geopolitical and societal risks such as domestic or regional conflict and involuntary migration, particularly in geopolitically fragile areas.

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Table 1.2: Most Important Risks'
Interconnections

1	Unemployment and underemployment
	Profound social instability
2	Large-scale involuntary migration
	State collapse or crisis
3	Failure of climate-change mitigation and adaptation
	Water crises
4	Failure of national governance
	Profound social instability
5	Interstate conflict with regional consequences
	Large-scale involuntary migration

Source: World Economic Forum Global Risks Perception Survey 2016.

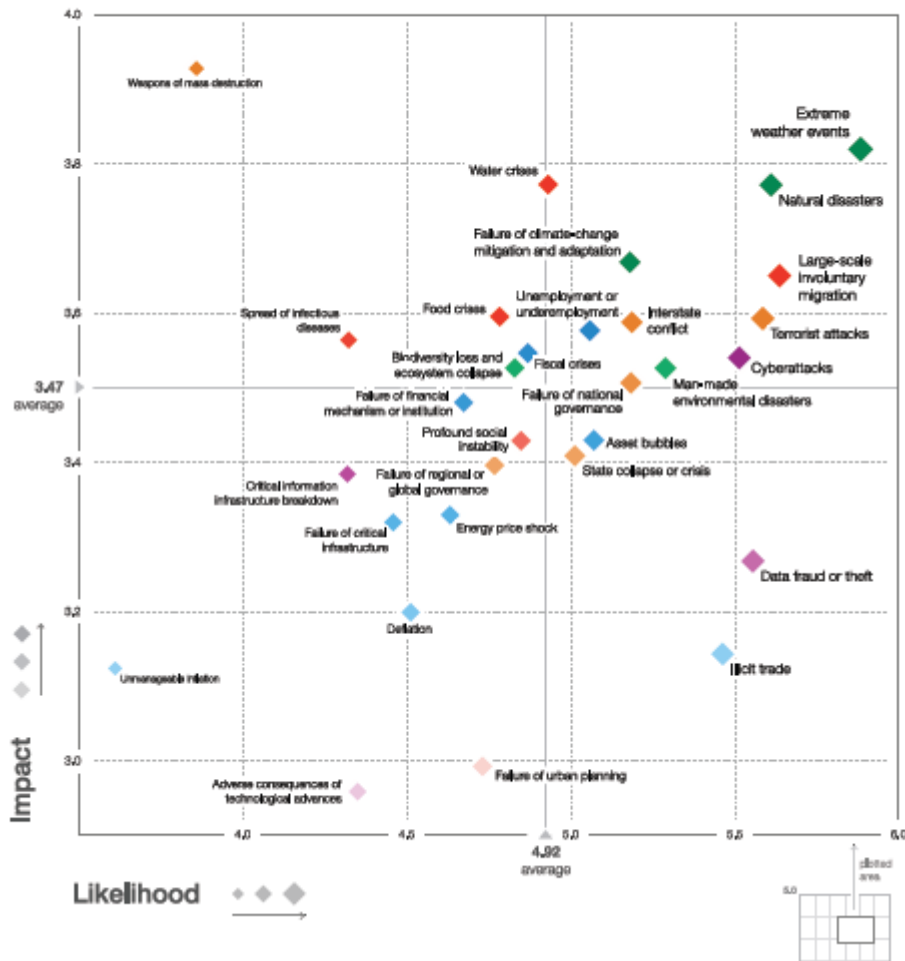
Page 73 (of 76) of the **World Economic Forum Report 2017** sets out the ‘**Top 5 Global Risks**’ – termed ‘**Evolving risks**’. Note the ‘Top 5’ now strongly features ‘**Environmental risks**’ that are linked directly or indirectly to ‘**Climate Change**’. Note the increase in ‘**Environmental risks**’ since 2011. Also note that ‘**Water Crisis**’ has been re-classified as <societal> although many of the associated water issues are also climate-related.

Figure 2: The Evolving Risks Landscape, 2007-2017



Source: World Economic Forum 2007-2017, Global Risks Reports
 Note: Global risks may not be strictly comparable across years, as definitions and the set of global risks have evolved with new issues emerging on the 10-year horizon. For example, cyberattacks, income disparity and unemployment entered the set of global risks in 2012. Some global risks were reclassified: water crises and rising income disparity were re-categorized first as societal risks and then as a trend in the 2015 and 2016 Global Risks Reports, respectively. The 2006 edition of the Global Risks Report did not have a risks landscape

Figure 3: The Global Risks Landscape 2017



In reference to this Report, and in reference to other information related to Climate Change, I make the following observations in this submission to the Senate Enquiry.

1. Changing weather patterns and water crises are likely to trigger or exacerbate geopolitical and societal events such as domestic or regional conflict and involuntary migration. For example, sea level rises will force mass migration from many populous coastal cities in SE Asia. Retreat and melting of glaciers in China will displace populations and reduce food production. These impacts may well be blamed on high emitting countries (such as Australia).
2. Changing weather patterns may adversely impact food production more generally in SE Asia, the Pacific Rim and in Australia.
3. It therefore points to recommendations for Australia to consider in regard to its position on Climate Change, both domestically and on the world stage.

Recommendations:

I respectfully make the following suggestions and recommendations to this Enquiry:

- Australia should accelerate its carbon emissions reductions domestically, consistent with strengthening the long-term global goal, and limiting the increase in global temperature to the 1.5 °C threshold, as per the United Nations Paris Framework.
- Australia should demonstrate leadership, and advocate strongly at future UN COP meetings for emissions targets and trajectories consistent with not exceeding a +1.5 C degrees threshold.
- In view of the two points above, Australia's Federal government should educate the Australian public appropriately in the risks associated with global climate change, including impacts of sea level rises, water supply risks to international states, impacts on food production, probable mass migrations, as it relates to what Australia is saying and doing domestically, and what we advocate for internationally.
- Australia should invest foreign aid in our Region in educating and assisting other countries in Climate Change adaptation and mitigation.

Australia can then in the presence of visible action on the four (4) Points above, continue over time, to substantively reduce geo-political risks associated with Climate Change, and therefore favourably impact Australia's National Security.

Failure to do so, will exacerbate many if not all risks in Table 1.2 above.

END.