

Australia: Fires driven by climate change are the 'new normal'

Sunday 19 January 2020, by [CREAMER Harry](#), [McILROY Jim](#) (Date first published: 14 January 2020).

Harry Creamer, a leading environment activist from Port Macquarie on the NSW central-north coast and longstanding member of Climate Change Hastings, acted for most of us on November 10 when he gatecrashed Prime Minister Scott Morrison and NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian's media conference at the Rural Fire Service's offices in Wauchope. Jim McIlroy.

Creamer told *Green Left Weekly* he did it because, like so many others, he is angry that governments are refusing to take seriously the link between climate change and the bushfire catastrophe engulfing northern NSW and southern Queensland.

"I acted because I know how important it is to understand that climate change is a driving force of the bushfire emergency we are facing right now. I feel so let down by the prime minister and the premier because of their refusal to take climate change seriously.

"I felt that a peaceful protest was the best way to elevate the issue at this important time."

Creamer said there is "no doubt" that climate scientists "have been predicting for several decades" that we are facing hotter weather and lower rainfall in parts of Australia.

"The consequent change in the fire regime is now playing out in NSW and Queensland," Creamer said. "While climate change is a global problem, our political leaders can do a lot more to tackle the problem head on.

"This is the new normal.

"As we head into increasingly tough times, our leaders should be with us.

"Our leaders must take decisive action on climate change right now.

"The reality is the prime minister, the NSW premier and all Coalition MPs seldom, if ever, use the words 'climate change'. If pushed, they may say they 'believe' in climate change — as if it were a religion.

"The key point is this: if they do know what's really happening, if they accept the science, they would know that we are entering a climate emergency.

"This is where we are now at, and all the solutions to the emergency already exist."

"In an emergency, all operations are informed by the nature of the situation, such that all decisions made can help deal with the emergency, and don't risk worsening it.

"State and federal governments are doing next to nothing to tackle Australian emissions at the

source.

“And, to make matters worse, every effort is being made to increase emissions by opening new coal mines, approving any development they hope will make money, and destroying all natural environments that stand between them and the money to be made.

“The phrase ‘business as usual’ is their motto. Climate policy under the Coalition has been carefully, cynically and cunningly crafted to allow polluters to pollute, new mines to open, farmers to clear, loggers to log, diesel to power commuter cars, and the population to grow beyond sustainable limits.

“Actions speak louder than words. Judge them by their actions, not their words.

“Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack is right to say we’ve always had bushfires, but he is wrong to leave it at that. The truth is, fires are getting worse, driven by human actions creating global warming and climate change.

“The fire season is getting longer, fires are now more frequent, and often more intensive and larger in extent. These fires may have happened anyway, but they are worse through years of global and local climate policy neglect.

“Climate denial by the Liberals and Nationals just makes things worse for everyone. We need to know the government has our backs, as every new extreme weather event, be it fires or floods, hits somewhere in Australia.

“Climate change does not cause extreme weather events, but it does make them worse, including fires and droughts. When the fires are over, we still have the drought to contend with.

“These fires are indeed unprecedented, but that’s what we would expect as the planet warms. It’s what has been predicted for years. It’s the new normal, for now, until the next new normal emerges.”

Harry Creamer

P.S.

• Green Left Weekly. November 14, 2019. Issue 1245:
<https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/fires-driven-climate-change-are-new-normal>