

Sport & Climate Impacts: How much heat can sport handle?

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In the words of Andrew Demetriou, former CEO of the Australian Football League and Board Member of The Climate Institute.

In my role with the AFL in the last few years, I talked to many people about a range of issues — and naturally some of them were closer to my heart than others. The issues I encountered in the AFL are vast; they touch people from every conceivable walk of life. Some resonate on a personal basis more than others.

As a board member of The Climate Institute, I'm engaged on an issue that is important in so many ways. When thinking about how best I could provide a clear understanding of why I'm involved with the Institute, first on my mind is how climate change is impacting us locally and globally.

I think about the fact that climate change is gravely affecting the way we live and the way our children will live in decades to come. I think about the effect it's having on infrastructure and the future of our economy, and about the dangerously high global levels of CO₂ we're currently faced with.

The science is loud and clear. Our world is warming, and places like Australia are experiencing ever wilder weather: more drought, bushfires, and other extreme weather events.

The Climate Institute has documented in previous work the impacts of climate on infrastructure and large sectors like finance and transport.

For this summer — and to mark a year since Melbourne experienced a severe heatwave while athletes played multiple-hour tennis matches at the Australian Open — the Institute is documenting the impacts of climate change on sport.

Summer and winter sports alike are impacted. Some are showing resilience, changing their practices and amending playing grounds. Others will find adaptation much harder.

Sport, of course, is near and dear to me. So I'm very pleased to provide the opening words to this report.

I hope that you will find it compelling and consider the many aspects of our lives that climate change is altering, in some instances forever.

Like in other areas of our society and economy, we need to act now for greater resilience in managing unavoidable climate impacts, but to also call for urgent decarbonisation of the Australian and global economies to avoid unmanageable climate impacts. We can't afford to stay on the sidelines on this issue.

The full Sport & Climate Impacts report and associated content such as infographics can be found at www.climateinstitute.org.au/sport-and-climate.html