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MEDIA RELEASE

Pacific and Indigenous voices lead world's largest climate adaptation event

More than 90 countries will be represented at the eighth international Adaptation Futures event (AF2025) set to be held in Ōtautahi Christchurch, New Zealand from 13-16 October.

Adaptation Futures is the world's largest and most important climate adaptation event bringing together scientists, governments and industry. More than 200 in-person and online sessions will cover AF2025's core themes of Indigenous innovation and leadership; oceans, islands, and futures; cities, settlements and infrastructure; the food, water, and biodiversity nexus; health, wellbeing, and future generations; the art of adaptation, communication and education; and beyond adaptation. AF2025 will have a particular emphasis on issues for the Pacific and Indigenous people.

The flagship event of the United Nations' (UN) World Adaptation Science Programme (WASP) will be co-hosted by WASP and Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury (UC), in a hybrid format allowing people to join in person or online. It is supported by a sponsorship consortium of national and international partners, and foundation sponsor, the Adaptation Fund.

New Zealand Minister of Climate Change Simon Watts said the country is working on a national adaptation framework to better understand and manage the risks of a changing climate, and hosting AF2025 would boost these conversations.

"I am looking forward to welcoming international delegates to Adaptation Futures in Christchurch in October. Bringing together world experts on adaptation strengthens the discussions we're already having here in New Zealand on how to face some of climate change's biggest challenges," he said.

"As an island nation with our fair share of weather extremes, we are keenly aware of the need to accelerate adaptation action to protect communities and make the most of the economic opportunities that flow from being one of the best prepared countries in the world. We're also part of and partnered with the Pacific, a region which has long led on recognising climate threats and driving action."

AF2025 co-convenor Professor Bronwyn Hayward of the University of Canterbury said adapting to a changing climate is now an urgent reality. During the event, panels will discuss Indigenous leadership; the impacts of climate change on the Pacific and developing countries; how insurance will be tested; and the impacts for finance, loss, and damage in relation to climate adaptation. Masterclasses will also be offered, featuring state-of-the-art responses to climate risk.

Foundation Sponsor Adaptation Fund will support five premier Innovation “Spotlight” events during AF2025 to showcase highly innovative approaches that accelerate adaptation, selected from the wider lineup of presenters. Head of the Adaptation Fund Mikko Ollikainen said AF2025 provided a vital platform for advancing innovative and inclusive climate adaptation.

“We strongly welcome the focus on Indigenous leadership and locally led solutions, which are essential for building resilience that is both effective and equitable. Through our expanding portfolio in the Pacific and beyond, and by creating more opportunities for countries to pilot, scale, and share adaptation innovations, the Fund remains committed to closing the global adaptation gap,” he said.

“We look forward to working alongside partners to co-create and exchange knowledge directly with communities on the ground, transforming climate risks into opportunities and ensuring that the most vulnerable remain at the heart of global adaptation efforts.”

According to Distinguished Professor Steven Ratuva of the University of Canterbury, also a co-convenor, more than 90 countries will be represented at the conference as 1200 global and Indigenous leaders, climate scientists, policy makers, researchers, and investors come together to share knowledge, ideas, and stories to help accelerate climate adaptation action across the world.

Arts events, living labs and field days will be part of the week, offering participants and the local community opportunities to collaborate, network, and share skills. Interest has already been high with more than 1200 people applying to present their research.

Climate adaptation work involves preparing for the current and future impacts of climate change such as more frequent and extreme weather, flooding, and heatwaves.

Professor Hayward said organisers were grateful to the world's climate scientists, businesses, investors, and governments for supporting the event.

“As the impacts of climate change affect more and more communities, economies and biodiversity, we must scale up our global efforts to protect vulnerable communities, businesses, and environments,” she said. “Adaptation Futures brings together thought leaders for greater global action while also looking at how climate change affects Indigenous and Pacific communities, and their innovation and leadership in adapting to mitigate these risks.”

“At a time of great uncertainty and challenges in many parts of the world, we are heartened by the way people have come together to accelerate adaptation for a more climate resilient and fairer future.”

AF2025 will be hosted in Ōtautahi Christchurch, the second largest city in New Zealand. In 2011, it experienced a 6.3 magnitude earthquake that severely damaged the city and

surrounding areas. A 14-year rebuild has transformed Christchurch into a vibrant, thriving city known for its resilience, modern design, and extraordinary landscape.

Early bird discounted registration closes on 15 July 2025.

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To arrange an interview with AF2025 co-convenor Professor Bronwyn Hayward or Distinguished Professor Steven Ratuva, please email megan@prioritycomms.co.nz

