

# Impact X Climate Summit

Sydney, April 2024

## Gender equality and women's leadership as an urgent short-term priority to accelerate transformative climate action

### Women's Climate Congress discussion starter

#### Summit aims (from program)

'A collaborative two-day agenda will provide an opportunity for Australia and the Pacific region to **demonstrate bold commitment** to achieve 2030 goals and **accelerated implementation on net zero, nature positive plans.**'

'Impact X brings together leaders from business, government, finance and community groups to accelerate transformation for climate and nature and create a better future for all.'

#### WCC Charter for Change

The [WCC Charter for Change](#) is a call to action from the hearts of women, in all our diversity, to urgently secure the climate and build ongoing human and planetary wellbeing.

Action 1 in the Charter is 'Embrace gender-balanced, inclusive governance'.

In this action, women call for 'full equal and meaningful participation in decision making and action towards a climate secure, peaceful and compassionate future.' 'In this future, all human lives are valued and the diversity of life experiences (such as age, culture, sexuality, ability) are seen as vital for good decision making.'

#### Is having women in the room enough?

Women may be in the room but what is often missing from the climate action agenda is any representation/discussion of the women's movement and gender equality *per se*: what knowledge and experience women bring, what barriers there are to their full and equal participation in high-level decision making and how to overcome them, and the disproportionate impact that climate change has on women and girls.

However, well researched, well presented and effective the technological and nature-based solutions discussed at this summit are, national and global governance systems will ultimately either accelerate or slow down the uptake of these solutions. And to date the pace of climate action globally has been far too slow under historically male-dominated systems and policy lens. Acceleration required a radical change in governance.

Increasing evidence shows that when women are in decision making roles (including in parliaments) they introduce/pass/implement more environmental protection measures than men).

[When Women Lead | \(rachelsnetwork.org\)](#)

[f0038d22-en.pdf \(oecd-ilibrary.org\)](#)

And direct experience from the increasing women's movement engaged at COPs shows that with more women (including First Nations women) at the table, nature-based solutions along with care for all Earth life would become a high priority, as would phasing out fossil fuels, respect for First Nations knowledge, equitable finance and many other solutions.

According to Mary Robinson (Chair, The Elders): 'When women are involved, action follows'.

#### The opportunity cost of the women's gender equality movement

The Commission on the Status of Women (a UN conference like COP but all about the status of women) recently had its annual meeting in New York with some 10,000 women in attendance and climate change on the agenda (and this one was CSW68 having started in 1948, well ahead of COPs!). But it is an uphill road with some countries actively campaigning against gender equality and denying that women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate, and all manner of other blockages.

At climate COPs on the other hand, women are highly underrepresented – woefully so at the country leadership level.

Imagine if all the highly experienced and talented women-hours that are currently spent working for women's rights internationally could instead be redirected towards full and equal high-level engagement in climate action. Would that be a turning point for global climate action?

### **Elevating gender equality as a climate action**

So why isn't gender equality **per se**, with its related intersectional connections, a topic for active discussion in the climate movement alongside other topics like reducing emissions, nature-based solutions, etc?

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### **Some questions for conversations with women (and adapt for men)**

*In your area of work, how do you rate your ability to contribute on a level playing field with men?  
Do you feel able to fully explore/express your knowledge, solutions and policy/societal priorities?*

*If not [level] – why not/what are the barriers? Say more about this*

*What part do you think gender equality and women's leadership could play in creating the conditions for accelerated implementation on net zero, nature positive goals?*

*How would you rate promoting gender equality as a way to accelerate transformation compared to the other issues discussed at this conference (emissions targets, EVs, nature-based solutions and so on)?*

*Looking nationally and internationally, how do you rate the potential for women to promote bold commitment and accelerate transition?*

*How can the climate movement support the women's equality movement support each other?*

**Contact:** Janet Salisbury  
Women's Climate Congress

M 0416 167 280

[womensclimatecongress@gmail.com](mailto:womensclimatecongress@gmail.com)