

# How to teach and talk about climate change

Free workshop



## Professor Travis A Rector (University of Alaska Anchorage)

**Date:** Friday 28 April 2023, 10.00 am—12.30 pm AEST  
**Venue:** Deakin Burwood Corporate Centre, Level 2, Building BC, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood  
**Register:** via Eventbrite

This workshop will be offered in-person and live streamed via Zoom.

As science educators, we have a great opportunity to help students and the public learn the science content and perspectives needed to understand and respond positively to the threat of climate change— whether it be in a formal or informal education setting. Many of the topics we teach (e.g., the sun, conservation of energy, geologic history of the planets, and physical scales) lay the foundation for understanding not only the causes of, but the solutions to, climate change.

Climate change of course is a contentious and emotionally difficult topic that requires a different approach. Many people, especially youth, are feeling depressed and hopeless. They are seeing and experiencing the consequences of climate change in the form of heat waves, fire storms, and other extreme weather events. Plus, they're hearing messages— accidentally or intentionally— that it's too late to do anything about it. However there's never been a better time to be optimistic. Renewable energies like wind and solar are now cheaper than fossil fuels; and new markets are emerging that can solve the problem and lead to economic growth. Both having abundant natural resources, Australia and the United States are poised to be renewable energy superpowers.

I'll present strategies on how to have students and the public leave your class or outreach effort feeling informed, hopeful, and ready to address the problem. We'll work through different examples of classroom discussion and public interaction. We will include some time for small group work, so if you are currently teaching please bring your syllabi and class schedules to share. And if you are already engaged in outreach on climate change, please bring any relevant materials or examples that you use.



Professor **Travis A Rector** is an astrophysicist and Chair of Physics & Astronomy at the University of Alaska Anchorage. In recent years his focus has been on advocating for solutions to climate change. Living in Alaska, he has witnessed dramatic changes in his home state. He is currently serving as the chair of a task force for the American Astronomical Society, whose goal is to identify ways astronomy as a profession can reduce its carbon footprint on a scale commensurate with the terms of the Paris Agreement. Air travel for in-person meetings has been identified as a major source of emissions. Fortunately virtual conferences and other on-line tools for collaboration hold great promise for our profession. Professor Rector is focused on determining how these tools can address climate change as well as improve participation, equity, and scientific productivity.

<https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-arts-and-sciences/departments/physics-and-astronomy/faculty/rector.cshhtml>



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