



PENINSULA VOICE
Learning • Conversation • Engagement

Media Release

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Youth anxiety linked to climate change

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There's growing evidence that young people around the world are experiencing increasing levels of psychological distress and anxiety because of concerns about climate change, and the picture in Australia is just as disturbing.

Mission Australia, youth organisation Orygen and academics at the University of Melbourne surveyed 8,800 people aged 15 to 19 about the impact of climate change on their mental health and published the results in 2023. They found that those concerned about climate change were more likely to have higher psychological distress, low wellbeing and rate their mental health as "poor or fair".

Youth mental health provider Headspace has seen similar results. They surveyed more than 3,000 people aged 18–25. They found they're increasingly worried about their future, concerned that they won't have the same options that their parents had and would like to see more action taken on the challenge of climate change.

This eco-anxiety, the fear and stress felt about climate change, is being worsened by repeated natural disasters.

Local community group Peninsula Voice is working to shine a light on this issue and will host an event on February 29 'Climate Change – our home, our future'.

The aim of the event is to present experts in climate change and human health to share the latest evidence of the global and local picture, the efforts being made to address climate change and the steps we can all take to make a difference.

'Topics like bushfires and floods, temperature and sea level rises, damage to our native flora and fauna are confronting us daily, but there's less talk about what is being done to address it' says Peninsula Voice convenor, Peter Orton.

'Anxiety eases when we take action, so we want to provide this hope to our community by sharing stories of local initiatives. Sam Lundberg's work is a really good example, so we hope lots of young people come to the event to hear about his work.' He added.

Sam is a 19 year old Mornington Peninsula local. He volunteers with Zero Positive, a non-profit youth organization that leads initiatives to guide Australian schools towards emission neutrality while fostering positive mental attitudes towards climate action.

He's currently working with Peninsula Grammar on a 5 year plan to become emissions neutral and is also chairing the Melbourne branch for ZeroPositive's subsidiary GenZero, a youth climate advisory board.

Other speakers include Melbourne University Professor David Karoly (Climate Change on a global front) and Monash University Assoc. Professor Angie Bone (Climate Change and human health). We'll also hear from Repower (local action to reduce carbon emissions) and the climate change team from Mornington Peninsula Shire Council.

This event will run from 6.30pm – 8.30pm at the Peninsula Community Theatre, 91 Wilsons Rd, Mornington.

For more information about Peninsula Voice and to register, go to www.peninsulavoice.com.au

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RELEASE ENDS

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