



About the Event

REWRITE THE FUTURE: Climate Conversations

Aim:

These forums are aimed at enabling the community to learn more about the issue of climate change and solutions for effective mitigation as well as contribute to a discussion about what they see as priorities for action.

Objectives:

The purpose of this event is to provide a forum where people are provided with highly credible information and an opportunity to have a discussion with experts and peers and to develop/share their own ideas. It is hoped this approach will increase participants' understanding about the topic as well as facilitating a contribution to the wider public debate and lead to a personal commitment to action.

Background:

Research suggests that local deliberative forums are an effective way of engaging with the community and promoting active participation on the issue of climate change.^{1,2} Examples of these type of meetings include those in which experts are joined by local stakeholders and where there is opportunity for active participation by audience members through small group discussions and the chance to ask questions of experts and stakeholders. This approach enables participants to learn about the technical aspects of science as well as social, political, economic and ethical considerations; boosts participants' confidence in their own ability to contribute to debate on the issue; helps develop respect for scientists and institutions; and can assist in achieving consensus on difficult issues as well as support for policy directions.

Proposed outcomes:

The discussions and contributions from participants will be documented in Workbooks. If participants agree, a summary report of these contributions will be made available to all participants. This report will be used by the organisers to inform their strategic planning and, if participants agree, be made available to local, state, and federal government as a snapshot of community views. As indicated above, it is also hoped that participation in the event will lead to a personal commitment to action on the part of attendees.

Format:

The forum will commence with a presentation on the science and solutions. Following this people will be invited to participate in small group conversations about climate change and their priorities in terms of making a transition to a sustainable future. All groups will then

¹ Matthew C. Nisbet, [Reconsidering Climate Change Literacy & Communication](#), 7 August 2009.

² Arizona Science Center in Phoenix, Community Conversations on Climate and Water, [Summary Report](#), 9 May 2009.



share the outcomes of these discussions; experts will be invited to comment on the ideas raised; and participants encouraged to document their views in a workbook to be collected by the facilitators.

Materials:

Participants will be provided with a Workbook, some questions to work through and space for recording their responses. Using a process outlined in a Guidebook, designated facilitators will help lead the small group discussions, and the themes and ideas raised shared with the broader group. The outcomes of these discussions and responses from participants' workbooks will then form a summary report to be provided as feedback to participants and other interested parties.

Target audience:

This forum will be relevant for all members of the community, including:

- ***People who are 'concerned and confused'***: this group may include people who are concerned about climate change but confused by the paradoxical nature of the political debate; are unsure about whether further climate change can be effectively prevented; and/or are uncertain whether we have the solutions needed.
- ***People who are currently 'disengaged'***: people who are not currently engaged with the issue but may be persuaded/encouraged to come by their concerned peers/friends/family/colleagues;
- ***Those who are already engaged but would like to be 'activated'***: this group may include people who already know quite a bit about the science and solutions but may be seeking to take a more active role in the debate or wish to know more about the social and economic transition needed to restore a safe climate;
- ***Those who are 'considering methods of engagement' with their own communities***: members of other climate action/community groups may be seeking to engage with their own communities and are interested in using the Rewrite the Future materials to run their own event.