

CLIMATE CHANGE THREATENS AUSTRALIAN TOURISM



Climate change could severely damage Australian tourism industry. Already now, the country suffers from droughts and fires. Future development could even worsen the situation. Extinction of certain species as well as the bleaching of the Barrier Reef are examples of what could a changed climate do.

These days almost nobody in developed world doubts that the global warming will have impact on our civilization. Australia has recently announced the results of an analysis focusing on the impact of the climate change on the Australian tourism industry. Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization's scientist Kevin Hennessy, predicted impacts of the climate changes on **Kakadu, Cairns, the Blue Mountains and the Victorian Alps** which are Australia's important tourism destinations. The predictions were made for 2020, 2050 and 2070.

According to the scientist, these regions will experience hotter weather, more intense rains but at the same time, he predicts that there will actually be less rainfall. Blue Mountains could experience more fires. Kakadu and Cairns are likely to be hit by more severe cyclones. The Victorian Alps could end up with an 80 per cent less snow cover in 2050 compared to the present status.

The changes in climate would consequently result in changes of the whole ecosystem. Rising sea levels would cause the loss of wetlands. There might be more water-borne illnesses and fire risks will be greater. Some animals will perhaps adapt but other could perish. The lack of snow will definitely influence the tourism industry as well as possible closure of national parks to public. Already now, Australian environment suffers. The bleaching of the Barrier Reef could serve as an example of the damage. Animals like e.g. shearwaters reproduce less because of the higher sea temperatures and pygmy possum as well as eucalyptus trees suffer from the lack of water.

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