



## New Global Data: 2020 Second Hottest Year on Record

2020 was the second hottest year on record, cementing the last decade as the hottest on record globally, as climate change continues to accelerate.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has confirmed the global average temperature for 2020 was  $+0.98^{\circ}\text{C}$  above the 20th century average, and only  $0.02^{\circ}\text{C}$  shy of the previous record set in 2016.

“It’s remarkable that [despite La Niña conditions](#), 2020 was the second hottest year on record,” said Climate Council expert, Professor Will Steffen.

“What it’s telling us is that climate change is driving very rapid warming trends and worsening the impacts of natural variability events. This sets off yet another alarm bell to the climate change siren,” he said.

### Fast facts:

- 2020 was the second hottest year globally on record - despite a cooling La Niña, whereas 2016, the hottest on record, began with a strong warming El Niño event.
- The past decade (2011-2020) was the hottest on record ( $+0.82^{\circ}\text{C}$  above the 20th century average). This surpassed the previous decadal record (2001–2010) of  $+0.62^{\circ}\text{C}$ .
- The global annual temperature has increased at an average rate of  $0.08^{\circ}\text{C}$  per decade since 1880 and over twice that rate ( $+0.18^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) since 1981.
- The past seven years in the 1880–2020 record have been the hottest seven on record.
- The 10 hottest years on record have occurred since 2005.
- 2020 marks the 44th consecutive year (since 1977) with global land and ocean temperatures above the 20th-century average.
- The 2020 Northern Hemisphere land and ocean surface temperature was the highest in the 141-year record at  $+1.28^{\circ}\text{C}$  above average.
- 2020 was the hottest year on record for Europe and Asia.

“Right now, we are on track for catastrophic climate change of  $3^{\circ}\text{C}$  of heating and maybe more. At just over  $1^{\circ}\text{C}$  of heating, we are already paying a serious price, as we have seen with the recent Black Summer bushfires, prolonged drought, and the third mass bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef in five years,” said Professor Steffen.

“Year after year, decade after decade, temperature records continue to tumble because we continue to burn coal, oil and gas. It must stop,” he said.

Professor Steffen said he was encouraged to see state and territory governments stepping up their climate commitments and action, as well as Australia’s major trading partners and many leading businesses and sectors.

“We all need to step up - and fast. 2021 needs to be a year of climate action because failure is not an option,” he said.

**For interviews please contact Brianna Hudson on 0455 238 875.**

The Climate Council is Australia’s leading community-funded climate change communications organisation. We provide authoritative, expert and evidence-based advice on climate change to journalists, policymakers, and the wider Australian community.

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