



Snapshot

The Witness King Tides project: a creative way for the community to imagine climate risks

Summary

Creative projects can help the community to better imagine what the future could be like under a changing climate. One creative project, Witness King Tides (WKT), has captured the imagination of many coastal communities. The WKT project encourages people to photograph their local shoreline during the highest tide of the year to illustrate the vulnerability of coastal areas under sea-level rise. What began as a small initiative to raise community awareness has now expanded across Australia and to the USA and Canada.

It is often difficult for people to imagine a future that differs from their experience of the past. Creative projects can play an important role in helping people to envisage the future which, in turn, can prompt them to consider planning for climate change.

One communication initiative, Witness King Tides, aims to raise community awareness of how [sea-level rise projections](#) might translate to a local area. People are invited to take photos of their part of the coastline during a King Tide to document the effects of the highest tide of the year. These images are then uploaded to a website and displayed with links to a map (Figure 1). Such a collection of images of a very high tide is intended to develop a community narrative that could help people envisage what future coastal inundation might look like. This builds on research that shows that an individual's experience with flooding can encourage them to plan for climate change.

Keywords

King tide, community awareness, photography, sea-level rise

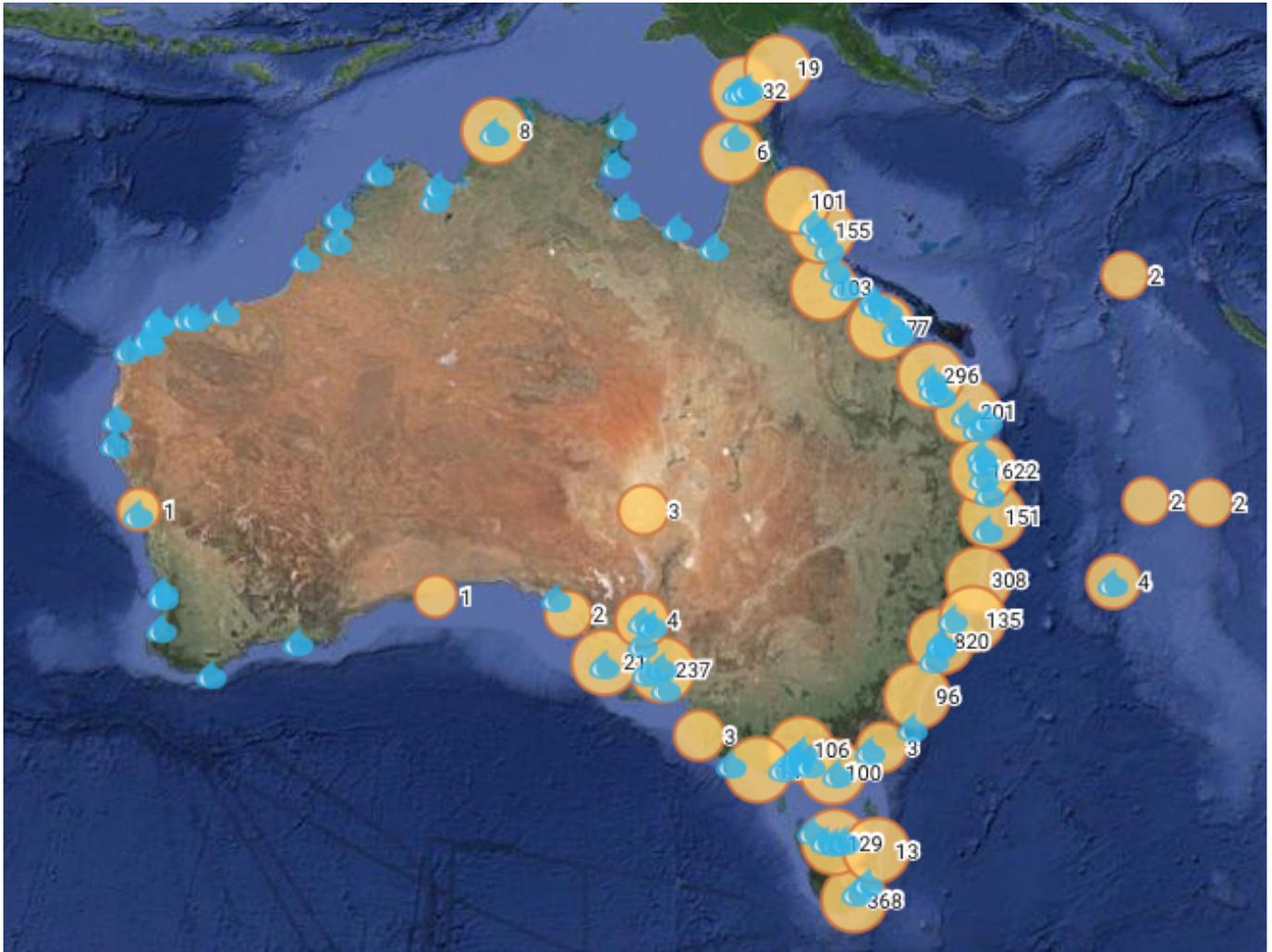


Figure 1: Map showing when a king tide will happen around the Australian coast. Source: WKT project's website (www.photos.witnesskingtides.org © Green Cross Australia 2016).

Images help to "see for yourself"

Since 2012, more than 5,300 photos have been uploaded (Figure 2). Generally the images show both natural and built infrastructure with nuisance flooding – inconvenient levels of inundation that cause little permanent damage – such as drenched jetties and walkways, or beaches covered up to the dunes with water.

Further reading

(all links accessed 15 June 2017):

The Witness King Tides project's website: <http://www.witnesskingtides.org>

A video of the Witness King Tides project on Totally Wild: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uckzlo-eflg>.

A video of the California King Tides project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3hKt1Zcu7o>.

The Sydney Coastal Councils Group's (SCCG) social media project: http://www.sydneycoastalcouncils.com.au/becoming_social.

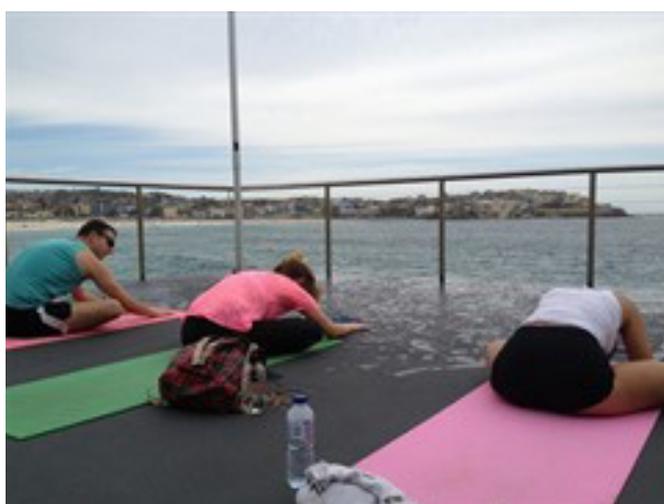


Figure 2: Examples of photos shared by participants of the project. Source: WKT project's website. (www.photos.witnesskingtides.org © Green Cross Australia 2016).

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