

February 9, 2016(Channel 9 news)

# Aussies warned of longer, hotter heatwaves

By

AAP



Australians must brace for hotter, longer and far more frequent heatwaves thanks to climate change.

Leading climate scientists say extreme prolonged heat is becoming the norm in Australia, where the number of annual heatwave days has risen markedly over the past 60 years.

The warning comes after a series of scorching summer heatwaves around the country, including one in Perth where temperatures are expected to stay above 40C until at least Thursday.

Climate scientist Sarah Perkins-Kirkpatrick says the extreme events will only continue to increase.

"Those really rare heatwaves we might have only seen once every 20 years for example, might occur now once every two years," she said on Tuesday.

"They will certainly be occurring lot more often than what they used to had climate change not occurred."

Bureau of Meteorology senior climatologist Blair Trewin agreed, saying there had been a strong increase in weather events involving extreme heat and a decline in the number of extreme cold events.

Dr Perkins-Kirkpatrick said weather data from the past 60 years showed a marked increase in the number of heatwaves.

They were also becoming more intense, particularly in the south of the continent, she said.

But how much you sweat - and when - will depend on where you live.

Heatwaves in Sydney are occurring an average three weeks earlier.

Melbourne is also copping stretches of extreme heat earlier in the summer but experiencing about the same number of heatwave days.

Canberra is having twice as many heatwave days each year, although their intensity has remained the same.

Bureau of Meteorology data released last month showed 2015 was the fifth warmest year on record, with significant heatwaves in March, October and December.

Heatwaves and other extreme weather events are currently being examined in detail at a national meteorological/climate conference in Melbourne.

Read more at <http://www.9news.com.au/national/2016/02/09/12/37/aussie-heatwaves-getting-hotter-longer#qG3TBlgAPXiQQvQE.99>