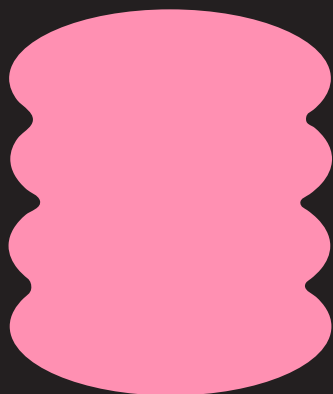


FY2026
Annual Report



A Message from our Founders

In April last year, ECOMIND was two people, a roll of butcher's paper, and a problem we couldn't stop talking about: young people are navigating a planet in crisis, stressed and burnt out, and told they are the future without being given the support to navigate it.



Twelve months on, we couldn't have imaged the things we've achieved. We have build our flagship program, the ECOMIND Certificate, that is supporting our next generation of climate leaders to stay in this work for the long haul. We have hosted a Youth Summit as part of AlterCOP. We have stood on the stages at Parliament House advocating for young peoples futures. We have pushed against harmful campaigns asking for the removal of climate science from education and coordinated a coalition of 60 young people and experts to form the Future Minds Policy Agenda, Australias first roadmap to building a sustainable future for young people.

Not only that but we have walked the talk, treating our resources as we wished we would treat the planet, not infinite and in need of active renewal. We have grieved with young people at our climate cafes, tried and failed many times and continued to bravely navigate this new terrain, one step at a time.

None of this happened alone. It happened because of every funder, partner, mentor, facilitator, and young person who showed up and trusted us with their story.

Thank you for being part of it. There is so much more to do, and we're only just getting started.

*With gratitude,
Court & Georgia*

The Problem

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INHERITING A PLANET IN CRISIS, A PROBLEM THEY DIDN'T CREATE BUT ARE EXPECTED TO SOLVE.

The planetary crisis is having a profound impact on the mental health of young Australians. With its inextricable links with AI, cost of living, world health, job insecurity, and political instability, it is reshaping their sense of safety, plans for the future, and day-to-day emotional load, yet we don't have the systems in place to prepare them to carry that weight. Young people are expected to save the world, without being taught how to sit with the complex emotions they face as a reality of the crisis. This is resulting in overwhelm, anxiousness and paralysis.

In the urgency to act, the climate movement designed to carry these young people forward, can unintentionally reproduce the very patterns it's trying to change: prioritising output and productivity over long-term sustainability, and treating energy and passion as if they were an infinite resource to use, not something that requires time and caring practices to replenish. Without meaning to, this can leave young changemakers running on empty and burning out, resulting in so many stepping away from the movement within just a few years of joining it.

The Solution

SUSTAINABLE MINDS. SUSTAINABLE PLANET.

ECOMIND was created to sustain the movement, empowering the next generation of leaders with the tools to look after themselves, each other and the planet, *sustainably*. Burnt out people cannot save a burning planet. By caring for the people who care for the planet, we are fortifying our next generation of climate leaders to stay in this work for the long haul and build the future we're all hoping for.

OUR PILLARS

CARE



ECOMIND CERTIFICATE

Tools to care for yourself, each other & the planet, *sustainably*.

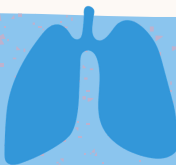
CONNECT



CLIMATE CAFES & PEER SUPPORT

Fostering connection & communities of care as the antidote to anxiety.

CREATE



FUTURE STUDIO

Transforming climate & mental health conversations, culture & systems

The Year at a Glance

OUR IMPACT

1,091



young people cared for, connected and creating change.

9,529



young people reached through advocacy, storytelling and community.

227



young people ECOMIND certified, ready to shift cultures and be sustainable.

19



climate cafes held, sustaining connection and emotional validation.

TESTIMONIALS



TEGAN LERM
CEO of Project Planet

*The ECOMIND Certificate couldn't have come at a better time! Running a climate organisation comes with its own anxieties, but **I was reminded how to take care of myself, to be in a better place to care for others and the planet.***



AVALON BOURNE
CEO of Sonder Youth

*The ECOMIND Cert is **one of the best mental health programs** I have come across. It was thoroughly researched, engaging and met the needs of the participants perfectly. Recommend to anyone in the climate/youth space.*

The Year at a Glance

PROJECTS



Climate Distress in ECRs: Our Collaboration with CSIRO

We worked with Early Career Researchers (ECRs) from CSIRO to design a workshop that helped them to **tackle climate distress at work**.

*"I wasn't sure what to expect from a room full of scientists talking about their feelings, but Court and Georgia created the perfect atmosphere for everyone to open up and be vulnerable. **I feel so much more motivated and connected with my colleagues** than I did before."*

Climate Cafés: 19 and Counting

We ran 19 Climate Cafés, where young people could put down what they were carrying and feel less alone.

"ECOMIND created the perfect place to open up. I feel more motivated and connected."



Youth Climate ChangeMakers Summit

We delivered the Youth Climate ChangeMakers Summit, a full-day event bringing together **70 young people from 10 schools and universities** across Greater Sydney, Western Sydney and Wollongong with researchers, and aligned organisations including Climate Fresk, Climate Cares, Rising Tide, and AYCC to learn the climate science, learn how to be with climate emotions and how to use their voice for change.

The Year at a Glance

PROJECTS

Psychiatrists target thinktank in battle over kids' climate fears

Is a child distressed about climate change suffering an anxiety disorder or simply living in the real world?

yahoo!
news

OPEN LETTER CALLS FOR 'EMPOWERING' CLIMATE EDUCATION

NEWS
RADIO

The Open Letter: Climate Science, Not Climate Silence

In 2025, misinformation began circulating that climate education itself was causing climate anxiety in young Australians, recommending that climate education be removed from schools. ECOMIND lead an open letter rejecting that claim. **The letter drew 300+ signatories**, including psychologists, doctors, researchers, educators, and youth-serving organisations from across the country.

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caha
Climate and Health Alliance

Doctors for the
Environment
Australia

AYCC

PARENTS FOR
CLIMATE

ZaliSteggall OAM MP
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WARRINGAH

Community of Practice & The Future Minds Policy Agenda

We formed and led a Community Practice made up of **60 young people and experts** dedicated to creating a Policy Agenda to ensure a sustainable future for young people. This coalition has drafted the **Future Minds Policy Agenda** and will be **presenting it at COP31, Türkiye**.



SELF
CARE

ALPHABET



Unwind with ECOMIND: UTS Industry Innovation Project

ECOMIND partnered with students from UTS's Industry Innovation Project, who designed a social campaign for the month of July, Unwind with ECOMIND, to encourage young people to see wellbeing as a central part of climate action.

The campaign achieved:

12,957 views

272 interactions

49 new followers

Spotlight

THE ECOMIND CERTIFICATE

In June this year we launched the ECOMIND Certificate, Australia's first Climate Mental Health program equipping the next generation of climate leaders with the skills to look after themselves, each other and the planet, *sustainably*. The program was built through months of research and consultations with the people who understood the problem best: young people, mental health researchers, and peer organisations working on climate distress around the world. This is what we learnt:

- Climate action burnout was described as an internalised sense of over-responsibility: the belief that if they didn't do everything, nothing would get done. This was compounded by grind culture, perfectionism, and a lack of models for what sustainable activism actually looks like.
- Rest is not a luxury, it's resistance. Several experts pointed to the connection between the extractive, always-on culture driving the climate crisis and the extractive culture inside the movement trying to solve it. Learning to rest was described, repeatedly, as a radical act.
- Isolation makes everything harder. Young people told us that the antidote to climate anxiety wasn't more information, it was connection: peer support, mentors, and community that could hold the weight collectively instead of individually.
- Emotions need somewhere to go. Grief, anger, and helplessness were named again and again, alongside a clear ask: don't pathologise these feelings, give us tools to move through them and back into action.
- Young people wanted practical tools, not therapy speak. Across every consultation, the same request came through: help us build a personal toolkit, not a diagnosis.

These insights, alongside a structured co-design process with our Youth Advisory Board, directly shaped the Certificate's three modules: *Looking After Yourself*, *Looking After Others*, and *Looking After the Planet*.

In April this year, we piloted the Certificate with 20 young changemakers to test whether the program worked. An independent evaluation conducted by Orygen confirmed that it not only worked but it exceeded expectations.

Spotlight

THE ECOMIND CERTIFICATE

Orygen tested the Certificate against 32 measures across six domains of wellbeing and sustainable action. Every single domain showed a statistically significant, large improvement, from emotional resilience and climate anxiety to burnout awareness and sustainable engagement.

- 100% of participants said looking after their wellbeing is essential to their climate action
- 93% felt more connected to others in the movement
- 93% felt they now have tools to take sustainable action
- 100% said they would recommend the program to others

In June this year, we launched the ECOMIND Certificate at Heaps Normal in Marrickville. 150 people from ECOMINDs community came together to celebrate, connect and make a commitment to doing this work differently.



Since launch, the Certificate has already been delivered with the Australian National University, University of Newcastle, Cool.org, and Climate Writers, maintaining our results from the Orygen Evaluation. It is booked for delivery with AYCC, Climate for Change, Mycelium Activist Support Services, UNICEF, Youth at Taronga Zoo, and Future Council.

Whats Next

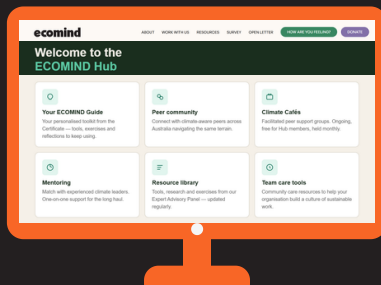
DELIVERING, SCALING, SYSTEMS CHANGE

Delivering the Certificate: Empowering the Next Gen



We're delivering the ECOMIND Certificate to youth climate organisations, fellowships, and degrees across Australia, targeting 1,000 young climate leaders certified by the end of FY27, building on delivery and bookings already underway with organisations including UNICEF, AYCC, and Future Council.

Scaling Our Model: Activating Local Communities



To grow beyond what any small team can deliver directly, we're building a self-paced, train-the-trainer model, hosted on the ECOMIND Hub. This is about embedding the Certificate into classrooms, youth spaces, and sustainability organisations across Australia and beyond, activating local communities with the skills to deliver the cert in their words, using their own experiences.

Systems Change: Future Minds & COP31



We're developing the Future Minds Policy Paper, Australia's first youth climate mental health policy paper, co-designed with 60+ experts and young people, to be presented at COP31 in Antalya, Türkiye. Alongside this, we are the Wellbeing Partners for the Child & Youth Pavillion at COP31 ensuring young people have the space to breathe, connect and process throughout the conference.

Summary

LET'S CO-CREATE A SUSTAINABLE PLANET

Just over a year ago, ECOMIND was an idea on a piece of butcher's paper. Today, it's 227 young people certified, 1,091 young people connected, and 9,529 engaged in sustaining this movement. It's climate cafés on beaches and in boardrooms, a Certificate backed by independent evidence, a Youth Advisory Board shaping every decision we make, and a growing community of researchers, funders, and organisations who believe what we believe: burnt out people cannot save a burning planet.

None of it would exist without the young people who trusted us with their stories, the experts who gave their time and insight, and the partners and funders who backed an idea before it had proof. Thank you for being part of this year.

The work ahead is bigger. We have audacious goals, embedding the Certificate into every institution shaping the next generation of climate leaders, building the systems to train trainers and activate local communities, and taking youth climate mental health to COP31, paving the path for a sustainable future.

We can't do it without you. Whether that's partnering with us, funding our next stage of growth, or simply sharing our work with someone who needs it, there's a place for you in this.

Get in touch: georgia@ecomind.au

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