

Are we there yet?

Reflections on decades of Local Government
climate action

Liz Johnstone, April 2021

This presentation

Sets the context

- > Global trends
- > From Rio to Paris

Local government & climate change

- > Impacts
- > Barriers
- > Actions

How do we get there?

- > Urgent action & advocacy
- > Roles



Global trends

Growth and change

- > Population growth and demographic change
- > Rapid urbanisation
- > More connected globally
- > Shift in global economic power
- > More climate events, causing more damage more often

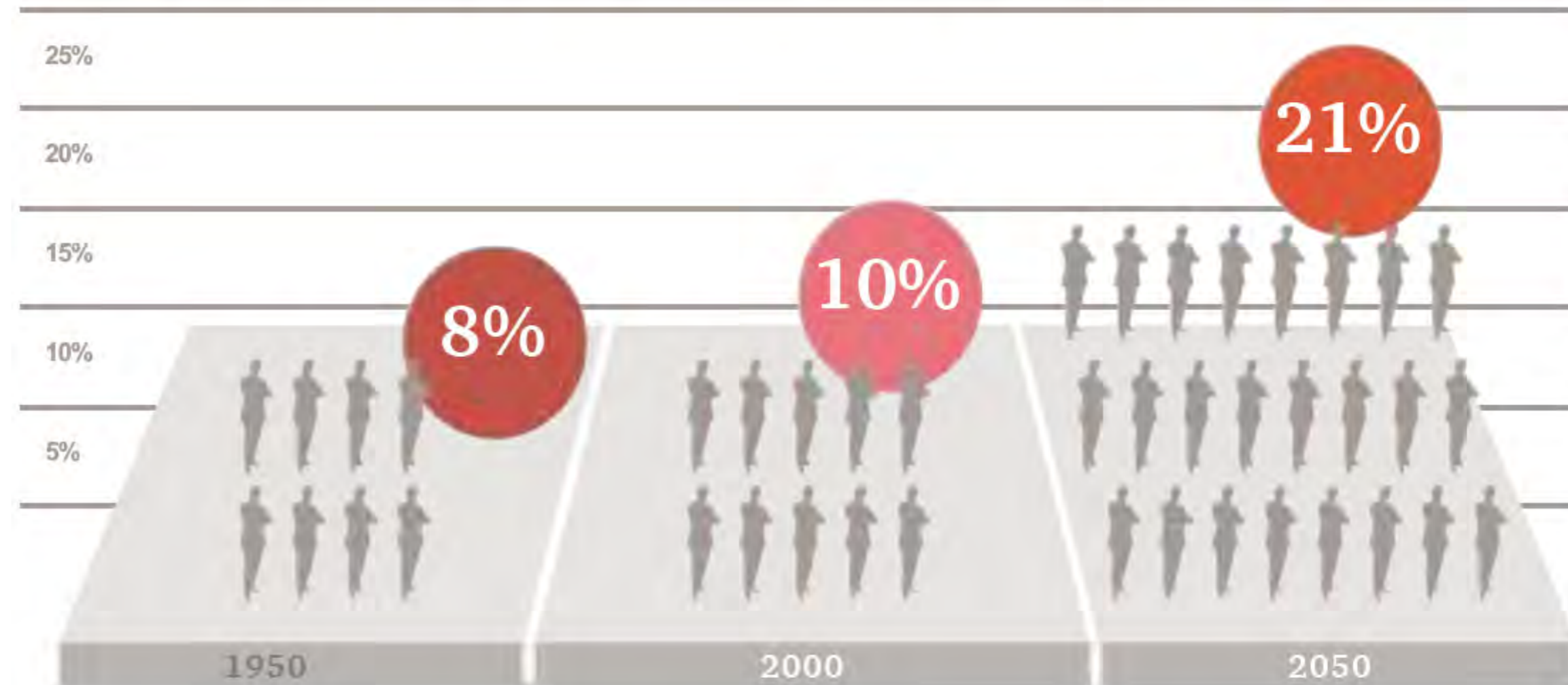


Global trends

Growing and ageing population

- > Older cities are ageing, some are shrinking

Figure 5: Proportion of the world population aged 60 years or more



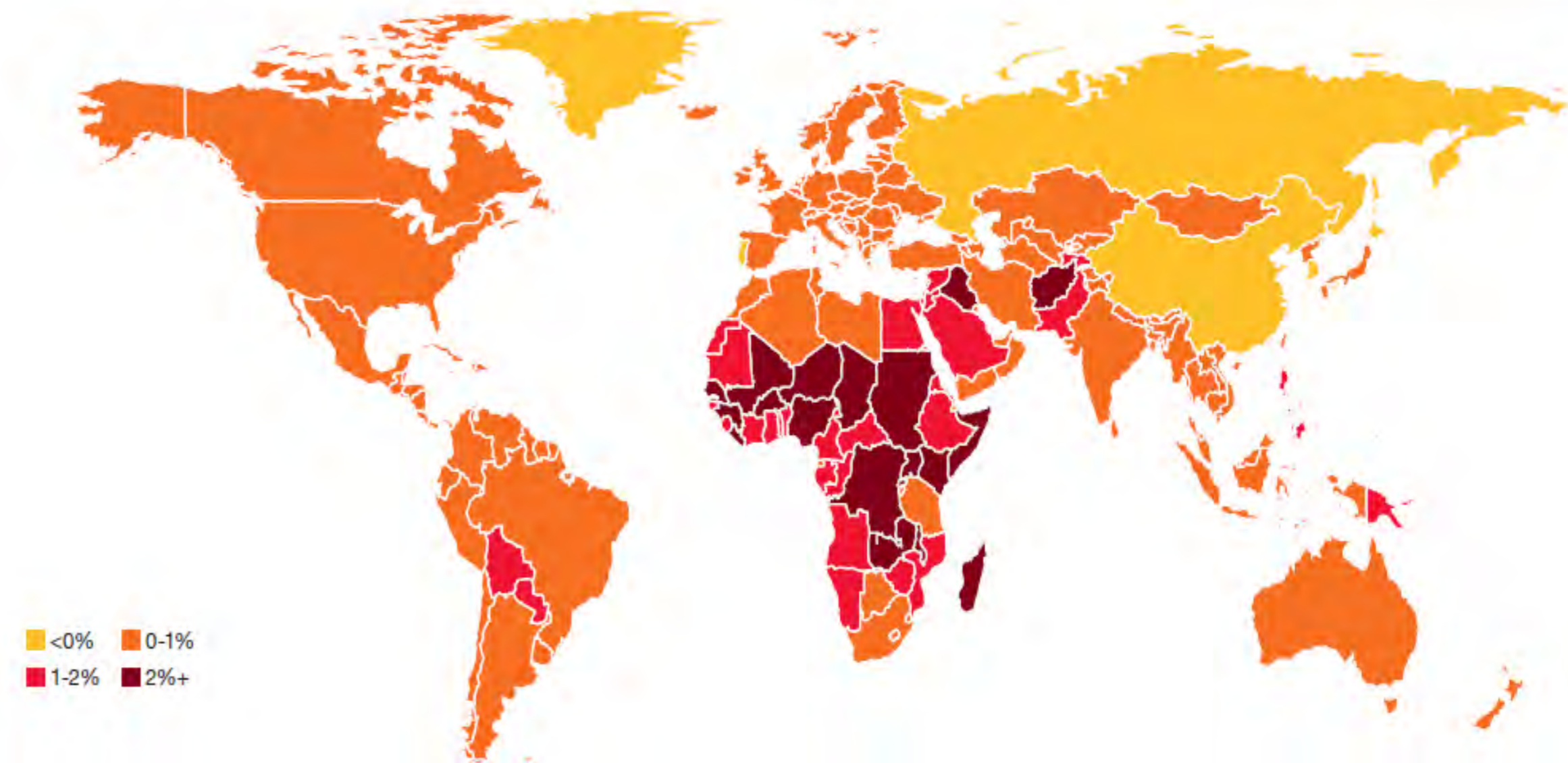
Source: UN report *World Population Ageing 1950–2050*

Global trends

Rapid growth - is uneven and impacting youth

- > 90% of young people 10-24 are in less developed countries
- > millions of children are not in school
- > millions more are unemployed
- > 80% of Africa's growth is in slums and informal settlements

Figure 7: Annual population growth rate, 2010–2050 (medium variant)



Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

Global trends

Urbanising, but differently

- > By 2100 ,13 of the world's largest megacities will be in Africa.
- > India will hold three of them – and there will be zero of them found in the Americas, China, or Europe
- > All will be bigger than Tokyo (35M now)
- > 53 million-or-so people live in the thousands of dense informal settlements, or slums, that pack sub-Saharan Africa's fast-growing cities.
- > population density in Dharavi slum is more than 10 times that of Manhattan

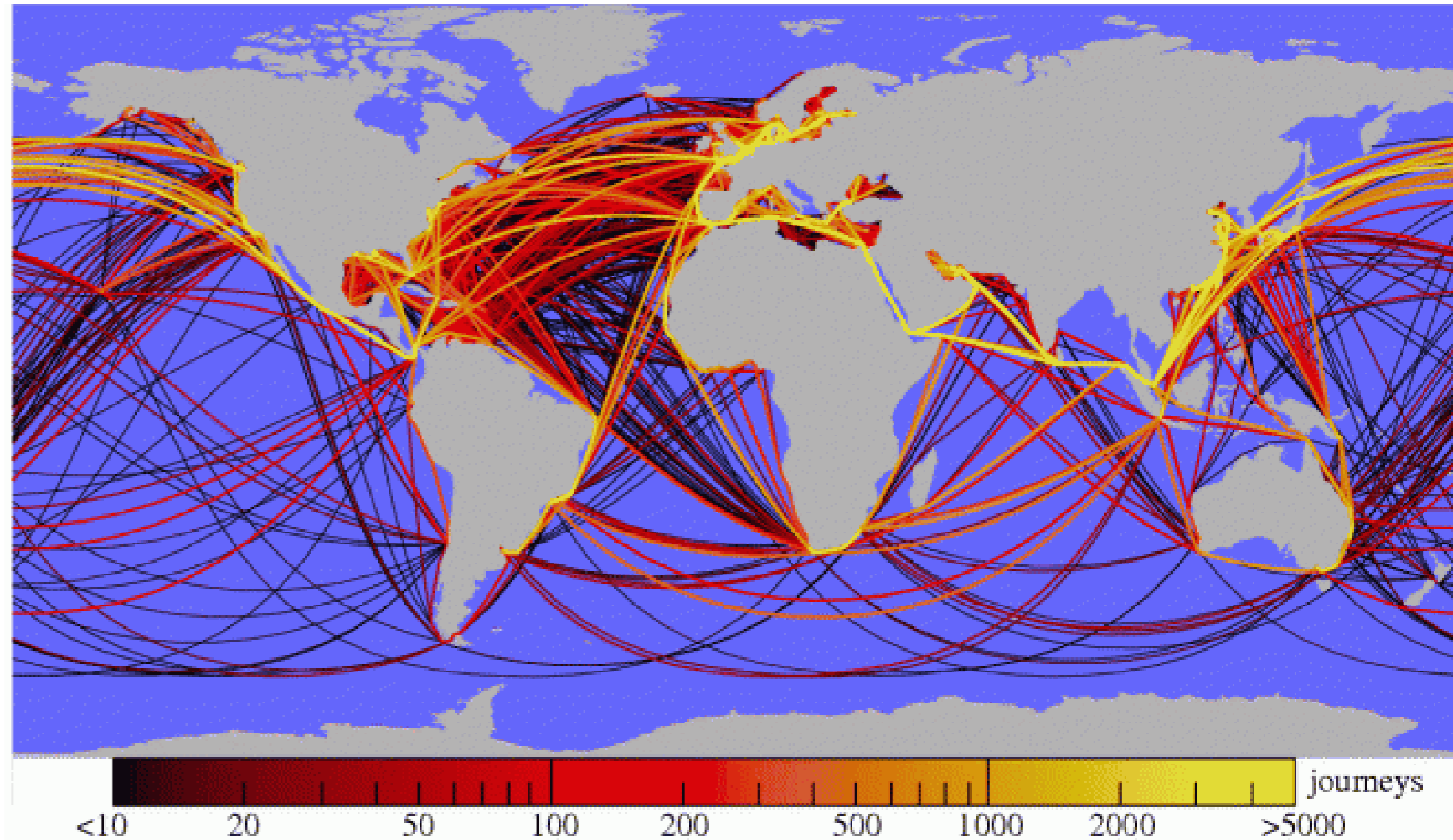


Mumbai – Coronavirus incidence of 50% within slum areas and 16% outside

Global trends

More connected

- > Big data, big tech
- > New tech - drones, 3D printing, Gig economy
- > Global supply chains
- > Global movement of labour



<https://www.wired.com/2010/01/global-shipping-map/>

Global trends

Shift in global economic power

Figure 2: GDP of G7 and E7 countries (US\$)



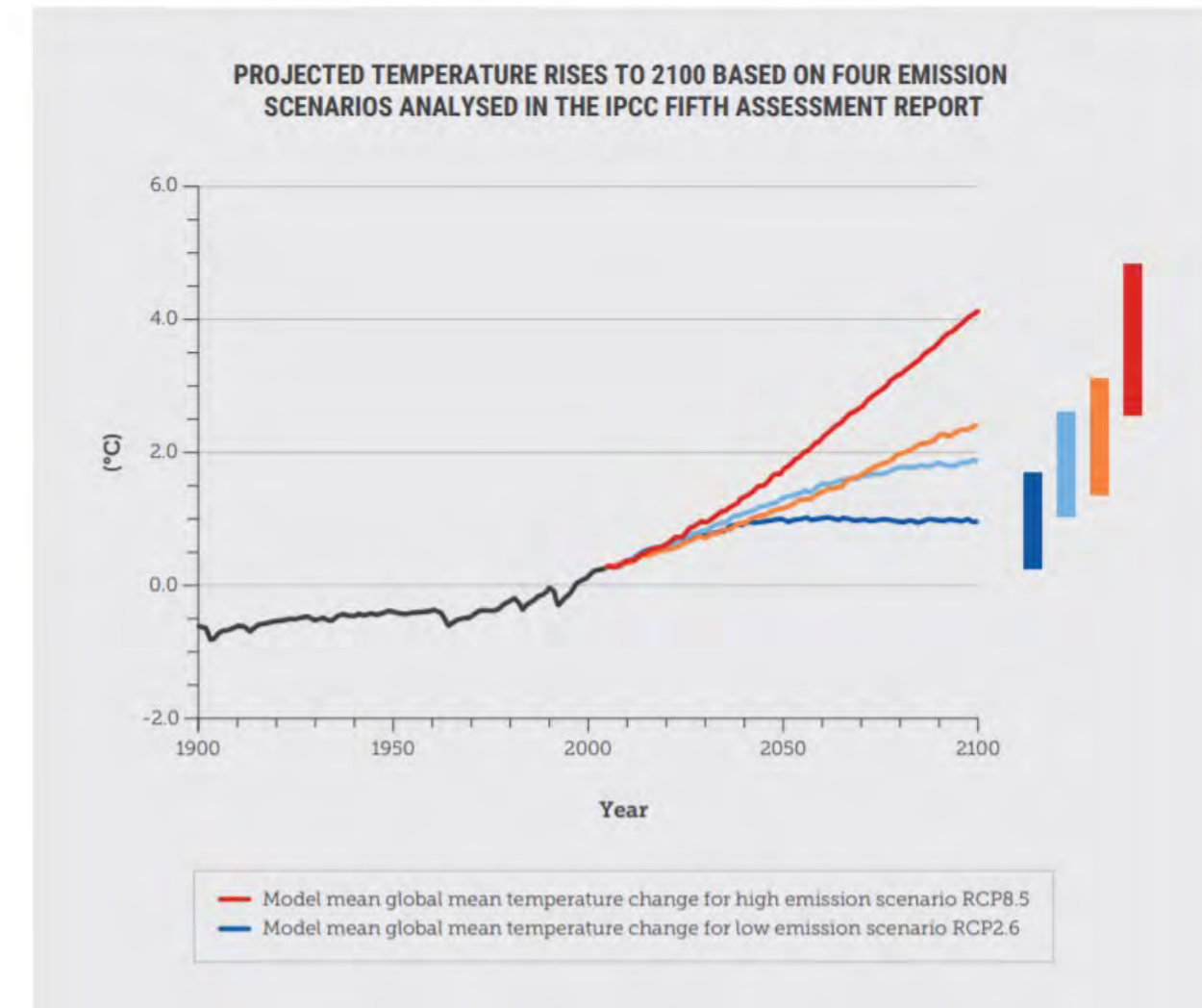
Source: PwC analysis

Five Megatrends And Their Implications for Global Defence & Security (pwc.com)

Global trends



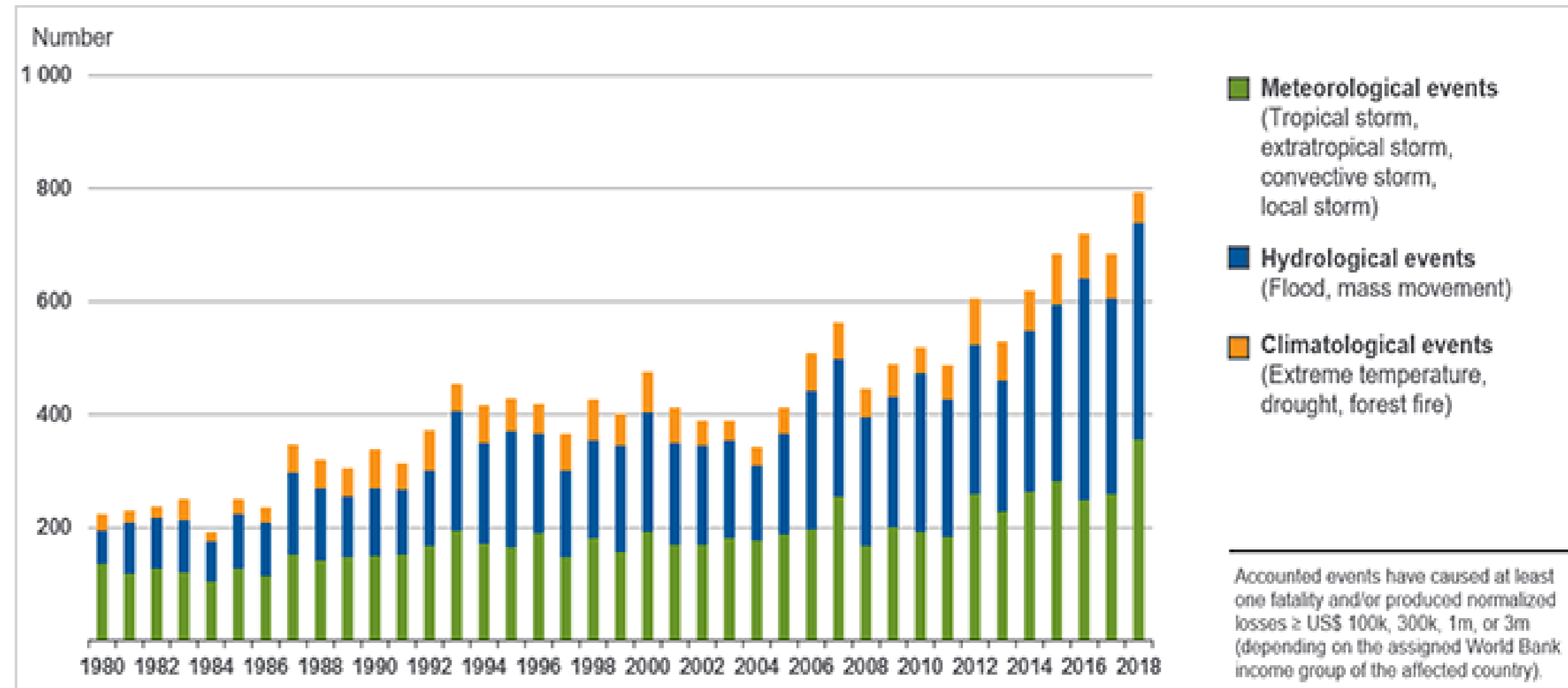
Figure 4: Projected temperature rises to 2100 based on four emission scenarios analysed in the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report. Key: Dark blue: RCP2.6; light blue: RCP4.5; orange: RCP6.0; red: RCP8.5. Source: Collins et al. 2013.



Global trends

More weather related catastrophic events, costing more

- > By Peril, 1980-2018
- > In 2019
 - > 409 events
 - > economic losses of \$232B
 - > insurance covered \$71B (about a third)
- > Fire, flood and drought are becoming more costly and impactful
- > Over the decade to 2019, 44% of the costs were incurred in the Asia Pacific region



From Rio to Paris

1979

- > first international conference on Climate Change

1988

- > Toronto targets of 20% reduction in GHG by 2005 on 1988 levels taken to Cabinet in 1989
- > IPCC meets for the first time

1990

- > ICLEI founded Local Agenda 21
- > IPCC First Assessment Report (FAR)
- > Australian (Hawke) government adopts Toronto targets - *as long as it doesn't impact on the economy*

1992

- > Rio Earth Summit, Australia signs on to the UNFCCC
- > 9th in world to ratify Kyoto which comes into force from 1994 when 50 signatories are reached

1995 - COP1

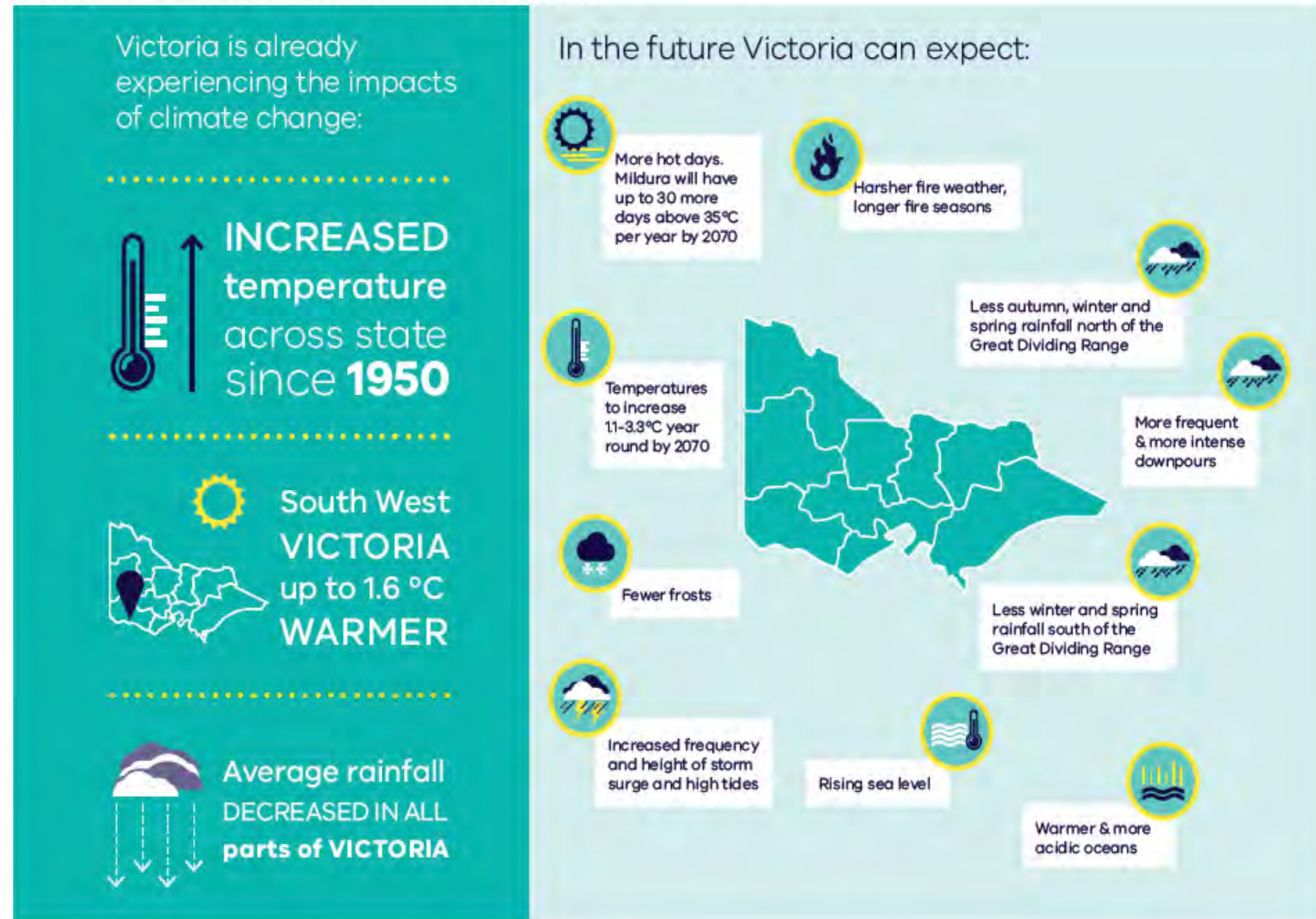
2015 – COP21

- > Australia announce net zero by 2100
- > (2050 accepted as needed)



Climate challenge

Image 3: Future Climate for Victoria

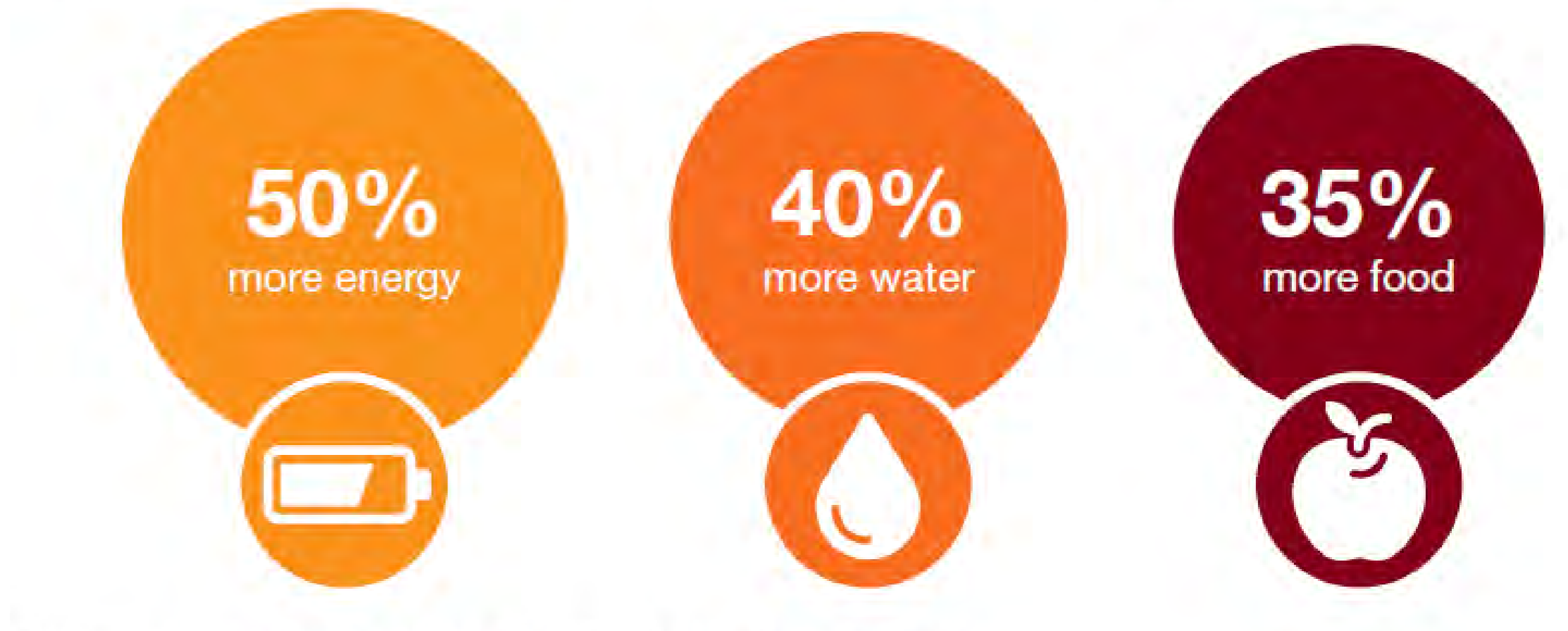


Source: www.climatechange.vic.gov.au

Climate challenge

More people needing more resources

Figure 14: With a population of 8.3 billion people by 2030, we'll need...



Source: National Intelligence Council: Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds.

Impacts

Physical and social

- > In 2009, the UCL Lancet Commission stated that ‘climate change could be the biggest global health threat of the 21st century
- > In the same year the WHO drew attention to a study warning Africa’s urbanisation “is a health hazard for certain vulnerable populations ... [that] threatens to create a humanitarian disaster”.
- > In 2020, the World Economic Forum Global Risk Report identified climate change and its impacts as our biggest long-term global risk.

Barriers

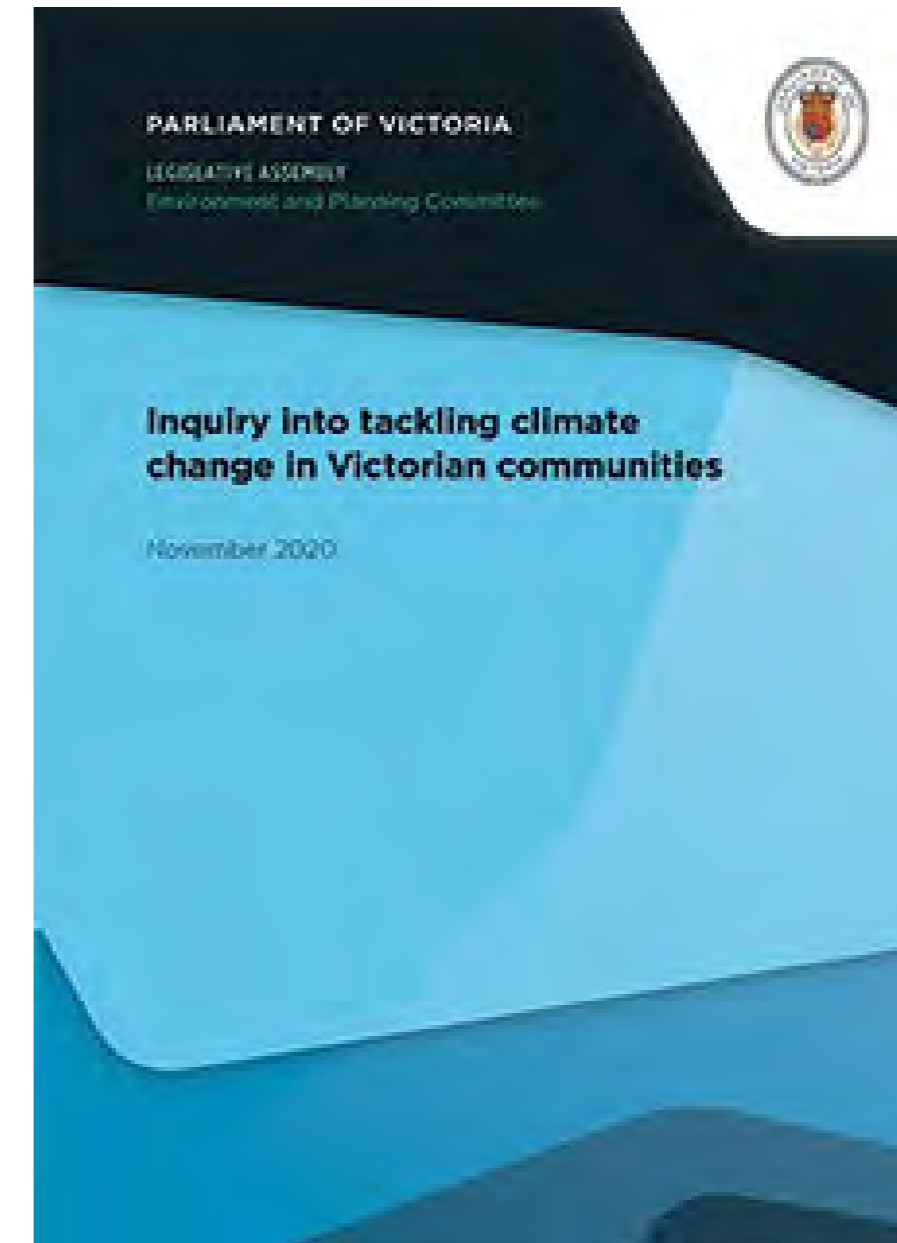
Barriers remain including

- > a lack of professional, technical or political support
- > lack of power or other resources
- > dominance of conventional policy objectives
- > Short termism

Action

Parliamentary Inquiry into Tackling Climate Change in Victorian Communities confirmed key roles that local government plays:

- > mitigation activities such as
 - > the installation of rooftop solar
 - > energy efficiency upgrades
 - > purchase of electric vehicles for local government fleets
 - > reducing organic waste and diverting it from landfill
 - > energy efficient public lighting upgrades
 - > renewable energy power purchase agreement - one of the world's largest collaborations facilitated through Greenhouse Alliances
 - > using the planning system to drive Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) and improve sustainability, climate resilience and efficiency of new developments
- > Other roles relate to
 - > policy integration and change – esp. planning and building
 - > whole-of-council approach & changes to council practices.
 - > community leadership and advocacy



How do we get there?

Act urgently

- > Listen - to young people, to experts, to the science – just as for Covid
- > Don't wait – Act, do what you can at work, as a citizen, friend and family member
 - > Speak to people who don't know or don't agree
 - > Think about what you eat, how you travel, how you vote and how you invest
 - > Use less energy – everywhere, generate renewables or buy green energy
 - > Care more for our soil, biodiversity
 - > Waste less

Hard short term targets for 2025, 2030.

<https://www.marketforces.org.au/superfunds/>

<https://www.marketforces.org.au/info/compare-bank-table/>

**AIM HIGH, GO FAST:
WHY EMISSIONS NEED TO
PLUMMET THIS DECADE**



Advocate and collaborate

Climate Positive Stimulus

- > to support local manufacturing and supply chains
- > build business resilience
- > increase urban greening
- > Progress towards a circular economy

Opportunities

- > Integrate environmental objectives into recovery plans
- > Tackle the significant increases in waste to landfill, including single use plastics
- > Fully integrate sustainability and affordability objectives into stimulus funding - such as to improve the environmental performance of homes to reduce costs and emissions
- > Stimulate 20-minute neighbourhoods across Melbourne - activation, diversification and local links

Learn from CASBE – and raise the bar



Questions?