Why is coral bleaching unfair?

The Great Barrier Reef off the Queensland coast is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Climate change is having a wide range of negative impacts on the reef. Flow-on effects include impacts on plants, animals, coastal communities and reef-based industries.

One of the main impacts is more frequent coral bleaching events. This bleaching can result in coral death. As corals provide food and habitat for coral reef species, if the corals die, then the ecosystem will collapse and the reef as we know it will cease to exist.

The 'big picture' is that activities such as the burning of fossil fuels to power vehicles and to generate electricity have caused global warming which has, in turn, caused mass coral bleaching events which may result in coral death.

This is an example of how your generation and all future generations are being affected by the economic decisions of your parents' and grandparents' generations.

Access the following Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority resources:

- the animations showing 'climate change' and 'coral bleaching'

- the factsheets on climate change and coral bleaching

available from http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/learn-about-the-reef/resources-by-theme/climate-change
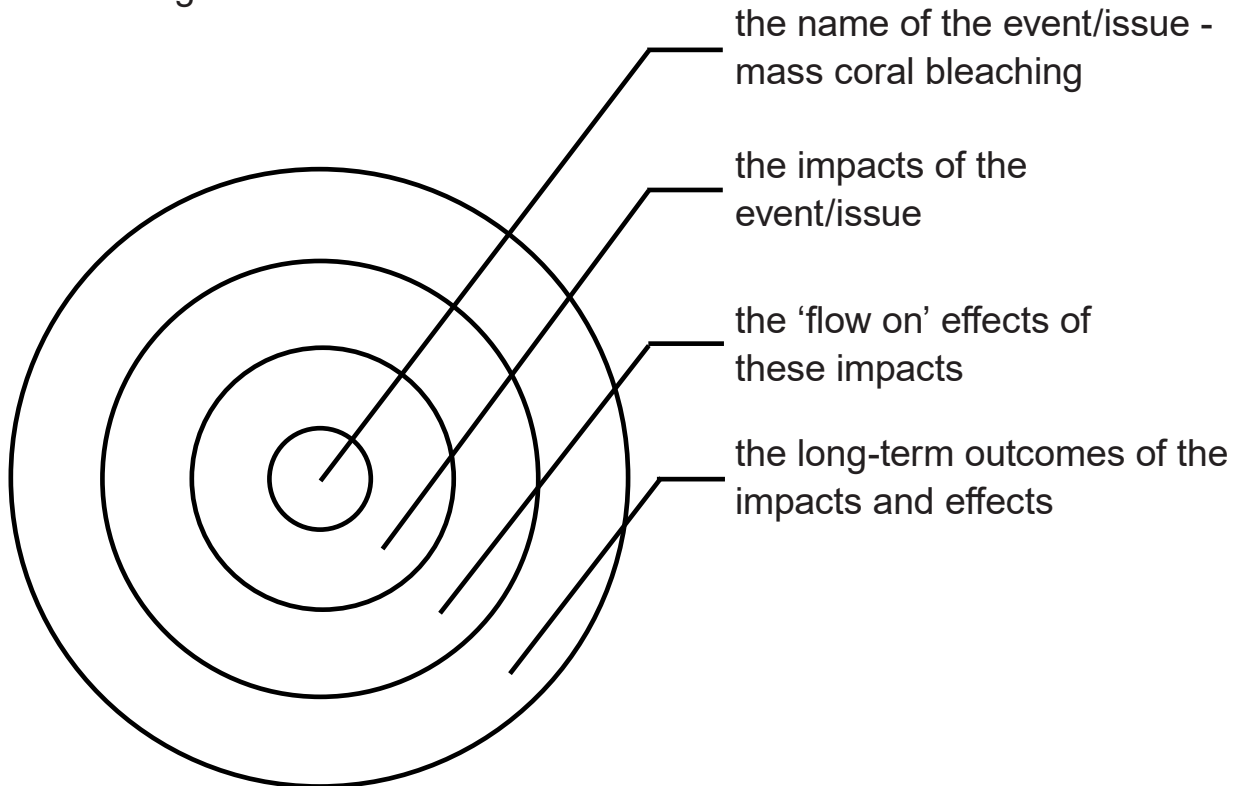
There are other visual resources available on YouTube:

- the *Climate State* video – *Coral Bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef 2016*

- the *Coral Garden* animation – *Coral Bleaching Explained: The Story of Frank the Coral*

Use a graphic organiser to record relevant information from the sources that you view.

With a partner, use the space on the next page to make a 'futures wheel' about mass coral bleaching. Write the following into the segments of the wheel.

the name of the event/issue - mass coral bleaching

the impacts of the event/issue

the 'flow on' effects of these impacts

the long-term outcomes of the impacts and effects

Discuss with the members of your class what might happen to the reef-based industries (such as, tourism and fishing) if the reef becomes less visually attractive and/or less productive.

Use the space below to summarise what is discussed.

Record a podcast about the cause and effect of mass coral bleaching and how this makes you feel. Use the space below to plan the script for your podcast.