

6 November 2023

To: Prime Minister the Hon Anthony Albanese
The Hon Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy

Strong and urgent steps needed for Australia to ramp up on climate

Dear Prime Minister and Minister,

Our organisations, representing communities across the country, are deeply concerned by the alarming signs of climate breakdown observed in 2023.

The climate crisis is accelerating. Extreme heatwaves in the northern hemisphere and record-breaking wildfires in Canada have brought back the memory of Australia's 2019–20 'Black Summer' bushfires. The return of El Niño heightens the risk of catastrophic bushfires occurring in Australia in coming months and could see the globe consistently reach temperatures 1.5°C higher than average through this decade. The next generation's health and prosperity will be determined by your ambition.

Since taking office in 2022, the Labor government has legislated national climate targets, strengthened the Safeguard Mechanism, and accelerated the rollout of renewable energy. The community acknowledges these welcome steps after years of inaction.

Yet at a time when the world must move with emergency speed to tackle the climate crisis, the Albanese government has approved several new and expanded fossil fuel projects, and pledged \$1.5 billion in funding for the Middle Arm petrochemical precinct—a project that will enable fracking in the Northern Territory and gas exports, and is opposed by local traditional owner groups.

These decisions have disappointed the communities we represent. They undermine Labor's climate change credentials as well as Australia's bid to host COP31 in partnership with Pacific Island nations.

As climate and community organisations, we are talking to Australians every day about their fears, but also about our shared vision of a future with clean energy, a healthy environment, a resilient economy, and prosperous and united communities. We are calling on your government to affirm its commitment to tackling the climate crisis, a fair and inclusive transition, and seize the benefits of the transition in this year's Climate Statement to the Parliament.

The government can show leadership on climate by committing to:

- Deliver a historic investment in climate solutions to accelerate decarbonisation and prepare communities for climate impacts. Australia can draw inspiration from the United States' Inflation Reduction Act to make large and strategic investments, which will alleviate cost-of-living pressures, create jobs, and support the resilience of communities to climate impacts.
- Rule out new coal and gas projects in accordance with the calls of Pacific Island nations and the analysis of the International Energy Agency, which shows these are not needed for our decarbonising world.
- Take steps to ensure Australia beats its target of a 43 percent emissions cut by 2030 and ensure the forthcoming Net Zero 2050 decarbonisation plan can deliver net-zero emissions by 2035.
- Sign and support the *Port Vila Call for a Just Transition to a Fossil Fuel Free Pacific*.

By taking these positive steps, the Albanese government can help protect the lives and livelihoods of communities in Australia, the Pacific region, and across the globe.

The community is watching closely and will welcome political leadership on climate change from the government.

Signed,

350 Australia
ACF Community Melbourne NxNW
Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Religious Response to Climate Change
(ARRCC)
Bayside Climate Crisis Action Group
Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action
Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
(CAFNEC)
Centre for Climate Safety

Citizens' Climate Lobby
Clarence Climate Action
ClimActs
Climate Action Burwood/Canada Bay
Climate Action Hobart
Climate Action Maribyrnong
Climate Action Merri-bek
Climate Action Network Australia
Climate Action Now Signs incorporated
Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle

Climate for Change
Common Grace
Conservation Council of South Australia
Conservation Council of Western Australia
Cooperative Power
Currie Country Social Change Aboriginal
Corporation
Darebin Climate Action Now
Doctors for the Environment Australia
Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community
Education
Environment Centre NT
Environment Victoria
Farmers for Climate Action
Friends of the Earth Australia
GetUp
Locals into Victoria's Environment

Lighter Footprints
Moonee Valley Sustainability
Nature Conservation Council NSW
Nillumbik Climate Action Team
Parents for Climate
People's Climate Assembly
Queensland Conservation Council
Shire Climate Action Network Group
Solar Citizens
Solutions for Climate Australia
The Australia Institute
The Green Institute
The Sunrise Project
The Sustainable Hour
Tomorrow Movement
Vets for Climate Action
Wodonga Albury Towards Climate Health