

## **An Open Letter to the Incoming Prime Minister of Australia**

As representatives of diverse professions, we have come together to call upon the incoming Government of Australia to recognise climate change as an existential threat requiring immediate national mobilisation.

We are deeply concerned by the rapidly escalating impacts of the climate crisis. Climate change affects us all. Increasingly frequent and intense events such as droughts, floods, heatwaves, bushfires, and marine heatwaves are causing loss of life, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Every year that action is delayed, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather disasters such as the Black Summer bushfires and the recent devastating floods will increase. Catastrophic damage to our terrestrial and marine ecosystems including our prized Great Barrier Reef, will be inevitable.

This places enormous burdens on our first responders, defence personnel, health providers, farmers, veterinarians and others engaged in public service.

Climate change is an existential threat across our region, especially to our Pacific family who are already affected by sea-level rise. Water and food crises exacerbated by climate change, along with population pressures and social conditions are putting at risk the global rules-based order, on which we rely for our security and economic prosperity. Australia has an opportunity to improve its international reputation - and create large numbers of high-quality domestic jobs - by committing to stronger emissions targets more rapidly.

There is hope for the future if Australia gets its climate policies in order. We must rapidly decarbonise our economy and transition to low emission energy and industrial processes. Fossil fuel emissions must be reduced to zero soon as possible. If we mobilise all resources to build a zero-emissions economy, we can become a regional energy and industrial superpower – and reduce the costs of climate catastrophe.

Australia can be a global leader in a decarbonised world with significant economic opportunities, especially for rural and regional Australia. But the entire community needs governments to tell the truth about the need to embrace renewable energy and low emissions agriculture, and to plan alternative opportunities for affected communities.

The security, health and future prosperity of all Australians depends on what we do today, not promises for the distant future. Australia has the skills and resources to lead the world in climate action, and Australian leadership will encourage other nations to accelerate the global transition to a decarbonised, safer future for our grandchildren.

We call upon the incoming Government to mobilise the resources necessary to address this clear and present danger, and to decarbonise our economy to reach net zero emissions as close to 2030 as possible. Climate change must be the next Government's top priority.

Your Sincerely,

Vice Admiral Chris Barrie AC (Rtd), Australian Security Leaders Climate Group

Richard Mathews, Diplomats for Climate Action Now

Greg Mullins AO, AFSM, Emergency Leaders for Climate Action

Dr Helen Scott-Orr AM, PSM, Former Chief Veterinary Officers Group

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