



Monthly Update

This is the first monthly update on the work of your Steering Committee. It also reports on work and activities of relevance from the membership of *Diplomats for Climate Action Now*.

Richard Mathews, Convenor

*Our grandchildren will
live through three times as
many extreme weather
events as we did*

Prof Mark Howden, ANU

Meeting Political Leaders

We have sent requests to a wide range of relevant political leaders (portfolios of climate change and energy, foreign affairs and trade) from both major parties, seeking meetings to raise awareness of our Climate-Focused Foreign Policy and to put forward our concerns about the risks and damage caused by Australia's poor performance on climate action.

To date no government ministers or MPs have responded to our requests for meetings. Some independent MPs have expressed interest in meeting us and we hope to arrange those meetings soon.

We received positive responses from the shadow minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong and the shadow minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen. Last week a group of us (Peter Dawson, Anne Giles, Richard Mathews, Maria Poulos-Conklin) had an on-line meeting with Penny Wong's Chief of Staff Tom Mooney, and Foreign Policy advisor Ashlee Brady. This week we met Chris Bowen, again on-line.

In both meetings we presented our concerns and explained the purpose of Diplomats for Climate Action Now. Peter Dawson joined both meetings to present his proposal to boost Australia's engagement with Indonesia: **"Indonesia and Australia: Deep Engagement on the Energy Transition"**. We supported Peter's proposal which is in line with our Climate-Focused Foreign Policy for Australia (CFFP) principle to *"support Australia's development partners to achieve their objectives of reducing emissions and making the green economy transition"*.

Tom Mooney (Penny Wong's CoS) said they knew about our group and that many of our CFFP principles were supported by ALP policy, if not overtly then in spirit. They were also interested in the Indonesia proposal. Ashlee Brady said that the ALP was interested in hearing about innovative forms of climate finance; and they were still considering whether to support recommitting Australia to the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

We offered to prepare a paper on [why Australia should recommit to the GCF](#). Subsequently, one of our members, Dr Ruth Adler, an expert on climate finance, kindly drafted a paper on this topic, which was reviewed by another expert climate finance adviser. We submitted this paper to Penny Wong's office this week.

Chris Bowen told us he knew of our group and supported much of our CFFP. He was also very interested in taking forward Peter Dawson's proposal on Indonesia and asked for a short paper that would help him take such a proposal to a future cabinet. He wanted a five-point plan. Peter Dawson is progressing his initiative with further consultations with the business community.

People who are going to be around in 10 years' time, in 20 years' time, will blame us profoundly if we don't do anything about it.

David Attenborough on Climate Change

Working with Like-Minded Advocacy Groups

A small group of us (Anne Giles, Alan March, Richard Mathews) have had discussions on joint advocacy in the lead-up to the election with the heads or leaders of Emergency Leaders for Climate Action, the Australian Security Leaders Climate Group, Former Chef Veterinarians group, Vets for Climate Action and the Public Health Association of Australia. We are also hoping Farmers for Climate Action will join us.

We are preparing a joint letter to the PM and Opposition Leader, expressing our common concerns about the rapidly escalating impacts of what clearly is now a climate *emergency*, the need to urgently transition away from fossil fuels, and our common view that an incoming government must take urgent action to seriously address the climate emergency. We hope the value of our joint letter will be to highlight that a diverse group of normally low-key professional and former public service groups are seriously concerned about the climate emergency, thus galvanising many other concerned people - who otherwise might not do so - to make their views known.

The draft letter, accompanied by a joint statement with our more detailed concerns, is currently under consideration by the various groups. We are working with these groups to develop a media strategy which will include a press release highlighting the joint letters, and a press conference fronted by our respective spokespersons. A joint op-ed piece in major newspapers will also follow the press release.

Pacific Islands Paper

Work on this paper is progressing well and has been the focus of a sub-group comprising around twenty of our members led by Philip Kentwell. They have made good progress on the paper with strong guidance and contributions from Kamal Azmi, Peter Hooton and Janaline Oh. A final draft is expected to be ready for publication soon.

This paper will form a solid basis for us to engage with political leaders on Pacific Island and SIDS issues and climate change. This paper builds on the principle in our CFFP that states:

"Australia should champion the interests of small island states... (and) commit to offering vulnerable Pacific Island nations a safe-refuge resettlement program for affected populations if their homelands become no longer habitable due to sea-level rise or other effects of climate change."

Feedback

Any feedback on the above work streams would be most welcome. Just send me an email: dip4can@gmail.com.

Forthcoming Events

Members may be interested in the Australian Institute for International Affairs NSW branch first event for 2022. I will be speaking on the topic: "Why Australia Should be a Global Leader on Climate Action". This will be an on-line event, and you can register here:

<https://aiiansw.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/40273-why-australia-should-be-a-global-leader-in-climate-action>

Diplomats for Climate Action Now

dip4can@gmail.com
<https://www.diplomatsforclimate.org/>