

DIPLOMATS FOR CLIMATE ACTION NOW

26th September 2021

The Hon Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development

The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer

The Hon Sussan Ley MP, Minister for the Environment

The Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Agriculture and Northern Australia

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie, Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education, Minister for Emergency Management and National Recovery and Resilience

Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister for Women

The Hon Angus Taylor MP, Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction

Cc all other Cabinet Ministers

Cc Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Leader of the Opposition

Cc members of the Shadow Cabinet

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers

We are a group of former Australian diplomats concerned about Australia's current lack of commitment to time-bound targets to achieve rapid reductions in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions and the implications this has for the climate and environment we bequeath to future generations. We are also concerned about what this lack of commitment means for Australia's future strategic and economic prosperity.

The recent IPCC report emphasised that the global community must work urgently to achieve the Paris Agreement objective of limiting the global average temperature rise to below 2C above pre-industrial levels. We must make rapid reductions in CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions, if we are to prevent increased climatic extremes, catastrophic sea level rise and a dangerous rate of biodiversity loss. The challenges of climate change are matters of public importance which we believe go beyond politics; and acting on climate change now is our ethical and moral responsibility towards future generations.

As former diplomats we are deeply concerned that Australia's key strategic and economic interests are at risk because of our failure to date, to commit to a target of net zero emissions by 2050. This lack of commitment is particularly concerning to those regional partners for whom climate change already poses a clear existential threat. The United States and other key partners in Europe and

around the globe are increasingly voicing concerns that Australia is not pulling its weight on climate action. Australia's inertia on commitments undermines our credibility as a regional partner; it undermines our reliability in the minds of our strategic allies; and it will cost us dearly as trading partners seek to impose carbon tariffs on imports of our goods and services. We fear this inertia will undermine many of the strong international relationships we have built up over decades.

Actions, plans and policies are of course vitally important, but without a commitment to targets at the highest levels of government, no-one will believe that we are serious about pulling our weight on reducing emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases. According to a recent climate poll by the Australian Conservation Foundation, a majority of voters across Australia and a majority in all federal electorates – including where coal and gas are key economic sectors – are now demanding action on climate change. And a clear commitment by Australia to targets would be welcomed by our neighbours and partners and would encourage greater investment in renewable energy and new green industrial processes.

We know that Australia can benefit from responding more ambitiously to climate change. As we transition to a green economy, we can also support our regional partners in their transitions, to our mutual benefit. Australia has the resources to become a major clean energy exporter, and many private investors are already looking at these opportunities which can also generate enormous employment benefits, particularly for regional communities. Australia also has a proud tradition of building effective coalitions to solve regional and global problems, and we can continue that tradition if we take a pro-active approach on climate action; and in cooperation with our Indo-Pacific partners, we can build a stronger, greener, clean energy region.

The science of climate change is now incontrovertible, and numerous substantial reports have shown that it is possible to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy over the next decade. The International Energy Agency, in its report Net Zero by 2050, found that beyond projects already committed, no new investment in oil or gas fields or coal mines – or mine extensions – is required. Many of our businesses and communities have already begun the change to power our communities with clean energy. Australia has a wealth of capabilities and resources to rapidly transition our transport, energy and industrial sectors to clean energy and green hydrogen. And we have the know-how and ability to protect and restore our forests, wetlands and mangroves and preserve the beauty and bounty of our great nation for future generations, while continuing to build a prosperous future.

But time is running out for us to catch up with the rest of the world. As former diplomats, we see what is happening around the globe, and it concerns us that Australia is not at the leading edge of international action on climate change.

Therefore, we urge the Government to commit Australia to achieving net zero emissions before 2050, and to make more ambitious nationally determined contributions before 2030, in advance of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow in November. We urge all our political leaders to work together on this.

Sincerely,

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| Joanna Adamson | former High Commissioner to Ghana and Sierra Leone, Ambassador to Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mali, Senegal and Togo |
| Margaret Adamson | former Consul General Berlin; Deputy High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea; Ambassador to Poland and Czech Republic; Ambassador to Cambodia; High Commissioner to Pakistan |
| Dr Ruth Adler | former Ambassador to Ireland; High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam |
| Graham Alliband | former Ambassador to Vietnam |
| Zena Armstrong | former Consul-General Guangzhou, China; Assistant Secretary Environment Branch DFAT |
| Kamal Azmi | former Counsellor (Development Cooperation), Australian High Commission, Solomon Islands; former Director, G20 Domestic Resources Mobilisation Section, DFAT |
| Allan Behm | former diplomat and Head of the International Policy and Strategy Divisions, Department of Defence |
| Dr Lucinda Bell | former Deputy High Commissioner to Bangladesh |
| Brendan Berne | former Ambassador to France; Ambassador to APEC |
| Dr Denis Blight AO | former diplomat; Honorary Visitor ANU School of History |
| Dr Alison Broinowski AM FAHA | former Counsellor, Australian Mission to the UN, New York; Acting President, Australians for War Powers Reform |
| Richard Broinowski AO | former Ambassador to Mexico; Ambassador to Vietnam; Ambassador to the Republic of Korea |
| Penny Burt | former Deputy High Commissioner Singapore; former CEO Asialink |
| Noel Campbell | former Ambassador to Argentina; Ambassador to Spain; Ambassador to United Arab Emirates; Ambassador to (former) Yugoslavia |
| Alex Cassie | former Second Secretary Australian Embassy Mexico |
| Jocelyn Chey AM | former Consul General to Hong Kong and Macau |
| Nicholas Coppel CSI | former Ambassador to Myanmar |
| Aron Corbett | former Consul Makassar, Indonesia |
| Susan Cox OAM | former Ambassador to Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau; Ambassador to Croatia |
| Bob Desiatnik | former diplomat (DFAT) |
| Laurie Dunn | former Counsellor, Development Cooperation, Australian High Commission, Port Moresby; former Minister-Counsellor, Development Cooperation, Australian Embassy, Hanoi |
| Susan Elliott | former Counsellor, Australian Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Geneva |
| Douglas Foscett | former High Commissioner to Bangladesh |
| Roger Frankel | former Ambassador to Venezuela |

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| George Fraser | former High Commissioner to Nauru; High Commissioner to Kiribati; Ambassador to FSM, Marshall Islands and Palau |
| Janet Gardiner | former Ambassador to Syria; Ambassador to Portugal |
| Anne Giles | former diplomat (DFAT) |
| Susan Grace | former Ambassador to Nepal; Consul-General Chennai, India |
| Bruce Haigh | retired diplomat (DFAT) |
| Robin Hamilton-Coates | former DFAT officer |
| Peter Hooton | former High Commissioner to Samoa and Solomon Islands; former Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Environment Program, Nairobi |
| Catherine Hurst | former Counsellor Australian High Commission, Port Moresby |
| Sean Kelly | former Consul-General for Southern China Guangzhou; former Consul-General for Southern India, Chennai |
| Evelyn Killick | former Assistant Commissioner-General Shanghai Expo; Executive Deputy Director Taipei; Second Secretary Tokyo |
| Dr Peter Lawrence | former First Secretary, Australian Permanent Mission to the UN Geneva |
| Dr David Lee | former DFAT officer and historian 1995-2019; now Associate Professor University of New South Wales |
| Jan Linehan | former Assistant Secretary, Deputy Legal Adviser DFAT |
| Sandi Logan | former Counsellor, Public Affairs Washington DC, Bonn and Port Moresby; former Assistant Secretary, Department of Immigration |
| Alan March | former Australian Humanitarian Coordinator AusAID |
| Richard Mathews | former Consul-General for eastern Indonesia, Makassar; Deputy Representative Taipei; Deputy Ambassador to Greece |
| Michael Mayer | former DFAT officer |
| Mary McCarter | former High Commissioner to Mauritius |
| Jackie McConnell | former First Secretary Australian High Commission New Zealand |
| Lyndall McLean AM | former Ambassador to Myanmar; Deputy High Commissioner to New Zealand |
| Heath McMichael | former DFAT officer, APEC and Multilateral Development Banks Branches |
| Beverly Mercer | former Ambassador to Croatia |
| Sharyn Minahan | former Ambassador to Denmark, Norway and Iceland; Ambassador to Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay |
| Elizabeth Morris OAM | former diplomat (DFAT) posted to New Zealand and Nepal |
| Bill Nelson | former DFAT officer |
| Bronwyn Nicholas | former First Secretary, Australian Embassy, Jakarta |
| Susan Oliver | former First Secretary Bangkok |
| Estelle Parker | former Chargé d'affaires a.i. Mexico City; Deputy Ambassador to Mexico, Central America and Cuba |
| Anthony Pearce | former Consul General Stockholm and lead climate negotiator |
| Anne Plunkett | former Ambassador to Portugal; Ambassador to Ireland and the Holy See; former Deputy High Commissioner Fiji |
| Maria Poulos Conklin | former Chargé d'affaires Mauritius; former First Secretary France and Sri Lanka |
| Jacqui Rabel | former diplomat (DFAT) posted to Palestinian Territories, Solomon Islands, Iran and Bougainville |
| Violet Rish | former Vice Consul Makassar, Indonesia |
| Godfrey Santer | former First Secretary, Australian Embassy, Paris; and Director, Marketing Operations, Australian Tourist Commission |

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| Alistair Sherwin | former DFAT officer and Humanitarian Coordinator, AusAID |
| Tom Sinkovits OAM | former High Commissioner to Nauru |
| Paul Smith | former Australian High Commissioner to Barbados and Ambassador to Suriname |
| Tanya Smith | former Minister-Counsellor, Australian Embassy Washington DC |
| Robin Taylor | former Counsellor, Australian Embassy Jakarta |
| John Tilemann | former diplomat (DFAT) and international civil servant; member of the Australian delegation to the Rio Earth Summit |
| Peter Versegi | former Ambassador for Regional Health Security and former Minister-Counsellor, Australian Mission to the United Nations New York |
| Stephen Waters | former High Commissioner to Vanuatu; Australia's Representative in Taipei; Consul General Mumbai, India |
| Paula Watt | former Director Soft Power Strategy, DFAT |
| Michael Wood | former Consul-General Chicago, United States |
| John Woods PSM | former Ambassador to Peru; former Ambassador to Venezuela |
| Lucinda Wright | former DFAT officer, 1975-1989 |