



TEAR
AUSTRALIA

Transform.
Empower.
Advocate.
Restore.



Climate change, poverty and Australia's role

Our urgent concerns about climate change

Climate change is rapidly escalating. The consensus from the vast majority of scientists (at least 97 percent) agrees that climate change is real, and humans are causing it.

This is an issue we care about as Christians.

We believe that Australia isn't doing its fair share when it comes to addressing climate change. Our commitments are far below what is required and expected, and we are not even meeting those commitments. Under the Paris Agreement Australia committed to reaching a 26-28% reduction in 2005 levels of carbon emissions by 2030.¹ The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has advised that global emissions need to be reduced by around half by 2030. Australia is currently on track to reduce emissions by only 7%.²

As Christians, we feel the burden of this brokenness of God's world. We also feel hope that the world's restoration is possible if we take action.

There is general consensus, through the Paris Agreement, about what needs to be done. Analysis by ClimateWorks Australia has found Australia has three times the potential needed to reach the current 2030 target.³ **Australia has technologies and resources available to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.**⁴

We have the science and we have the resources to make the changes required. **What we need is a bold and credible national climate plan** to make the transformative shifts required to reach and even step up our Paris Agreement commitments.

A critical upcoming date is in 2020, when Australia (along with all other countries) will be asked to submit an update on its Nationally Determined Contributions – that is, by how much it will reduce its national greenhouse gas emissions. This is the opportunity for Australia to showcase a bold national climate plan. Indeed, the UN Secretary General has asked governments to bring strong new climate pledges and concrete plans to meet the Paris Agreement.

We are asking you, our political leader, to step up and take the lead on this action. We know your position comes with great responsibility, and you feel the burden of many issues – as we do of this one. There is clear support amongst the Australian constituency to act on this now: In a recent poll, more than 80% of Australians want the Government to enhance their climate action, and more than 90% want to see more renewable energy. Furthermore the 2019 Lowy Institute poll revealed Australians regard climate change as the greatest threat to Australia's vital interests. **The need is critical. We need you to take the lead.**

¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2018) *Summary for Policymakers*, <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15>

² Department of the Environment and Energy (2018) *Australia's Emissions Projections 2018*

³ Skarbek A (2018) *Australia is not on track to reach 2030 Paris target (but the potential is there)*, The Conversation - <http://theconversation.com/australia-is-not-on-track-to-reach-2030-paris-target-but-the-potential-is-there-102725>

⁴ ClimateWorks Australia (2015) *A prosperous, net zero pollution Australia starts today*, cited in The Climate Council (2019) *Climate cuts, cover-ups and censorship*, Climate Council of Australia, <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Climate-Cuts-Cover-Ups-and-Censorship.pdf>

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What we are asking of you

We are asking you, as our political leader:

1. **Commit to a bold and credible national climate plan, including substantially increased emissions reductions targets.**
2. **Mobilise dedicated finance from within a growing aid budget to assist our neighbours in developing countries adapt and build their resilience to climate change.**

Financing climate action

We can do so much more to support our neighbours in developing countries adapt and build their resilience to climate change, by mobilising more dedicated finance towards this in the aid budget.

In the 2019/20 Federal Budget, the Government allocated \$200million to climate finance initiatives in line with its \$1 billion by 2020 commitment under the Paris Agreement. However, this target is extremely weak and isn't commensurate with Australia's 'fair share'.

Australian aid is effective: this is a fact supported by both the 2011 Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness and, more recently, the Performance of Australian Aid 2013-14 report. The work of TEAR Australia's international partners provides countless examples of the transformative effect of Australian aid. With greater financial contribution and use of our global influence, Australia can play a significant role in assisting in developing countries to contribute to building a sustainable, climate-resilient future.

We are asking you to do everything in your power to maximise political action on climate change

- Take a photo and share on social media that you have met with us today to talk about climate change action
- Take the lead in your party about the future we face due to climate change and the cost of doing nothing:
 - Speak to your colleagues about this issue and form a cohort of MPs who want to see more action
 - Write to the relevant Minister(s) and the Prime Minister expressing your concern about Australia's future and role in climate change action
 - Take the issue up in the party room.
- Take a public stance in support of bolder action:
 - Make a public speech or position on the issue of climate change and the need to take bolder action on this.
 - Raise the issue through a parliamentary speech or committee question.
 - Introduce a Motion or Bill into Parliament, for example declaring a climate emergency.

⁵ Hanrahan C (2019) Federal election 2019: Vote Compass finds broad desire for more action on climate change. Retrieved from ABC News website: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-15/federal-election-vote-compass-climate-change/11110912> cited in <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/australia/>

⁶ Lowy Institute Poll 2019, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/lowy-institute-poll-2019>

⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs (2019) *Climate Change Action Strategy: Tackling Climate Change through Australia's Development Assistance Program 2020-2025* (Australian Government, Canberra).

⁸ Commonwealth of Australia (2011) *Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness* (Australian Government, Canberra).

⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs (2015) *Performance of Australian Aid 2013-14* (Australian Government, Canberra).

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