



Australian Community Futures Planning

We have it in our power to create the world anew

An Open Letter to Prime Minister Scott Morrison You still have a chance to become a decent leader.

For eight years the Coalition government has been in office. In that time you and the government you now lead have achieved nothing that benefits Australia. Since 2013:

- Australia's economy has grown more slowly than at any time since World War II.
- Unemployment has been held, unnecessarily, at over 5% and underutilisation of labour is at an all time high.
- The poorest 80% of Australians are now set to pay higher average taxes over the next decade while the average tax paid by the richest 20% will fall. Low income families have not seen an increase in their net worth for more than a decade. Inequality has been rising and will continue to rise.
- Our public services have been stripped of capacity, in both services and policy, by wholesale outsourcing to an incompetent and overpaid private sector.
- Women are unsafe in your workplace and insecure in their financial future.
- Family and domestic violence related sexual assault has been rising and rose again by 13 per cent in 2020.
- Ethical standards in the government sector have fallen so that pork barrelling is now considered legitimate instead of discriminatory, unfair and corrupt.
- Despite your promise, we still have no federal integrity commission.
- Wholesale funding of election campaigns by big business and billionaires now threatens our democracy as do your government's threats to freedom of speech and freedom of the press.
- Breaches of law such as the Robodebt scandal cause massive grief and even suicide, and yet go unpunished.
- Attacks on the arts and in particular on tertiary education have robbed Australia of enormous cultural richness, economic capacity and opportunity for advancement.
- Home ownership is no longer affordable for the majority of young Australians.
- At least 940,000 children now live in families on benefits you have unnecessarily set at well below the poverty line, 17% of Australians are now severely food insecure, and last year 1.2 million children went hungry.
- Indigenous Australians are no closer to constitutional recognition and are incarcerated and removed from their families at appallingly higher rates than non-Indigenous Australians. Indigenous suicide rates have risen on your watch, Prime Minister, despite your personal commitment.
- Australia's international reputation in human rights has plummeted alongside our reputation as a trustworthy trading partner. Your government has made an enemy of Australia's biggest trading partner.



This is just a short part of the long list of failures of your government. It suggests that you either do not have the capacity or you do not have the will to lead Australia to become a modern, intelligent country respected for its fairness and trustworthiness. But as history has placed you as prime minister at such a pivotal time, you still have a chance to lead on the biggest issue we will face – climate change.

On behalf of the signatories to the attached petition, we respectfully demand that Australia lead the world at COP26 to stop global heating specifically by proposing fair sharing of a safe carbon budget.

Authorised and submitted for consideration by ACFP Founder, Dr Bronwyn Kelly

Petition: Demand that Australia lead the world at COP26 to stop global heating

To: Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, Angus Taylor

In the interests of the planet and all our children, the total volume of greenhouse gases emitted to the atmosphere must be capped at a limit sufficient to ensure that Earth's temperatures do not rise by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-Industrial Revolution levels. Nations must find a way to fairly share responsibility for ensuring the world emits no more than the remaining safe total load of carbon (CO₂-e).

We therefore call on the Australian government to move the following Motion at the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow (UNFCCC) in November 2021 – COP26:

Australia proposes that a new basis of negotiation within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be established to meet the temperature objectives of the Paris Agreement and that this should henceforth be based on pledges to stay permanently within specified total tonnage limits for emissions – such tonnage limits per country to be determined by the following formula:

- A.** *A pre-determined budget of total global emissions necessary to ensure a near 100% probability of staying below 1.5 degrees Celsius (estimated to be no more than 235 billion tonnes between 2020 and whenever net zero is reached by all countries), multiplied by*
- B.** *The percentage of the total load of global carbon emitted by each country to the atmosphere in 2019.*

In Australia's case, this would be roughly equivalent to 235 billion tonnes multiplied by 1.5% which is the approximate proportion of global emissions from domestic sources in Australia in 2019. If the formula were accepted this would give Australia a final carbon budget of approximately 3.5 billion tonnes. Australia's obligation under the UNFCCC would then be to reach net zero emissions without exceeding the 3.5 billion tonne limit of emissions. This is the only means by which Australia could reliably, fairly and affordably honour the commitment we made in Paris in 2015 to do all things necessary to keep temperatures from rising by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Achievement of net zero emissions within a budget of 3.5 billion tonnes of carbon equivalents is well within Australia's financial capacity. Failure to cap temperatures at 1.5 degrees Celsius will exceed Australia's capacity to live with the heating by many hundreds of billions of dollars, devastate our unique biodiversity and destroy our vital but sensitive resources of water, soil productivity and oceanic abundance.

Why is this important?

In November 2021, 197 countries will meet in Glasgow for the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26). This will be a make-or break meeting for stopping irreversible, catastrophic climate change.

At COP26, all countries will be urged to commit to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and to increase their already pledged percentage reductions in annual emissions of greenhouse gases (CO₂-e), consistent with the Agreement they all signed in Paris in 2015 to maximise the possibility of capping global heating as closely as possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre Industrial Revolution temperatures.

But the negotiating framework in use under the UNFCCC will no longer work to achieve the temperature targets agreed in Paris. Relying as it does on voluntary pledges of percentage reductions in emissions, the negotiating framework can no longer function to stop global heating because it does not oblige each country to reach net zero before they emit too much carbon to the atmosphere.

If we wish to stop the heating, it is not the date by which we reach net zero that matters; it is the total volume of carbon emitted that matters. The world needs to permanently limit the total volume of emissions if we are to keep temperature rises to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

A new global negotiation framework is therefore required where each nation must commit to stay within a tonnage ceiling for their emissions. And the pledged tonnages must not add up to more than the remaining safe load of global emissions.

That safe global load is approximately 235 billion tonnes. Every country must reach net zero before that ceiling is breached, or environmentally and economically disastrous temperature rises will be locked in.

As we approach the Glasgow meeting, few if any countries are doing enough. And Australia is currently among the least cooperative. Yet for Australia it is imperative that we stop the heating. As our foremost climate economist, Professor Ross Garnaut, has said:

The 2019-20 bushfires reminded us of what Australia has to lose from the world's failure to deal with climate change – we are more vulnerable than any other developed country.” But he also said: “We also have more to gain than any other country from the world moving early to zero net emissions necessary for cessation of warming, and from full participation in the global transition to zero emissions. [1]

Fortunately, it is still possible to defeat climate change. But to do this, all countries must come to an agreement right now to cap the remaining total tonnage of carbon that we permit ourselves to emit to the atmosphere. And they must all come to agreement about the fair shares of that remaining tonnage that can be emitted by each individual country.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) currently estimates that the world can emit no more than:

- 400 billion tonnes of carbon for a 67% chance of capping heating at 1.5 degrees Celsius, and
- 300 billion tonnes of carbon for an 83% chance of capping heating at 1.5 degrees Celsius. [2]

If the whole world emits no more than about 235 billion tonnes we will give ourselves and our children a near 100% chance of capping heating at 1.5 degrees Celsius. Australia's and the world's best interests are served by shooting for the 235 billion tonne budget. Australia will save a minimum of \$584 billion by 2030 [3] if the world keeps temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius. In fact, in the decade to 2030 the cost to Australia of allowing heating above 1.5 degrees Celsius is estimated to be at least 16 times higher than the cost of preventing the heating in the first place.

The world is likely to have no more than a decade to eliminate emissions before the remaining carbon budget is exceeded and catastrophic heating is locked in. It is therefore imperative that Australia shift from being among the least cooperative nations in Paris Agreement negotiations to a nation of leadership in global cooperation aimed squarely at stopping temperatures rising by more than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Unless we work with the rest of the world to stop it, global heating will

simply overwhelm the planet and our economic capacity to live with it. This is a future our children cannot afford.

If the world agrees to shift to commitments to stay with an agreed carbon budget, this would mean that Australia could emit no more than 3.5 billion tonnes ever, which may seem daunting. But it is no harder for Australia than it would be for any other nation. In fact, for Australia it is easier than most and not at all unachievable to stay within that carbon budget and achieve net zero in approximately 12 years.

The prize for Australia is a big one, if we start now.

This petition is posted by the Founder of Australian Community Futures Planning, Dr Bronwyn Kelly. Australian Community Futures Planning (ACFP) is an independent community based organisation assisting Australians to build a long term plan for their future as a nation. www.austcfp.com.au

For reference material and more information on the proposed Motion to the United Nations COP26 follow these links:

Fact Sheet on the petition: <https://www.austcfp.com.au/supporting-activities>

The State of Australia in 2020, Episode 6 Part 2 – Climate policy failure and how to fix it by global leadership <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ignbk7MoT7c>

[1] Professor Ross Garnaut, “Reset: Restoring Australia After the pandemic recession”, La Trobe University Press, 2021, page 254.

[2] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “Climate Change 2021: the physical science basis”, <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>

[3] Melbourne University, Sustainable Society Institute, “Australia's Clean Economy Future: Costs and Benefits”, June 2019. <https://sustainable.unimelb.edu.au/publications/issues-papers/au> This petition will be delivered by email.

Signed by 170 people – all from Australian postcodes.

Signatures withheld from publication in accordance with ACFP’s Privacy Policy.