

National Council of Churches in Australia
379 Kent Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Friday 15 October 2021

The Hon. Scott Morrison, MP
Prime Minister of Australia

Cc: Hon. Barnaby Joyce MP
Hon. Angus Taylor MP
Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Senator the Hon. Zed Seselja

Dear Prime Minister,

COP26 and Australia's role in addressing catastrophic climate change

We write to you as people of faith who believe the Earth, our common home, is a precious gift created by God, that all life is interdependent, and that we have a responsibility to care for all people and all creation.

Human activity is contributing to changing our climate and the consequences are already dire. Many of our churches are located at the front lines of climate change impacts and are sounding the alarm for the wellbeing of the communities they serve.

There is widespread scientific consensus that this situation and the resulting human suffering will only become catastrophically worse unless we change direction.

For this reason, we believe climate change is a moral imperative. One that requires urgent action in partnership with the international community and alongside our Pacific family.

We believe Australia can be a leader and champion of ambitious climate action and should pursue a path that gives the greatest hope for the future of God's creation.

To that end, as the 26th Conference of the Parties approaches, we urge the Australian Government to commit to:

- Scale up Australia's 2030 emissions reduction target to at least 50% and ambitiously aim for 74% to help limit global temperature rise to less than 1.5 C, and pledge to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 in line with most developed nations
- A national climate policy and plan for a just, equitable and rapid transition to a low-carbon economy that drives down greenhouse gas pollution
- A just and sustainable transition for communities currently dependent on carbon intensive industries for employment, and investment in renewable energy

- Policies that support people, nations and ecosystems that are most vulnerable to climate change, including measures to strengthen the resilience of communities and support people and the services they rely on to adapt to the effects of climate change.

We offer this letter with an awareness of our own responsibilities to address climate change. Every member and part of society has a role to play, but a stronger and more ambitious climate agenda from the Australian Government is critical to address the enormous challenge that lies before us. We believe Australia is ready.

Yours in faith,

Bishop Philip Huggins, President
National Council of Church in Australia

The Most Reverend Geoffrey Smith, Primate
Anglican Church of Australia

Rev. Mark Wilson, National Ministries Director
Australian Baptist Ministries

Rev. Sharon Hollis, President
Uniting Church in Australia

Rev. Mark Kickett, Interim National Chair
Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)

Dr. Rob Nyhuis, Chair
Churches of Christ in Australia

Rev. James Bhagwan, General Secretary
Pacific Conference of Churches

Commissioners Janine & Robert Donaldson
The Salvation Army

Ann Zubrick, Presiding Clerk
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Bishop Albert Wong
Chinese Methodist Church in Australia

Keith Lyons, General Secretary
The Congregational Federation of Australia and New Zealand

Archbishop Haigazoun Najarian, Primate
Armenian Apostolic Church of Australia and New Zealand