



20 February, 2020

Hon. Scott Morrison MP  
Prime Minister of Australia  
PO Box 6022  
Parliament House  
Canberra. ACT. 2600.

Dear Prime Minister,

Today we are writing to you as a fellow person of faith about the climate crisis that has been playing out so tragically in the form of massive bushfires this summer. This is a national catastrophe. We stand on the brink of a global one.

This land now called Australia is very vulnerable to climate impacts. Aboriginal Communities in arid areas are at great risk, as are the Torres Strait Islanders from increasingly hostile oceans. Farmers face more extreme droughts and floods. Our concern is also for the tens of millions around the world who are already being displaced annually by other climate-related disasters. There is even worse to come.

The insight of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait leaders, that all things are connected, is affirmed by the overwhelming scientific consensus. There is much to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, who have survived and thrived on their lands for over 2,000 generations.

Scientists and former emergency services chiefs have been very clear that the fires have been made much worse by human-induced climate change. The warmer temperatures and prolonged drought have made the land progressively drier.

You have said that you recognise this. Yet you have also insisted that your climate policies will not change. This, despite global views that Australia's climate policies are amongst the worst in the world.

We urge you and your Government to find within yourselves that which is most noble, most caring and courageous. It will take courage to admit that policy directions chosen so far have been unwise, but this is what this moment in history calls for.

As Parliament continues to convene on the land of the Ngunnawal people, we are asking you and your colleagues in the Coalition to unite behind the science. As it says in the Book of Proverbs "Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counsellors there



is safety.” There is now an abundance of clear expert advice. The best counsel available is telling us unequivocally that this is a planetary emergency.

Almost all peer-reviewed articles by climate scientists agree on the main points: climate change is real and it is caused by human activity, primarily the burning of coal, oil and gas, together with animal agriculture and land clearing. Human ingenuity has developed viable alternatives for each of these destructive practices. What is needed is strong and visionary leadership to support their urgent adoption.

We are asking you to have the wisdom, courage and humility to admit that it is time to chart a new course when it comes to climate policy. It is not about “getting the balance right,” as you have put it, when so much is at stake, both here and around the world. Old arguments and ideological stands need to be re-examined. It is no longer about balancing the protection of natural resources with economic considerations, but about making life and health the priority of your administration, trusting that this choice will bring economic benefit and a sense of hope and promise to all Australians.

With the wake-up call that has been the bushfire crisis, we ask that your Government be guided by those experts who offer pathways to a thriving and sustainable future, including pathways for regional and vulnerable communities.

Only then might our children’s hope for a better future be restored. Only then might your Government leave a proud legacy by which to be remembered.

Yours faithfully

1. Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM, Chair of the Catholic Bishops Commission on Justice, Mission and Service
2. Reverend Dr Ray Williamson OAM, President, NSW Ecumenical Council
3. The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt, Dean, St John’s Cathedral, Brisbane, Anglican Church of Southern Queensland
4. The Very Reverend Fr Dr Shenouda Mansour, Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Sydney and Affiliated Regions
5. Most Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso AM
6. Most Venerable Thich Quang Ba, former Chair, current Committee Member, Australian Sangha Association
7. Most Venerable Ajahn Sujato Bikkhu
8. Dr Rateb Jneid, President of Australian Federation of Islamic Councils/Muslims Australia
9. Rabbi David Kunin, Chair, Moetzah of Australian, New Zealand and Asian Rabbis



10. Emeritus Professor Desmond Cahill OAM, Chair, Religions for Peace Australia, Deputy Moderator, Religions for Peace Asia
11. Ann Zubrick, Presiding Clerk of Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia
12. Dr Carolyn Tan, Chair, Public Affairs Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia
13. Brother Peter Carroll fms, President, Catholic Religious Australia
14. Prakash Mehta, President, Hindu Council of Australia
15. Brooke Prentis, CEO, Common Grace
16. Charlie Hogg, National Coordinator, Brahma Kumaris Australia
17. Dr Gawaine Powell Davies, President, Buddhist Council of NSW
18. Thea Ormerod, President, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change