



## Strong Targets towards a Carbon Pollution Free Australia

16 June 2015

Dear Australian Parliamentarians,

We are a diverse group of 51 leading civil society organisations, representing a broad cross section of Australians. We encourage our leaders to take on the responsibility to do more to cut Australia's carbon pollution and do our fair share to limit global warming.

Climate change brings grave risks for the health and wellbeing of Australians, our environment, jobs, our economy, our prosperity, our poorer neighbours and ultimately our children's future.

Cutting carbon pollution not only helps prevent further dangerous climate change but puts us on a pathway to create a clean economy and better future for the people and places we love.

As world governments prepare to commit to new pollution reduction targets at the United Nations meeting in Paris, December 2015, we call on you to commit to carbon pollution reduction targets for Australia that:

- are in line with limiting global warming to the globally agreed upon goal of less than 1.5-2°C above pre-industrial levels.
- reduce emissions by at least 40 per cent below 2000 levels by 2025<sup>1</sup>, at least 60 per cent by 2030, and to lay out a clear pathway for Australia to achieve net zero carbon pollution as soon as possible, by mid-century at the latest.

A net zero carbon pollution pathway to 2050 is achievable, affordable and desirable.

**Australia is one of the most vulnerable developed countries to climate change:** The world is currently on track for a 4 degree temperature rise. This will result in more severe and frequent extreme weather such as droughts, floods, heatwaves, storms, as well as higher sea level rise<sup>1</sup>. Climate change poses significant risks to human health, lives, food production, the environment, infrastructure, business, regional stability, rural and remote communities, and our economy. The impacts of climate change are exacerbating existing inequalities in Australian communities as low-income households and disadvantaged communities are disproportionately impacted. Climate change presents many health risks to Australians. The impacts of

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<sup>1</sup> A 40% reduction is desirable for several reasons. The first is that it provides a 75% chance of avoiding 2°C of warming, and a 50% chance of avoiding 1.5°C. As such, these are the most conservative targets needed to keep below 2 degrees of warming; many of our organisations are advocating a more precautionary approach with higher emission reduction targets. A 40% reduction would also put Australia on track to keep up with the United States in terms of per capita emissions and emissions intensity, which is crucial if we are to remain competitive in a low-carbon economy.

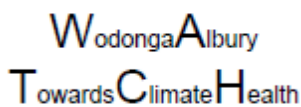
heatwaves, droughts, fires and floods include death, injury and illness, displacement, trauma and mental ill-health. Climate change also heightens international inequities. It is a major threat in the fight against poverty and hunger and is jeopardising hard-won development gains worldwide.

**Reducing carbon pollution will modernise the economy:** A pathway to net zero carbon pollution is an opportunity to modernise the Australian economy and build a sustainable, prosperous future. Economic modelling shows that under a low carbon pathway the economy will continue to grow to 2.5 times its current size by 2050<sup>ii</sup>, and not only will all industries continue to grow, some like agriculture will actually do better. Emissions reductions are becoming cheaper due to advances in technology. But if we delay action it will cost the economy more to transition<sup>iii</sup> through the lock-in of carbon intensive infrastructure and less competitive industries, shifting the burden to the next generation and jeopardizing our future international competitiveness.

**Australia has a responsibility to do our fair share to solve the global problem:** Australia is the 13th largest emitter globally and is one of the highest per capita emitters in the world. Australia is also a wealthy country with enormous capacity to cut our carbon pollution and help other countries. But Australia is currently not doing enough to cut carbon pollution and is not lifting our weight globally. We cannot expect poorer nations to do more of the heavy lifting; this is not the Australian way.

Australia and Australian people stand to lose so much from the impacts of climate change; it is in our national interest to be among the leading nations to ensure the world limits warming to well below 2 degrees. A zero carbon pollution future is possible, and it is all of our responsibility to make that future a reality for our children, and their children.







<sup>i</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2014, Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report, Fifth Assessment Report: <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>

<sup>ii</sup> F. Jotzo, L. Kemp, 2015, Australia can cut emissions deeply and the cost is low, Centre for Climate Economics and Policy for WWF-Australia: <http://tinyurl.com/jwt53ca>

<sup>iii</sup> The World Bank's research shows that delaying strong action on climate change until 2030 would increase the global cost by 50%. The 2015 report is titled *Decarbonising Development* - <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Climate/dd/decarbonizing-development-report.pdf>