

Open letter - embargoed until March 26th

Religious leaders urge climate responsibility

As religious leaders drawn from diverse religious traditions, we acknowledge our human responsibility to care for the Earth. We accept the ever stronger consensus among scientific bodies, international institutions and global civil society that climate change is threatening the ecosystems upon which life depends.

All our religious traditions uphold the moral demand to act for the common good. To seek maximum individual or national advantage in the face of global warming is to increase the costs to those least advantaged in the human family as well as today's young people.

We hold therefore that climate change is a moral issue. Australia's addiction to fossil fuels, both for domestic consumption and export earnings, is no longer morally justified and must be wound back as soon as possible. It makes no ethical, or even economic, sense to move only if others do.

This is a unique point in history when it is still possible to minimize climate disruption. We therefore call on all Australians to conserve energy and take up green energy options wherever possible. We call on investors to divest from fossil fuels and re-invest in socially responsible alternatives.

We call on the Government to retain existing legislation which is assisting the transition to a low carbon economy. We must do our fair share globally by setting ambitious targets, both for reducing emissions and our use of renewable energy, and by contributing far greater amounts to adaptation financing for developing countries.

If we take responsible and effective action without delay, another future is still possible. The choice, and the responsibility, is ours.

Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney, President, Uniting Church of Australia National Assembly
Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammad, Grand Mufti of Australia
Professor Nihal Agar, Chairman, Hindu Council of Australia
Jacqui Remond, Director, Catholic Earthcare Australia
Ajahn Brahm, Chair, Australian Sangha Association, Abbot of Bodhinyana Monastery
Sr Annette Cunliffe rsc, President, Catholic Religious Australia
Dr Beth Heyde, Chair, Public Affairs Commission, Anglican Church of Australia
Rev. Dr Brian Brown, Moderator, Uniting Church of Australia Synod NSW/ACT
Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky, Chairperson, Rabbinic Council of Progressive Rabbis
Bishop George Browning, past convener, Anglican Communion Environmental Network
Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins, Senior Rabbi, Emanuel Synagogue
Graeme Lyall AM, President, Amitabha Buddhist Association of New South Wales
Right Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard, Executive Director, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
Professor Neil Ormerod, Professor of Theology, Australian Catholic University