

# DEAR ENVIRONMENT MINISTER TANYA PLIBERSEK

The world's climate scientists, the International Energy Agency and the UN Secretary-General have made clear that if the world is to avoid more than 1.5°C of global warming there can be no approvals of new coal or gas projects or expansions.

Right now, the Great Barrier Reef is bleaching for the fifth time in eight years because of climate change.

The Australian Government keeps pouring fuel on the fire by approving new coal and gas projects.

Our national icons and wildlife will not survive unless we urgently change course.

But Australia's environment laws are not fit for purpose.

There is no requirement in our national environment laws for the Government to reject fossil fuel projects even if their full climate impacts will cause major harm to Australian environments—our national environment laws lack a 'climate trigger'.

In 2005, Anthony Albanese proposed a Bill calling for a 'climate trigger' in Australia's national environment laws, saying:

"The glaring gap in matters of national environmental significance is climate change...

It is time to act. It is time for procrastination to end."

**We agree. To be effective, Australia's nature laws require:**

- 1 // A 'climate trigger' that enables fossil fuel projects to be refused if their full climate impact, including scope 3 emissions, will cause harm to Australian wildlife and habitats like the Great Barrier Reef.
- 2 // A public right to appeal an environmental decision on its merits, to test whether the science and information it was based on was valid.
- 3 // Prohibitions on the outsourcing of decisions on national environmental issues to state and territory governments and other statutory authorities.
- 4 // Cumulative impact assessments to ensure that projects are not assessed in isolation, but in the context of other approvals.

**Without a climate trigger, the Government's proposed reforms will continue to protect the fossil fuel industry instead of our unique environment.**

## AUSTRALIA'S ENVIRONMENT LAWS MUST STOP NEW FOSSIL FUEL PROJECTS

**Kelly Albion** 350 Australia

**Katherine Tu** ActionAid Australia

**The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt** Social Responsibilities Committee, Anglican Church South Queensland; Dean, St John's Anglican Cathedral

**The Right Reverend Dr Peter Stuart** Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

**Adrian Tomlinson** CEO, Arid Lands Environment Centre

**Polly Hemming** Climate & Energy Program Director, The Australia Institute

**Helen Thompson** Australian Conservation Foundation Community Chisholm

**Phillip Jenkins** Australian Conservation Foundation Community Tasmania South

**Thea Ormerod** President, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change

**Grace Vegesana** Australian Youth Climate Coalition

**John Godfrey** Bass Coast Climate Action Network

**Margaret Sewell** Bathurst Community Climate Action Network

**Dr Kylie McIntosh** Bayside Climate Crisis Action Group

**Peter Moraitis** Beyond Gas Network

**Serena Joyner** CEO, Bushfire Survivors for Climate Action

**Bronwyn Opie** Cairns and Far North Environment Centre (CAFNEC)

**Cynthia Brook** Caldera Environment Centre

**Norman Pater** Director, Carbon Farming Foundation

**Hannah Ekin** Central Australian Frack Free Alliance

**Mik Aidt** Director, Centre for Climate Safety

**Ken Enderby** President, Climate Action Burwood/Canada Bay

**Susan Austin** Climate Action Hobart

**Angela Ashley-Chiew** Climate Action Maribyrnong

**John Englart** Climate Action Merribek

**Angela Michaelis** Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle

**Michelle Isles** CEO, Climate and Health Alliance

**Malcolm Robins** Climate Justice Mount Alexander

**Jaime Yallup Farrant** Climate Justice Union WA

**Bryony Edwards** Climate Rescue Accord

**Jane Kelly** Common Grace

**Kirsten Duncan** Conservation Council ACT Region

**Jess Beckerling** Executive Director, Conservation Council of WA

**Tom Reddington** National Director, CoPower

**Pippa Bailey** Cultural Gardeners — Australian Cultural Alliance for Climate Justice

**Arabella Douglas** CEO, Currie Country Social Change Aboriginal Corporation

**Karen Large** Darebin Climate Action Now

**Dr Kate Wylie** Executive Director, Doctors for the Environment Australia

**Corinne Fagueret** Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education

**Kirsty Howey** Executive Director, Environment Centre NT

**Christine Carlisle** President, Environment Council of Central Queensland

**Jill Redwood** Environment East Gippsland Inc

**Jono La Nauze** CEO, Environment Victoria

**Coral Rowston** Director, Environmental Advocacy in Central Queensland

**Retta Berryman** Environmental Justice Australia

**Martin Pritchard** Environs Kimberley

**Trevor Thomas** Managing Director, Ethinvest

**Catherine Cox** Extinction Rebellion SA

**Anne Lanyon** Faith Ecology Network

**Lisa Roberts** Friends of Bats and Habitat Gippsland

**Freja Leonard** Friends of the Earth Australia

**David Cazzulino** GetUp!

**John Hermans** President, Gippsland Environment Group

**Anna Cerneaz** Director, Graeme Wood Foundation

**Tim Hollo** Executive Director, The Green Institute

**Cherry Hardaker** Illawarra Knitting Nannas Against Greed

**James Sherley** Jubilee Australia

**Chris Degan** Knitting Nannas Coffs Harbour

**Leigh Naunton** Kooyong Climate Change Alliance

**Sally Kennedy** Lane Cove Coal and Gas Watch

**Henry Rischbieth** Letcombe Foundation

**Michael Simon Nolan** Lighter Footprints

**Carmel Flint** Lock the Gate

**Imogen Lindenberg** Mackay Conservation Group

**Sue Dwyer** MP Engagement Groups

**Bev Smiles** Mudgee District Environment Group; Central West Environment Council

**Jacqui Mumford** CEO, Nature Conservation Council of NSW

**Drew McKenzie** Nature Conservation Margaret River Region

**Steve Gates** Nature Reserves Preservation Group of Kalamunda

**Eddy Blaxell** Newtown Climate

**Elizabeth R Doig** Convenor, Nillumbik Climate Action Team

**Nigel Howard** Northern Beaches Climate Action Network

**Kim Wagstaff** President, Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society

**Peta Goodwin** Margaret River Regional Environment Centre

**Tracy Skippings** Margaret River Regional Environment Centre

**Will van de Pol** CEO, Market Forces

**Patti Burton** Move Beyond Coal

**Jacynta Faamau** Pacific Climate Warriors

**Rob Pallin** Director, Paddy Pallin Foundation

**Nic Seton** Executive Director, Parents For Climate

**Amy Blain** People's Climate Assembly; ACF Community Canberra

**Deidre Stuart** Protect Our Water Catchment Incorporated

**Clare Silcock** Queensland Conservation Council

**Elliot Costello** Ryan Cooper Family Foundation

**Tom Morton** Rising Tide

**Frank Breen** Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society

**Rupert G H Milne Home** Save Our Macleay River Inc.

**Shohaag Sengupta** School Strike 4 Climate Australia

**Megan Edwards** Shire Climate Action Network

**Iain Mackay** Sustainable Living Armidale

**Jenny Goldie** National President, Sustainable Population Australia

**Catherine Reynolds** Sutherland Shire Environment Centre

**Kathy McKenzie** Sydney Knitting Nannas and Friends

**Sharee McCammon** Tasmanian Climate Collective

**Dr Jennifer Sanger** Lead Scientist and Co-Founder, The Tree Projects

**Angelica Panopoulos** Victorian Forest Alliance

**Assoc Prof Robert Eisenberg** Founder, Vote Earth Now

**Lizette Salmon** WATCH (Wadonga Albury Towards Climate Health)

**Peter Wills** Chair, Wando Conservation and Cultural Centre Inc.

**Joy Connor** The Wellspring Community of Australia

**Virginia Young** Director, Wilderness Australia

**Sarah Deasey** Yarra Climate Action Now

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