

## Beyond politics – a Jewish call for serious climate action

Together with many other Australians, Jewish people are responding to a dreadful national disaster by contributing money and support to people who have lost loved family members, homes and other property and to volunteers fighting fires or rescuing injured wildlife. <sup>(1)</sup>

This is what Australians do at times like these.

But we need to do much more.

Since the 1980s, scientists have linked climate change to more frequent and intense fires and have issued increasingly urgent warnings about droughts, fires, destructive winds, floods, pests, diseases, climate migration, dying reefs and species extinction. Everything that climate scientists, fire chiefs, economists, financial experts, environmentalists and insurance companies have long predicted – all the warnings that climate change deniers, the fossil fuels industry, and their media supporters have mocked, minimised and ignored for three decades - has been proven correct. But many political leaders have yet to accept the need for immediate and transformative action to avert global catastrophe. <sup>(2)</sup>

In these critical circumstances, civil society, religious and ethnic organisations, business leaders and individual citizens have a moral responsibility to step up.

We call on the federal government to:

- take the lead in implementing a binding bipartisan national strategy and action plan to address the climate crisis, through mitigation, adaptation, and a just transition to a climate resilient economy;
- commit to much more ambitious targets to reduce Australia's contribution to dangerous greenhouse gases;
- introduce carbon pricing;
- phase out reliance on, and export of, fossil fuels, to ban all greenfield development of fossil fuel resources, including in the Galilee Basin, and to end cost exemptions and subsidies, direct or indirect, for fossil fuel exploitation;
- introduce a national strategy to retrain workers in fossil fuel industries and to develop Australia's vast and job rich renewable energy potential;
- recognise the invaluable role that Indigenous knowledge can play in reforming our land management practices;
- ensure that Australia contributes conscientiously to global efforts to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

We call on Australian state governments, local and city authorities, religious, ethnic and civil society organisations, business leaders and fellow citizens, if they are not already doing so, to exert pressure on our leaders to this end.

And we undertake to examine and change our own conduct in ways that will contribute to a cleaner, safer and more sustainable environment for all beings on our planet.

**Aleph Melbourne, Ameinu Australia, Australian Jewish Democratic Society, Dayenu, Habonim Dror Australia, Hashomer Hatzair Australia, Inner West Chavura, J-Greens Victoria, Jewish Labour Bund Melbourne, Jewish Voices for Peace and Justice (NSW), Meretz Australia, Netzer Australia, NIF Australia.**



(1) For example, by supporting campaigns initiated or coordinated by business, NGOs and community organisations, including StandUp, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry.

(2) Australia and Israel for example played less than constructive roles at the recent UN Climate Change Conference in Madrid, the disastrous Adani Carmichael coal mine is currently going ahead, and in Israel natural gas began flowing this year from a field that will be exploited for decades.