



The Very Revd Dr Andreas Loewe
Dean of Melbourne

10 August 2021

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

Dear Prime Minister,

Reach net zero emissions by 2050

I am writing to you on behalf of the members and my colleagues at St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne, to express our concern at the lack of government action to address the current climate emergency. During the past years, the physical effects of climate change—floods, droughts, bushfires—have increased. Not only here in Australia but also overseas. We believe that it is a matter of gospel justice to act decisively now in order to save our planet.

At St Paul's we have set ourselves a target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. We already have a good track-record in reducing our carbon footprint. Our investment in sustainable technologies to light and heat our building has reduced our carbon footprint by 14 metric tons a year. We aim to reduce our own footprint further year on year, and are encouraging our members to do the same. While we each can choose to reduce our individual carbon footprints, we can't put a halt to the government's investment in energy generation from fossil fuels, nor can we set Australia's emission targets. But you can.

As Christians, we believe that God has placed on us responsibility to be good stewards of our planet. In the prophecy of Jeremiah we hear how God holds his chosen to account for their failure to act in being good stewards of what was entrusted to them (Jer. 2.7). Similarly, in Matthew's gospel we read that Jesus promises this earth—and not another earth—as the inheritance for those who are blessed by their meekness (Mt. 6.7). Finally, in Luke's gospel we are told of the complacency of the Rich Man, who is not even convinced to change his behaviour by someone who has come back to life from the dead. The consequence of remaining at ease and shutting our ears to reality, Jesus says, is our own permanent alienation from God (Lk 16.19-21).

In the light of this, I strongly encourage you to adopt the COP26 goals set by this year's UN Climate Change Conference. These are ambitious but realistic and necessary targets. From these targets flow direct, positive outcomes. I would urge you to work with your fellow global leaders, and your cabinet, to put in place strategic and measurable goals to transition swiftly from power generation by burning fossil fuels to creating power from renewable sources.

We not only have a duty to care for our planet but also for our fellows. Any climate policy therefore needs to take into account the most vulnerable global communities to make sure that no one gets left behind. Some of the most endangered communities, such as the Pacific Islands, are our immediate neighbours. And some of the most priceless habitats threatened by the effects of climate change, such as the Great Barrier Reef, are on our own shores.

Prime Minister Morrison, in order for the last window we have to prevent irreversible damage not to close on us, we need to see wise and decisive leadership that works across national and party lines. Together we can keep 1.5 degrees within reach. We are committed to working to be better stewards of God's good creation. With your leadership and action, Australia and its global partners can do the same.

Yours sincerely,

The Very Revd Dr Andreas Loewe
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