

To the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, Prime Minister of Australia

26 November 2021

The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Member for Cook
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you as a coalition of climate concerned health organisations regarding the recent outcomes of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

According to the World Health Organization, climate change is “the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century”. As global temperatures increase, so too does the burden of disease, placing greater pressure on our health system.

Latest evidence indicates that even if countries fulfil all their commitments under the COP26 text, global land surface temperatures will exceed 2.4C by the end of the century.

It is crucial Australia plays its part in both mitigating global warming and developing resilience strategies.

We acknowledge the Australian Government’s commitment to a net zero emissions target by 2050. This is an important first step to ensuring Australia is part of a global greener future. However, there is much more that needs to be done to ensure a low carbon and resilient health system in Australia and for our Pacific Island neighbours.

In 2022, countries around the world are required to revisit and strengthen current emissions targets to 2030 as part of a revision of Nationally Determined Contributions. We urge the Australian Government to follow the advice of leading health experts, such as the World Health Organization, and develop an ambitious national strategy that both mitigates Australia’s emissions, secures the health of the community, and builds resilient health systems.

The economic value of avoided ill-health and associated productivity gains from doing so will also deliver considerable savings for health care and social service budgets.

To protect the health of all Australians, and ensure adaptation is embedded in Australia’s climate response, we call on the Australian Government to:

1. Embed health into the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021 – 2025 with explicit financial and policy support for a resilient health system under future warming scenarios
2. Ensure Australia’s 2022 Nationally Determined Contribution to the Paris Agreement includes the strengthening of the 2030 emissions reduction target
3. Commit to further funding for loss and damage in the Pacific Islands to protect regional health system resilience
4. Fully resource and implement recommendations from the Climate Change and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Discussion Paper by the Lowitja Institute

It is critical Australia continues to step up its action on climate – the health of every Australian depends on it.

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter. We look forward to your response.

Supporting Organisations

