

Dear Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer,

Thankyou for the opportunity to have input into priority areas for the 2021-2022 budget.

I am an Australian citizen and resident who will be directly impacted by the decisions made in the upcoming budget. I wish to explain my priorities and my rationale.

Like many Australians, particularly on the east coast, the 2019-2020 summer was a cruel wake up call for me about the reality of our changing climate and the impact it will have on me and the young people I care about. While I was aware of the greenhouse effect and knew that we had to drastically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, I had been disengaged from the budget considerations and practicalities of doing so and had faith in our country's systems to handle this situation. The fires that tore through our country and the subsequent reading and research I did in an effort to understand did much to damage that faith.

I learned how Australia has one of the highest per capita greenhouse gas emissions rates in the world, that we are responsible for nearly 30% of the world's coal exports<sup>(1)</sup>, and that in a recent study we were ranked 60 out of 61 countries for our climate change policy<sup>(2)</sup>. It is clear from these numbers that Australia's current budget priorities are failing to effectively meet the challenge of climate change.

**I therefore strongly recommend that limiting climate change be given the highest priority in this upcoming budget.**

Areas that require consideration in order to meet this priority include:

- Market mechanisms to internalise the social cost of greenhouse gas emissions, e.g. a price on carbon.
- Transmission infrastructure to upgrade Australia's energy network, in particular the NEM, to net zero carbon in the shortest possible time scale
- Investment in zero-carbon power generation, e.g. solar power and wind power
- Investment in firming infrastructure to cope with increasing intermittent power generation, e.g. pumped hydro storage and batteries.
- Investment to transition Australia's transport infrastructure to low-emissions options. These include:
  - Electrified private vehicle infrastructure, e.g. a charging network
  - Financial incentives for private electric vehicle purchase over private combustion engine vehicle purchase.
  - Investment in alternative to private vehicle transport e.g. public transport
- Investment in green hydrogen research and development as a potential industry for Australia's future.
- Investment in developing alternative technology for industries currently reliant on high emissions technology e.g. steel processing

Indirect but related areas that require additional funding in order to meet this priority include:

- Restoration of carbon sinks in the form of vegetation, e.g. increasing national park coverage area and protection
- Investment in low emissions agriculture and carbon farming practices
- Investment in science and research through funding to universities and research bodies
- Investment in independent media and communications such as the ABC
- Investment in transitioning workers into sustainable employment in the case that their current employment will be negatively impacted by the transition to zero carbon

**As the greatest moral challenge of our time and a personal and financial risk to Australians in particular, climate change caused by greenhouse gas pollution should be the highest priority for this upcoming budget.**

Thankyou again for the opportunity to provide input into the 2021-2022 budget, I will follow the decision process with interest.

Emma Storey

**Sources:**

1. Michelle Cunningham et al.  
<https://www.rba.gov.au/publications/bulletin/2019/sep/the-changing-global-market-for-australian-coal.html>
2. Climate Change Performance Index  
<https://ccpi.org/download/the-climate-change-performance-index-2021/>