

Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2021

I'm writing on behalf of Sunshine Coast Climate Action Now, a community organisation that's committed to local action to address the urgent social and political change needed to tackle the global climate emergency. We represent many residents on the Sunshine Coast who are very concerned about the impacts of climate change on their lives, homes and businesses.

Given the critical importance of this issue to the welfare of all citizens, we would like the federal budget in May to include specific measures to help manage the increasing and dangerous heatwaves we will experience. Specifically, we would like the government to provide funding for solar PV and battery storage for every school and early childhood centre in the country that does not already have these facilities.

Creating a network of schools and early learning centres with solar and batteries would provide clean renewable electricity equivalent to a new power station. The added benefit of using schools and early learning centres is that they are typically closed during peak load periods, late afternoons and evenings, weekends and during the summer holidays. This would enable solar power stored in the batteries to be used to stabilise the grid and negate the need to build more gas-fired peaking power stations, burning more fossil fuels.

Research by "Beyond Zero Emissions Million Jobs Plan" estimates that installing solar panels and batteries on all schools and early learning centres and allowing them to export unused energy to the grid could save up to \$100,000 per annum in power bills. At the same time, it is estimated that up to 7000 jobs could be created in the renewable energy industry across all regions of Australia.

Perhaps the most important benefit of funding such a proposal in the budget is the significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by displacing the power used by schools and early learning centres that is currently generated by burning fossil fuels with clean renewable energy. This will help Australia drive down emissions, which is essential if we are to avoid the worst impacts of global heating.

Thank you for considering this submission.

Yours sincerely

Fergus FitzGerald
Secretary
Sunshine Coast Climate Action Now