

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Government must release climate security risk assessment for transparent, credible defence debate: former security leaders

The Federal Government should make public a declassified version of the Office of National Intelligence's Climate Security Risk Assessment in order to help ground the current national debate on defence priorities, China and submarines, says the Australian Security Leaders Climate Group (ASLCG).

According to the ASLCG, which includes former Defence Force Chief Admiral Chris Barrie (Ret'd) and former Defence Director of Preparedness and Mobilisation Cheryl Durrant, Australia's greatest and most urgent security threat is posed by climate change, not China, and the Federal Government has a duty of care to the Australian people to fully assess, prepare for and respond to climate security risks.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has delivered on an election commitment to assess climate security threats, however the completed assessment of external climate risks remains sitting with the Government and a non-classified version has not yet been made public, Admiral Barrie said.

"With the Federal Government now leading a national debate on the nation's defence priorities and their response to potential threats within our region, the Australian public deserve to know the full range of security threats our nation faces - particularly those posed by worsening climate change," Admiral Barrie said.

"The practice of Australia's allies has been to release such assessments. With other security threats, Australian governments have been transparent, making a point of sharing with the community their knowledge to gain support for action; for example cyber security, Covid, North Korea and more. But the same rationale has not been applied to the security threat of climate change, which is a far greater risk.

"Both the United Nations and the US Secretary of Defence have described climate disruption as an 'existential' security risk, however climate security risks are missing in action in our current defence debate, led by politicians and the media.

"In defending the rights of all Australians, a government has no greater duty than to fully assess all the risks to security and be frank with the electorate about the threats we face as a nation and how to respond. Climate disruption is no exception. Integrity and transparency are two sides of the same coin.

For further information, view the Climate Security Up Front: Transparency, Security Risks and the Government's Duty of Care briefing [here](#).

**Media contact:** Luke Taylor, 0449 641 160

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*The [Australian Security Leaders Climate Group](#) is a non-partisan network of Australian security and policy professionals working to reframe the climate debate and make climate an immediate security priority in Australia through assessing the full level of risk posed by climate change, and building resilience for local and global protection.*