

NUCLEAR & GAS EXPANSION WEAKENS OUR NATIONAL SECURITY

Security Leaders Sound Alarm on Dangerous Climate Policies

To Australia's political leaders,

We write as former and current defence and security leaders and analysts to share our deep alarm at the vulnerability that inadequate climate action poses to our security, regional stability, and the safety, wellbeing, and livelihoods of all Australians. The threat is immediate and rapidly increasing, according to the US Defense Secretary and senior security analysts in the AUKUS trio. This threat is being neglected by Australia's two major political parties.

Proposals by the Liberal and National Parties to further weaken or remove Australia's already inadequate climate targets and the suggestion that nuclear power is a viable solution within the relevant time frame – the next decade – are at best dismissive of the realities of cost and time to establish a nuclear power industry and more seriously display a profound ignorance of the impacts of climate change on national security and more importantly, human security in the broadest sense.

The Albanese Government has committed to climate action. However, plans by both the Government and the Opposition to expand Australia's fossil gas production and exports are contrary to long-standing and sound scientific advice. All nations, especially large fossil fuel producers, must not licence new capacity, with the absolute priority being to reduce emissions to zero as fast as possible. Time is not on our side, and it is running out. Predatory delay by political parties captured by the fossil fuel industry and other vested interests will result in millions of deaths around the world and unlivable extremes for more and more Australians.

Global warming is intensifying natural disasters and, not least, placing immense strain on our emergency response capabilities and defence resources, with the Australian Defence Force (ADF) increasingly diverted to disaster response, stretching its operational capacity.

Inadequate action on climate risks will fuel climate impacts here and in Asia and the Pacific, leading to major humanitarian crises and government instability. This will necessitate increased Australian responses and support, not least for the rising levels of climate refugees. Rising sea levels and extreme weather events already threaten Australia's critical infrastructure, disrupting our food security, water security and supply lines.

The urgency for robust climate action could not be more clear. We must reduce greenhouse gas emissions and transition rapidly to a zero-emissions economy. This includes rejecting slow and expensive nuclear power in favour of fast, safe and reliable renewable energy sources, and phasing out fossil fuel extraction, while ceasing new gas and coal projects. Strengthening climate resilience through infrastructure investment and enhancing disaster preparedness for the climate impacts we can no longer avoid is paramount.

Climate change must be addressed as a clear and present risk and not as a poorly understood political differentiator thriving on community division. We call upon all major political parties to recognize the inseparable link between climate policy and national and human security. Weak climate policy compromises our safety, our economy, and strategic interests. We urge all political parties to commit to sound emissions reduction targets, accelerate the transition to safe renewable energy, and enhance climate resilience and regional cooperation rather than conflict.

The security of our nation depends on the actions we take today. We stand ready to support and contribute to policies that ensure a secure and sustainable future for all Australians.

Respectfully,

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