



Australian Government

Australian Government response to the Senate Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade References Committee Report on Implications of
climate change for Australia's national security

March 2026

Introduction

The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee concluded its inquiry when it tabled its report on 17 May 2018. The then Morrison government did not provide a response within the mandated timeframe.

Government Response to Committee Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Government Response
1.	The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government commits to providing ongoing adequate funding for climate science and research organisations.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
2.	The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government develop a climate security white paper, or similar planning document, to guide a coordinated whole of government response to climate change risks.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
3.	The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government develop a National Climate, Health and Well-being Plan based on the <i>Framework for a National Strategy on Climate, Health and Well-being for Australia</i> .	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
4.	The committee recommends the Department of Defence consider releasing an unclassified version of the work undertaken by Defence to identify climate risks to its estate.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
5.	The committee recommends the National Aerial Firefighting Centre undertake a cost benefit analysis to assess whether leasing arrangements or government ownership of firefighting aircraft will provide the best value and support to firefighters and communities in the future.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

6.	The committee recommends that the Commonwealth Government consider the need for a dedicated climate security leadership position in the Home Affairs Portfolio to facilitate coordination on climate resilience issues, including disaster risk reduction, infrastructure planning, community health and well-being, and emergency management.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
7.	The committee recommends that the Department of Defence create a dedicated senior leadership position to assist in planning and managing the delivery of domestic and international humanitarian assistance and disaster relief as pressures increase over time.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
8.	The committee recommends that national security agencies increase their climate security knowledge and capability by encouraging participation of staff in available courses.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
9.	The committee recommends the Commonwealth Government extend the National Partnership Agreement on Natural Disaster Resilience and review after the new funding arrangements are well established and data is available on the funding available for mitigation activities.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
10	The committee recommends that the Department of Defence establish emissions reductions targets across stationary and operational energy use, and report against these in its annual report.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
11	The committee recommends the Commonwealth Government provide further funding for international climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures, in addition to the existing aid budget, to the extent that financial circumstances allow.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.

Minority/dissenting recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Government Response
1.	Phase-out greenhouse gas emissions across all sectors of the Australian economy by 2040 at the latest, including ensuring that Australia reaches the target of 100% renewable energy by 2030.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
2.	Plan and upgrade the ADF's role and capabilities to provide equal priority to humanitarian, disaster relief and peacekeeping missions, alongside its warfighting functions.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
3.	Provide at least \$3.2 billion in climate finance funding each year by 2020, in addition to the existing aid budget, so that developing nations, particularly those in our own vulnerable region, can build climate resilience.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.
4.	Increase funding to the CSIRO climate program and other climate science programs and institutions, along with assurances around funding stability, so that Australia can better understand the threats posed by climate change.	The Government notes this recommendation. However, given the passage of time since this report was tabled, a substantive Government response is no longer appropriate.