

Submission to the Select Committee on Information Integrity on Climate Change and Energy

From: Celeste Pater

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Re: Submission to the Senate Select Committee

Introduction

I am an Australian concerned about government transparency, public messaging, and the real-world impacts of climate and energy policies. While I am not focused on debating climate science itself, I am deeply concerned about the economic and social consequences of policies, the lack of transparency, and the way information is presented to the public.

It feels like Australians are being told to accept policies and spending decisions as absolute fact, without genuine explanation or accountability. We are seeing rising bills, small business closures, stress on rural communities, and mounting economic pressure - all while government messaging presents these initiatives as inevitable and unquestionably beneficial.

Observations

1. Government messaging and communication

- Policies are often presented as non-negotiable, with absolute certainty that the public must follow, regardless of the impacts.
- This creates a sense of frustration and helplessness. Many Australians feel that their lived experiences - rising costs, economic pressures, and local community impacts - are ignored.
- Information from authorities is often selective or one-sided, leaving taxpayers without the full picture of financial commitments or consequences.

2. Economic and social impacts

- Farmers and small businesses are particularly vulnerable. Rising costs, regulatory pressures, and energy policies have contributed to severe stress in rural communities, in some cases leading to tragic outcomes.
- Many small businesses have closed, while the burden of policy costs continues to fall on everyday Australians.
- Large-scale renewable projects, such as wind farms, are being implemented without sufficient public consultation or consideration of local aesthetics, environmental trade-offs, or community sentiment.

3. Transparency and accountability

- Taxpayer money is being spent rapidly and sometimes without clarity on outcomes or efficiency.

- There is little room for public debate or independent scrutiny. Policies are presented as settled, even when impacts are visible and concerning to the communities they affect.

Recommendations

- Ensure all public communications are clear, balanced, and backed by verifiable data, including economic and social impacts.
- Increase transparency in government spending on climate and energy programs, with detailed reporting and accountability mechanisms.
- Incorporate the perspectives of rural communities, small business owners, and households when designing messaging or implementing projects.
- Allow space for open public debate and scrutiny, ensuring Australians can critically evaluate policy claims without fear of dismissal.
- Prioritize policies that are practical, locally informed, and economically sustainable, rather than purely ideological or top-down.

Closing

Australians are deeply affected by climate and energy policies, not just in theory but in their bills, livelihoods, and communities. While misinformation is an important issue, it is equally crucial to examine how government communications, spending, and implementation affect public trust, transparency, and accountability.

I urge the Committee to consider these impacts and ensure Australians are fully informed, fairly represented, and not burdened by policies implemented without scrutiny or transparency.

Sincerely,

Celeste Pater