

To whom it may concern,

My name is Carly Dober and I am a 30-year-old psychologist from Melbourne, Australia. I am growing increasingly concerned with the lack of inaction from the federal government in showing initiative and investing in the future of Australia using evidence available to us.

The climate change bill introduced by independent MP Zali Steggal announces that in order to effectively manage our economy and environment sensibly and responsibly, Australia must have strong national plans to adapt to increasing impacts of climate change, to reduce and mitigate its risks and to leverage its opportunities. We currently do not have this.

The Australian Federal Government must display fiduciary duty to work in the best financial interest of all Australians. A plan of a gas lead recovery and a commitment to further fossil fuel expansion.

In the wake of the devastating Black Summer bushfires, an overwhelming majority of Australians (82%) and South Australians (81%) say they are concerned about climate change resulting in more bushfires, according to a new benchmark report released today by the Australia Institute's Climate & Energy Program.

The annual Climate of the Nation report has tracked Australian attitudes on climate change for over a decade, since 2007.

There is a clear lack of objectivity in proposed plans for Australians energy policy, with fossil fuel lobbying taking precedent over the evidence, what will benefit long term economically and environmentally. An independent climate change commission and skills are sorely needed on the commission.

There is also a need for the Government to set five-year national adaptation plans for the nation and for nominated regional and economic sectors, such as agriculture, biodiversity, national parks, marine parks, health, energy, transport, services, education, planning, construction and infrastructure. Continuing to wait until other countries around the world start acting opens us up to the risk of being global pariahs, our national image being tarnished, our tourism economy being impacted further as biodiversity and our natural attractions change/die/disappear.

We need sensible, bipartisan climate policy in Australia. For far too long it has become an issue about being a party issue and not an Australian citizen issue. Our country has farmers, people who rely on the land and have done so for generations.

Not only that, our reliance on fossil fuels over renewables doesn't make sense with respect to the amounts of people employed in each sector.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, coal mining employs 37,800 people. Mr Reith's claim is more than five times this number.

This misperception is more accurate than general impressions of mining industry employment. Survey results show that Australians think mining employs nine times as many people as it does.

Then- we must consider employees in the tourism sector who do not get a mention. The Australian Bureau of Statistics showed there were 611,700 tourism jobs at the end of June 2020. This is 18% fewer than the 748,200 tourism jobs at the end of 2019. COVID-19 has impacted the employment figures, climate change will exponentially impact employment figures in this sector.

With regards to mental health impacts, Climate change and related disasters cause anxiety-related responses as well as chronic and severe mental health disorders.² Flooding and prolonged droughts have been associated with elevated levels of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorders.³ The trauma and losses from a disaster, such as losing a home or job and being disconnected from neighbourhood and community, can contribute to depression and anxiety. Extreme weather events have also been associated with increases in aggressive behaviour and domestic violence.³ Exposure to extreme heat may lead to increased use of alcohol to cope with stress, increases in hospital and emergency room admissions for people with mental health or psychiatric conditions, and an increase in suicide.

The need for mental health services increases in the aftermath of a climate-related disaster. At the same time, there is often a disruption in services or a decrease in the availability or accessibility of services.

Many potential long-term impacts of climate change, such as population migration, food scarcity, loss of employment and loss of social support, have consequences for mental health.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, population migration linked to climate change is already happening. Each year since 2008, an average of more than 20 million people are forced to move because of weather-related events, such as floods, storms, wildfires or extreme temperature. Many others are leaving their homes because of slower moving events, such as droughts or coastal erosion.

Mental health can also be affected by other impacts of climate change, including food scarcity or food quality issues, potential increases in diseases transmitted by insects (such as Lyme disease and malaria) and air pollution

We are able to take strong, decisive action and make Australia a leader with this bill. Please do not allow lobbying from dying industries to get in the way of this. It isn't a free market if

the fossil fuel industry continues to get massive bailouts and subsidies when they are losing billions.

Thank you.