



Dr Helen Haines

Federal Independent Member for Indi
117 Murphy Street
Wangaratta VIC 3677

Dear Dr Haines,

Re: National emissions reduction target legislation, 2022

I'm writing on behalf of Women's Health Goulburn North East (WHGNE), in regards to the imminent introduction of legislation around a national emissions reduction target to the Australian Parliament. We urge you to advocate for the legislation of a stronger target than the government's proposed 43 per cent by 2030 target - that is, a 75 per cent by 2030 target.

WHGNE is a proudly feminist organisation supporting the creation of equal, just, healthy, and safe communities in rural and regional Victoria. We view the world through a prevention lens, addressing the root causes of discrimination, exclusion, and oppression to realise communities in which equality, care and wellbeing are centred.

Our concern with an Australian emissions reduction target is linked to our work in climate justice. The latest IPCC report demonstrated that "climate impacts and risks exacerbate vulnerability and social and economic inequities."¹ In Australia, patriarchal norms, gender stereotypes and discrimination continue to drive to gender inequality, which means climate change will have a disproportionate impact upon women in our regional and rural communities, and, indeed, communities across the country.

We are already seeing – and will continue to see – climate change-related insecurity and increases in the cost of food, water, electricity and other goods. This has a greater impact upon women because gender inequality sees women bear a disproportionate burden of undervalued and underpaid care roles, as well as reinforcing a gender pay gap, both of which leave women with inadequate financial resources to care for themselves and their families.²

Meanwhile, climate change-linked natural disaster also increases the severity and frequency of violence against women. Our own organisation, via Gender and Disaster Australia (formerly the Gender and Disaster Pod)³ has pioneered Australian research that demonstrated the uptick in

¹ IPCC WGII Sixth Assessment Report: Summary for Policy Makers, 2022,

https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg2/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf; p33; last accessed 15.07.22

² Workplace Gender Equality Agency, [The Gender Pay Gap](https://www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap#what-drives-the-gender-pay-gap), <https://www.wgea.gov.au/the-gender-pay-gap#what-drives-the-gender-pay-gap>, last accessed 15.07.22

³ Gender and Disaster Australia, www.genderanddisasteraustralia.com.au/about, last accessed 15.07.22

domestic and intimate partner violence during and after bushfires in Victoria.⁴ This contributes to the alarming epidemic of gender-based violence that we see in Australia, which governments at both federal and state levels, and organisations like ours, are trying so hard to address.⁵

The impacts of climate change are compounded by other forms of systemic oppression and discrimination in Australia, with Indigenous women, women with disabilities, women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, regional and rural women, older women, and gender-diverse people at greater risk of harm.

It is with this in mind that we urge you to advocate for a stronger national emissions reduction target that ensures our country does its bit to keep the global community in line with staying below 1.5C warming, and in doing so, keeps all people in our communities, from Indi right across Australia, safe from climate change-induced harm.

Science-based recommendations by the Climate Council state this is only possible with a national target of 75 per cent emissions by 2030, towards achieving net zero emissions by 2035.⁶ Such a target is also consistent with ethical principles and the duty of care we feel the Australian Government should be demonstrating towards achieving “maximum protection”⁷ for all people, non-human nature, ecosystems and civilisation, throughout geographic space and time.

We recognise the economic and political complexities of implementing such a target, however we believe that good leadership and investment could see it deliver its own benefits. University of Melbourne modelling, commissioned by Friends of the Earth as part of its People’s Climate Strategy, demonstrated that an emissions reduction of 75 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 is not just viable, but economically advantageous, creating at least 53,900 jobs and stimulating \$51.7 billion worth of investment in the Victorian economy.⁸

Such an ambitious target offers more than just financial benefits to our economy. It provides our nation with the opportunity to radically overhaul our economic system, away from one that is motivated by economic growth and the extractive logic of capitalism, towards a wellbeing economy, characterised by care, equality, justice and collective wellbeing. This aligns well with

⁴ Parkinson, D. 2017, Women’s experience of violence in the aftermath of the Black Saturday bushfires, https://bridges.monash.edu/articles/thesis/Women_s_experience_of_violence_in_the_aftermath_of_the_Black_Saturday_bushfires/4705114 last accessed 15.07.2022

⁵ Our Watch, Quick Facts, <https://www.ourwatch.org.au/quick-facts/>, last accessed 15.07.22

⁶ Climate Council, 2021, Aim High, Go Fast: Why Emissions Need to Plummet This Decade, [aim-high-go-fast-why-emissions-must-plummet-climate-council-report.pdf](https://climatecouncil.org.au/aim-high-go-fast-why-emissions-must-plummet-climate-council-report.pdf) (climatecouncil.org.au), last accessed 15.07.22

⁷ Breakthrough - National Centre for Climate Restoration, 2020, Delivering Maximum Protection: An effective goal for a climate emergency response, [148cb0_c039398da2784c45b721dc79419acc81.pdf](https://breakthroughonline.org.au/148cb0_c039398da2784c45b721dc79419acc81.pdf) (breakthroughonline.org.au), last accessed 15.07.22

⁸ Friends of the Earth Melbourne, A People’s Climate Strategy for Victoria, 2021 [A People’s Climate Strategy for Victoria 2021.pdf](https://foe.org.au/files/2021/08/A_People's_Climate_Strategy_for_Victoria_2021.pdf) (d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net), p47, last accessed 15.07.22


Treasurer Jim Chalmers' recent comments around the inclusion of a "wellbeing budget" in his first budget.⁹

This piece of legislation provides our nation with the opportunity to demonstrate an ethic of care for the health, wellbeing and safety of the people in our communities who are most marginalised and impacted by climate change. An ambitious emissions reduction target of 75 per cent by 2030 is backed by our nation's – and indeed, the world's - most reputable climate scientists while offering a remarkable opportunity for us to collectively reshape our economy into one that puts people and the planet first.

Helen, we hope you will support an ambitious 75 per cent emissions reduction target in Federal Parliament, recognising how far it will go towards helping us to realise an equal, just, healthy and safe local (and global) community. Our climate justice work is centred on – indeed, dependent upon – government commitments to such a target and we would be very pleased to work alongside you to consider what such a bold commitment might mean for our own regional and rural communities.

We would be thrilled to discuss this with you further and look forward to watching the debate unfold in Federal Parliament.

Regards,

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Amanda Kelly
CEO, Women's Health Goulburn North East

⁹ The Sydney Morning Herald, July 7 2022, [Treasurer to measure 'wellbeing' pay-off from economy in first budget, Federal budget: Treasurer Jim Chalmers to introduce wellbeing budget as part of his first budget in October \(smh.com.au\)](https://www.smh.com.au/national/treasurer-to-measure-wellbeing-pay-off-from-economy-in-first-budget-federal-budget-treasurer-jim-chalmers-to-introduce-wellbeing-budget-as-part-of-his-first-budget-in-october-20220707.html), last accessed 15.07.22