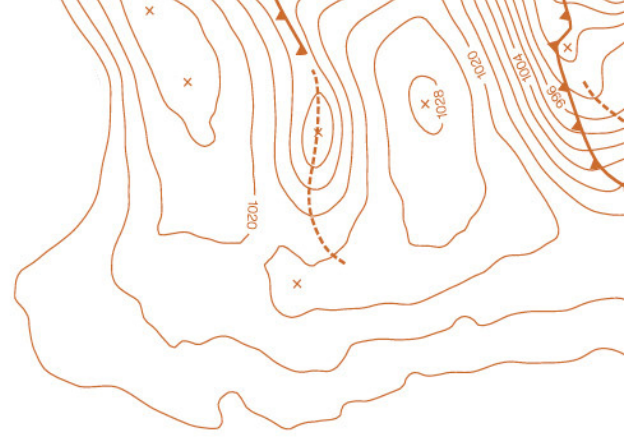




Western Alliance for
Greenhouse Action



6 July 2020

The Hon. Daniel Andrews
Premier of Victoria
Via email: Daniel.Andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Premier,

Strong interim Victorian greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets

In July 2019, the Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action (WAGA), a partnership of eight Councils in western Melbourne, together with other Victorian greenhouse alliances, made a submission to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on Victoria's interim emissions reduction targets.

The alliances support an interim reduction target of 67% below 2005 levels by 2030, based on the Victorian Government's Independent Expert Panel's own conclusion that a target of that level is necessary 'to secure an even chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C'. While the Panel in fact recommended a lower target (45-60% by 2030), we believe that the Government should follow the advice about what is actually necessary. We also stated in our submission in July 2019, that strong interim targets are important to ensure economic signals occur as early as possible to incentivise Victorian businesses and households to make the transition to climate resilience and remain competitive in a zero carbon global marketplace.

In 2020, the confluence of needs to address emissions reductions, the COVID 19 economic crisis and the impact of last summer's bushfires presents Victoria with an historic opportunity. Economic reconstruction can be coupled with rapid decarbonisation, and strong emissions reduction targets should be a central platform of the strategy. As we said in our 2019 submission, these targets would send clear investment signals for, and enhance job creation potential in, renewable energy, energy efficiency, electrification, efficient and public transport and improved land use.

This opportunity for transformational change also occurs at a time when it would receive broad public and cross-sectoral support. At the global level, the International Monetary Fundⁱ is calling on nations to 'do all they can to promote a recovery that also fights against the climate-change crisis.' At the national level, a coalition of the Australian Industry Group (AiGroup), the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) and the Investor Group on Climate Changeⁱⁱ are saying that Australia must use the common ground it has found in politics to address COVID 19 for climate change. Organisations such as the Clean Energy Councilⁱⁱⁱ and ClimateWorks^{iv} have released well-evidenced reports to show that a zero carbon economy can be readily achieved with existing and mature technologies. Most recently on 24 June 2020^v, the federal Labor Leader, Mr Anthony Albanese, called for a genuinely bipartisan approach to climate change and also committed Labor to a medium-term national emissions reduction target based on the science.



The WAGA Councils are committed to protecting their residential and business communities from the impacts of COVID 19, even as they face some of the worst^{vi} economic and health risks in Victoria. At the same time, they continue to step up to the challenge of climate change with strong local and regional action; for example, by participating in a Local Government Power Purchase Agreement to buy renewable energy for their own operations. Their actions are backed up by strong emissions reduction targets and, for most of them, climate emergency declarations.

We understand that determination of the Victorian interim emissions reduction targets has been delayed due to the immediate priority of dealing with COVID-19. However, we urge you to take this opportunity to set science-based targets, and we look forward to their release as soon as possible this year.

Please contact Fran Macdonald, Executive Officer of WAGA (franm@brimbank.vic.gov.au or telephone: 9249 4864) if you would like to discuss or have any questions about WAGA's position and work.

Yours sincerely,

Fran Macdonald
Executive Officer
Western Alliance for Greenhouse Action

ⁱ 'Nations must promote 'green recovery' from virus, IMF Chief says': <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-29/nations-must-promote-green-recovery-from-virus-imf-chief-says?sref=gPAG2MJ8>

ⁱⁱ 'Australia has found common ground to respond to Covid 19. We can do the same for climate change'" https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/07/australia-has-found-common-ground-to-respond-to-covid-19-we-can-do-the-same-for-climate-change?CMP=share_btn_tw

ⁱⁱⁱ Clean Energy Council, 'A Clean Recovery': <https://www.cleanenergycouncil.org.au/advocacy-initiatives/a-clean-recovery>

^{iv} ClimateWorks, 'Decarbonisation Futures': <https://www.climateworksaustralia.org/news/how-australia-can-be-a-net-zero-nation-by-2050/>

^v 'Anthony Albanese vows to set new medium-term emissions reduction target': <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jun/24/anthony-albanese-vows-to-set-new-medium-term-emissions-reduction-target>

^{vi} 'Melbourne's west a COVID-19 hotspot as clusters continue to grow': <https://www.theage.com.au/national/victoria/melbourne-s-west-a-covid-19-hotspot-as-clusters-continue-to-grow-20200516-p54tlq.html>