



Australian Government

Chief Scientist

7 November 2020

Ms Zali Steggall OAM, MP
Member for Warringah
Level 2, 17-19 Sydney Road
Manly NSW 2095

Dear Ms Steggall,

I write in response to your recent letter, received 3 November 2020, in which you seek clarification on my views and the advice I have provided as Australia's Chief Scientist on the impacts of climate change.

I consider that I have been very clear to the Australian community and the Government on the science of climate change and the impacts of increased global emissions.

On 12 October 2018, I published an opinion piece in *The Conversation* to coincide with the release of the International Panel on Climate Change special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 degrees.

I have continued to communicate my views through a range of speeches and articles including to the National Press Club on 14 February 2020,

'Climate change is Nature's reaction to our actions.

It is real, and it is already happening with a rapidity that is deeply affecting our way of life.

The link between climate change, a rising number of forest fire danger days and our season of bushfires is clear, and has resulted in a steep collective cost that can be measured in billions of dollars in economic damage — which pales to insignificance when compared to the greater costs behind the statistics.

The lost lives and livelihoods. The lost businesses and homes. The lost flora and fauna.

These costs are immeasurable ...'.

I also refer you to my opinion piece in the Sydney Morning Herald on 26 September 2020; the opening lines are:

'The science of climate change is not in doubt. Global warming is due to human activity, and must be arrested as a matter of urgency by reducing global emissions.'

Throughout my term as Australia's Chief Scientist I have chaired a number of reviews and have been providing, and continue to provide, scientific advice to government in relation to climate change and emissions reduction.

I chaired the review of the electricity market that recommended the development of the Integrated System Plan, which is enabling the rapid introduction of large scale solar and wind electricity generation into the National Electricity Market.

I am a board member of the Climate Change Authority, which has released two research reports this year.

I also chaired the Expert Advisory Panel that supported the work of the CSIRO Climate and Disaster Resilience report.

This year I chaired the panel that advised the Government on the development of the Low Emissions Technology Statement, which positions Australia to be a leader in the global shift to a decarbonised future and capture the economic benefits of the growing international demand for low-emissions technologies and products.

Combined with other current policies, such as Australia's National Hydrogen Strategy (the development of which I led), and future policies, such as the expected long term emissions reduction strategy for presentation at COP26 in Glasgow, I am sure that Australia will play its part in tackling climate change globally.

I am also confident that my advice has been taken into account.

But I recognise that scientific evidence and advice is just one element – a very important element – that is considered in policy decisions. These decisions are the responsibility of Australia's elected representatives.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Alan Finkel'.

Dr Alan Finkel AO