

# Open letter to leaders of G20 in Brisbane

Wednesday 12 November 2014

## Faith leaders call out G20 leaders for failure to act on climate change

As religious leaders drawn from diverse religious traditions, we see the earth as sacred and it is our human responsibility to protect it. When the earth is respected and cared for, human life can flourish.

We acknowledge that the best science is clear that the burning of fossil fuels is driving global warming, thus threatening the long-term viability of life on earth. At the G20 Summit meetings, we therefore urge national leaders to put climate change on the agenda.

We call upon all national leaders, even those of developing countries, to commit to a rapid transition away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. It is entirely possible to create thriving economies that are also sustainable. To do otherwise will result in unthinkable suffering, first for our brothers and sisters already at high risk of climate-related disasters, then for our own children and grandchildren.

To this end, ceasing government subsidies for fossil fuel companies is desirable. Subsidies operate as a perverse incentive to destroy the biosphere, to deplete and pollute precious water sources, pollute the air and create significant health problems.

It is a further injustice that, while wealthy countries spend tens of billions annually on subsidies for fossil fuels, most are failing to contribute even the most basic amounts to meet the mitigation and adaptation needs of the poor. We call on donor governments to commit substantial public money to Climate Finance, and to the technology transfers needed by developing countries to leapfrog to cleaner and more efficient technologies.

We urge our national leaders, in their meetings, to place our economies at the service of human prosperity, equity, inclusiveness and environmental stewardship. The pursuit of economic growth will ultimately be self-defeating without due regard for the future of the earth itself.

## Signatories

Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammad, Grand Mufti of Australia

Sr Berneice Loch rsm OAM, President, Catholic Religious Australia

Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney, President, Uniting Church of Australia National Assembly

Professor Nihal Agar, Chairman, Hindu Council of Australia

Ajahn Brahm, representing Australian Sangha Association (Buddhist)

Mr Kim Hollow, President, Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils

Dr Beth Heyde, Chair, Public Affairs Commission, Anglican Church of Australia

Mr Hafez Kassem, President, Australian Federation of Islamic Councils/Muslims Australia

Jacqui Remond, Director, Catholic Earthcare Australia

Rabbi Shoshana Kaminsky, Chairperson, Rabbinic Council of Progressive Rabbis

Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard, Executive Director, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University (Anglican)

Professor Neil Ormerod, Professor of Theology, Australian Catholic University

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