

The Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023

I urge the government to change their practice of disregarding the duty of care to the young and our fellow humans around the world and pass this bill.

It is astounding that in the case of *Sharma v Minister for the Environment*, senior government ministers argued that they don't have a responsibility to care for our children and future generations. In fact, they should be aware it is our primary aim to leave the world in better condition than we found it, and for successive generations we have found the natural world in massive decline, first in our glaciers, reefs and our biodiversity but now increasingly in our coastal communities, amongst people trying to survive and grow food in our hottest regions, and amongst communities vulnerable to cyclones, typhoons, hurricanes and river flooding.

It is evident that climate change is and will continue to impact on our lives, our flora and fauna unless we can repair our climate.

There is conclusive evidence from the UK's Institute and Faculty of Actuaries that suggest that half the world's GDP could be destroyed as early as 2070. Our government must show leadership, have a long-term perspective that enables future generations to survive and thrive.

It is irresponsible to permit additional fossil fuel mining at risk of devastating the prospects of those being born today, this will continue to be the case for many generations to come. They will be condemned to a much bleaker world. Currently we have a government who is offering a Duty Not to Care.

Overwhelming scientific opinion indicates that emissions are not dropping anywhere near fast enough to avert the worst impacts of the climate crisis. The science indicates that we now have very little chance of avoiding 1.5 degrees of warming. We are gambling with the wellbeing of billions of people across the globe. On the basis of decades of careful research the IPCC has stated that we are at a state of "red alert" and cannot afford any new fossil fuel developments.

The future we are looking at is one in which the lives of so many are in peril. We have just lived through the hottest year on record, we are failing to deploy renewable technologies at anywhere near the rate needed and despite this we continue with new fossil fuel developments. Is this leadership? No, it is failure to lead, it is jeopardising the future of our children and grandchildren and billions more across the globe.

The proposed Duty of Care Bill is vitally important. It is crucial that our decision makers are held to account and that there are stringent safeguards put in place to protect future generations. It is now probable that we will see hundreds of millions of people displaced from environments where they can't access adequate food and water and where it is too hot to live. Dislocation of this kind is likely to fuel mass migration and global conflict. The risks are far too great and too unpredictable to continue with our current "business as usual".

I request the government:

1. release the ONI report into climate related security risks
2. fall behind the Duty of Care report.
3. Cease to open further fossil fuels and wind down its risky position as the third largest exporter of fossil fuels.

The Duty of Care Bill will fill a significant gap in Australian law by ensuring that decisions are made with a view to the longer-term wellbeing of all citizens. Current performance clearly demonstrates that

without a Bill of this type, decision making will continue to be made with a short term focus that favours business profits over the interests of the broader populace and a healthy planet. We urgently need a Bill that promotes intergenerational equity in government decision-making. We simply can't afford to maintain the current perspective that is dominated by the three-year election cycle and short term profits. Surely the essence of good government is ensuring a safe and sustainable future.

I implore our parliamentarians to put future generations at the forefront of all decision-making and in that light to support the adoption of the Duty of Care Bill.