

11 March 2021

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to you on behalf of COTA SA to protest public expenditure on gas projects.

COTA SA is an older people's movement, representing the rights, interests and futures of 630,000+ older South Australians as we age.

In response to feedback from older people following the 2019-20 bushfires, COTA SA set up its Climate Change Group to look at what older South Australians can do to be active about climate change. In 2020, we –

- conducted a survey on climate change;
- released a statement of interest - <https://www.cotasa.org.au/policy/climate-change.aspx>;
- held a webinar with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC) <https://www.aycc.org.au/> and headlined by Dr John Hewson AM here - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjE_FIMOtho&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=COTASA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjE_FIMOtho&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=COTASA;);
- wrote a joint letter with AYCC to urge more tree canopy in SA as a way of ameliorating the heat effects of climate change.

Our partnership with AYCC on climate change reflects the high level of concern of COTA members about the future for their children and grandchildren and underlines our commitment to this major cross-generational issue.

We join with AYCC in supporting its campaign on *No Public Funding for Gas*. We understand that your Government has already allocated almost \$30 million in public money to open up new gas basins and has recently announced further funding for gas projects in the Northern Territory.

Gas is a fossil fuel. Extracting and burning it makes climate change worse. With climate change already driving extreme weather events, such as the 2019-2020 summer bushfires, we can't afford any more gas projects.

To tackle climate change, we need your government to transition rapidly to renewable energy and get our emissions down to Net Zero. If the Government proceeds with its plans to help the gas industry expand, fossil fuels will be locked into our energy system for decades. If we continue on a path of "business as usual" and open up new basins, we are projected to hit 5 degrees of warming by the end of the century. This is way above the 1.5-2 degrees of warming we are committed to internationally.

We are also concerned that the process of fracking to extract gas can put the health and water supplies of nearby communities at risk and infringe the land rights of First Nations people who in many cases actively resist such projects (the SEED campaign in Northern Territory and the Gomeroi in Narrabri, in particular).

We urge the Government to capitalise on our sustainable resources of sun and wind to become a renewable energy superpower. By investing in renewables, the government should be creating tens of thousands of decent and future proofed jobs, helping our communities recover in the post pandemic world.

We urge you to take up the opportunity for Australia to become an energy superpower using the renewable sources so abundantly available in Australia. This would be of particular value to regional areas of Australia and would provide a clear transition pathway to those communities currently reliant on fossil-fuel extraction jobs which will decline as the world heads to Net Zero.

Older people are telling us in no uncertain terms that climate change is a critical issue for them. While they are concerned about the health impacts of climate change, of even greater importance is a mounting concern about leaving a safe and liveable environment for coming generations.

We join our colleagues at AYCC to urge your government to stop injecting precious government funding to new gas projects. We strongly support the AYCC in its *No Public Funding for Gas* campaign.

Yours sincerely,



Barry Apsey
Chairperson, Climate Change Group



Jane Mussared
Chief Executive

CC Australian Youth Climate Coalition