**Election 2019 – Climate change and health**

# Why is this an issue for women?

* The impacts of air pollution from coal power stations, and rising CO2, as well as the resultant climate impacts, such as heat waves, rising temperature, drought and climate related disasters have specific systemic outcomes for women.
* Health-related impacts specific to women include negative birth outcomes, including intrauterine growth and congenital defects and premature mortality correlated with air pollution. Women and girls are also at higher risk of physical and domestic violence in the period following disasters.
* A high proportion of women are informal carers roles for the sick, children and elderly. Climate events result in increased respiratory deaths in the neonatal period, childhood asthma and heart disease, and premature mortality particularly in the elderly and children. The psychological stress involved in caring for family members is further exacerbated by reduced workforce participation, longer disaster recovery times and lower incomes.
* Rural, impoverished and indigenous populations are particularly susceptible to negative health impacts of climate change; this is amplified when women and girls have a lower socioeconomic status.

# Election commitments

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| Full implementation | Partial implementation | No or negative response |

The table below sets out how fully parties’ current election commitments address NFAW recommendations:

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| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** | | |
| The government should adopt a ‘polluter-pays’ principle to encourage reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Carbon pricing and renewable incentives are required. | | |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** | | |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
| The ALP has published a Climate Change Action Plan. This plan outlines Labor’s investment commitments, but does not provide comprehensive costings.[[1]](#footnote-1)  Rather than adopting a carbon tax or carbon pricing mechanism, Labor proposes to continue the LNP’s Safeguard Mechanism which requires large polluters to purchase emission offsets for industrial pollution greater than an agreed ‘baseline’.  Labour is aiming for 50 per cent renewable energy generation by 2030 and employs incentives to support this, including (amongst other measures):   * A $2,000 rebate for 100,000 households on incomes of less than $180,000 per year to purchase and install battery systems, as well as low-cost loans for households. * A Neighbourhood Renewables Program to support ‘the development of projects in local communities’. | The relabelled ‘Climate Solutions Package’ largely depends on providing incentives for polluters  to adopt new practices and technologies to reduce their greenhouse emissions and store carbon.[[2]](#footnote-2)  There are no incentives for renewable energy generation. | The Greens’ list a suite of policies and aims in its Renew Australia 2030[[3]](#footnote-3), with financial implications costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office.   * A transition to a net zero carbon economy through a range of mechanisms including a plan to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy through strong regulatory intervention and a strong effective price on carbon. * A reintroduced Carbon Price and boost of household compensation is expected to generate $65.9m over 10 years. * 100% of stationary electricity in Australia to come from renewable sources as soon as possible, by increasing the renewable energy target (RET) as well as measures such as public investment, feed-in tariffs, subsidies, and regulations to support a range of renewable energy generation, battery storage, and conservation technologies. * Removal of all subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** | | |
| Advisory and regulatory bodies with responsibilities in the climate change area should put in place a 40 per cent quota for women in leadership positions. | | |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** | | |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
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| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** | | |
| Studies of the impact of climate change and measures to reduce climate change or its impact should specifically address the needs of these disadvantaged and rural groups. | | |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** | | |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
| * Provide international assistance on climate change to vulnerable communities in the Pacific region * A fund to roll out electrical vehicle charging infrastructure will specifically target rural and regional Australia * Labor will review and reinvigorate the carbon farming initiative, and develop a high-quality, well-functioning offset market. Labor will also put in place new federal legislation to bring broad-scale land clearing under control where necessary. | * Australia has stopped funding the Green Climate Fund, a major UN climate change fund, and a basis for the Paris Climate Accord, where wealthier countries contribute to projects that help developing nations lower their greenhouse gas emissions * National electric vehicle strategy does not address rural wehicle charging infrastructure needs. * The Liberal budget commits $10bn to address the effects of climate change such as drought and flood relief, and $137.4 million over four years on ground protection and restoration of the environment. | * A leading role for Australia in negotiation of a multilateral emission abatement treaty which shares the burden equitably, recognising the proportionately greater historical and current contribution of wealthy industrialised nations to climate change. * Rapid rollout of smart technology, including meters, appliances, grids and energy storage, with measures to reduce the financial impact on people with low or fixed incomes. * Re-establishing the Carbon Farming Initiative |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** | | |
| Australia should develop the capacity to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions and become a global leader in renewable technology and supply, through increased targeted funding for renewable projects across all levels of government. | | |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** | | |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
| * Implement the National Energy Guarantee to deliver on commitment of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030 * Increase investment in the Clean Energy Finance Corporation by $10bn to support new renewable energy generation and storage; concessional loans for household purchases of solar and battery systems; commercial community renewables projects; and growth of new and existing industries. * Create a $5bn independent Energy Security and Modernisation Fund to build and upgrade Australia’s energy transmission and distribution systems. * Develop a Bioenergy Strategy to develop this industry (no funding promises attached) * Increase the government’s institutional capacity to address climate change issues by restoring and reforming the Climate Change Authority ($24m over forward estimates) | * $1.38bn over six years for the Snowy 2.0 pumped hydro. This builds on the Turnbull government’s plan. Improved energy storage is a welcome strategy. * $61.2m for energy efficient communities represent a welcome start to further investment into energy efficiencies, particularly in rural communities. * $18m over six years to help improve energy efficiency. This is on average $6m per year, spread nationally, and will not create significant incentives for Industry and Businesses to invest in renewables. * HOWEVER, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency, ARENA, has been defunded from 2022-23. | * Binding national emission limits for each year through to 2050 supported by a well-funded, comprehensive, integrated and research-based emissions reduction plan with appropriate targets and reporting for all sectors with significant greenhouse emissions. * Reform of electricity supply system and regulation to remove the bias toward centralised fossil fuel-based generation and encourage demand management and the development of distributed generation and storage of renewable energy. * No new coal-fired power stations, gas mines or oil wells, and no expansions to any existing coal- or gas-fired power stations or mines, plus the development of programs to assist fossil fuel-dependent communities to make the transition to other more sustainable sources of economic prosperity. * A just transition to a net zero carbon economy through a range of mechanisms including a plan to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy through strong regulatory intervention and a strong effective price on carbon. * Research, development and deployment of processes aimed at converting renewable energy into exportable resources. * The creation of a renewables export industry, including renewables-generated liquid fuels, direct connections to neighbouring countries and the export of technology. |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** | | |
| Energy policy should reflect the environmental, social and health costs of energy production and use. | | |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** | | |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
| Labor will   * develop a national Strategy on Climate Change and Health to address the health impacts of climate change. * undertake a comprehensive national assessment of the impacts of climate change on environmental, social and economic systems | The Coalition describes a focus on economic factors and jobs rather than environmental, social and health costs. | Greens are committed to: pricing electricity and fossil fuels to reflect their true cost, including externalities such as their impacts on health, water resources, ecosystems, agricultural production, air pollution and climate change. |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** | | |
| A climate policy which drives down fossil fuel emissions rapidly and deeply including emissions pricing involving incentives and penalties, as well as other strategies. | | |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** | | |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
| * Labor will not introduce a carbon pricing mechanism and is not intending to raise any revenues from climate policies. * National Electrical Vehicles Policy aims to reduce vehicle emissions. This policy provides incentives for sale of electric vehicles but provides no details on those incentives. | * Spreading the $2 Billion Climate Solutions Fund over 15 rather than 10 years represents cuts from $200m to $133 m over the life of the fund. * $400,000 for a national electric vehicle strategy | * An Australian government investment policy that divests from all fossil fuel extraction and consumption.[[4]](#footnote-4) * Requirement that all financial institutions, including superannuation and managed investment funds, disclose their investments in companies engaged in fossil fuel extraction, electricity generation and transport. * Removal of all subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. * Orderly phase out of fossil fuel mining, fossil fuel-based electricity generation and consumption of fossil fuels consistent with the emissions reduction plan. * Just transition to a net zero carbon economy through a range of mechanisms including a plan to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy through strong regulatory intervention and a strong effective price on carbon. |

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| OTHER ELECTION COMMITMENTS | | |
| Commitment | **Party** | **Comments** |
|  | Choose an item. |  |
|  | Choose an item. |  |
|  | Choose an item. |  |

Authorised by Kate Gunn, Sydney

1. https://www.laborsclimatechangeactionplan.org.au/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/climate-solutions-package [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://greens.org.au/platform/renewables#repower [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://greens.org.au/policies/climate-change-and-energy [↑](#footnote-ref-4)