

Julie Bishop
Foreign Minister
Parliament House
Canberra

Margaret and Paul Wilkes
46 Griver Street,
Cottesloe, WA 6011

14 April 2015

Dear Julie Bishop,

We commend your timely intervention in Vanuatu after the recent devastating Cyclone Pam.

However we are very disturbed by the current Australian government's failure to take appropriate action on climate change (see the enclosed New Scientist article linking the frequency and severity of cyclones to the warming of the Pacific Ocean)

The Australian government still seems to be in a state of climate change denial while much of the world accepts the science and is moving to take action. This can be described as "wilful ignorance" on the part of the current Australian government. As you are no doubt aware more than 90 percent of climate scientists and Academies of Science accept and understand that global warming and sea level rising with increasing acidification of the oceans are real threats to our planet.

The fact that Australia appears to emit only a small percentage of the world's emissions hides the fact that our hydrocarbon exports contribute considerably to the total global emissions. Emissions here plus emissions overseas, using Australian oil and gas, account for about 3 percent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Why does Australia continue to lag behind other countries in addressing the need for action to address a changing climate? This government's disregard for science as well as world opinion leaves Australia lagging behind many other countries. Some of our Pacific Ocean neighbours are particularly vulnerable and may be the source of future "climate refugees".

We understand that Australia is currently very dependent on our mineral exports but there has to be a better way forward where Australia engages in a positive way in this issue. Australia is well endowed with renewable energy alternatives and with the right policies Australia could be a world leader in this. The development and deployment of renewable energy technologies and the export of these would result in many jobs being created in 21st century industries and leaving behind those of the 19th and 20th centuries. Germany already employs more than half a million people in these new industries.

The Paris talks later this year offer an opportunity for Australia to join many nations of the world in pressing ahead with much needed collaborative action to avoid the worst consequences of climate change and we ask you, and the Government of which you are part, to take our global responsibilities seriously and take a message to Paris of commitment to the international efforts to combat the predicted consequences of global warming. Please take our concerns and those of most Australians seriously and join the rest of the world.

Regards

Margaret and Paul Wilkes