

CLIMATE CHANGE IS DESTROYING OUR REEFS.

WE MUST PHASE OUT COAL.

We, the undersigned, have collectively devoted over 1,200 years studying climate change, marine ecosystems and the reef. We know that the burning of fossil fuels is severely damaging our Great Barrier Reef.

As you read this a catastrophe is unfolding. The reef is currently experiencing the worst mass coral bleaching event in its history. From Cairns to the Torres Strait, vast swathes of once-colourful reef are now deathly white.

Why is this happening? **As the Earth's temperature rises due to climate change, our oceans are experiencing record-breaking heat.** Since March 2016, the weekly average sea surface temperature over the northern Great Barrier Reef has been around 1-1.5°C above the recent decadal average (2002-2011) for this time of year, with even higher temperatures in some localised waters. Aerial surveys of more than 500 coral reefs from Cairns to Papua New Guinea reveal that in the most pristine section of the Great Barrier Reef the overwhelming majority of reefs are ranked in the most severe bleaching category.

Australia is the custodian of one of the seven wonders of the natural world. Not only is the reef astoundingly beautiful, it's also a billion dollar economic asset. Its value-added economic contribution to the Australian economy in 2011-12 was \$5.7 billion and it supported 69,000 jobs. This natural asset is increasingly threatened by climate change.

Climate change is driven by the greenhouse gas pollution from burning coal, oil and gas. The Great Barrier Reef is at a crisis point. Its future depends on how much and how quickly the world, including Australia, can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit ocean warming.

We, the undersigned, are calling for the end of the fossil fuel era. Australia must rapidly phase-out our existing ageing and inefficient coal-fired power stations. In addition, there can be no new coal mines. No new coal-fired power stations. The transition to a renewables-led energy system, already underway, must be greatly accelerated.

This must be the top priority for Australia if we are to protect what remains of the Great Barrier Reef and other reefs around the world. We have too much to lose.

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This statement is endorsed by each signatory as an individual and not on behalf of institutions or organisations with which she/he is associated.