



7 April 2015

The Hon Tony Abbott MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

Australia's position at COP 21, Paris 2015

I write on behalf of over 105,000 members of Engineers Australia, to urge the government to support ambitious global emission reduction targets at the coming 21st meeting in Paris later this year of the Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The engineering profession, as an important sector of Australian society, has a key role in influencing Australia's response to the challenges of anthropogenic climate change. Following more than 12 months of deliberations, Engineers Australia has recently updated and strengthened its policy on climate change, noting especially:

"Building upon a long history of Engineers Australia policy development, and as the largest technically informed professional body in Australia, Engineers Australia advocates that Engineers must act proactively to address climate change as an ecological, social and economic risk."

I note that the scientific confidence regarding the causes and potential impacts of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions has strengthened in recent months with the publication of the fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. From an Australian perspective, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and Bureau of Meteorology have published an extensive analysis of climate impacts on Australia, which projects greater incidence of hot weather and attendant fire risk, more extreme severe weather events such as cyclones and flooding, as well as exacerbated drying conditions in southern Australia. Rising sea levels pose greater risk of low-lying urban inundation during storm surges and rainfall events. Increasing ocean temperatures and acidity pose risks to marine ecosystems, notably the Great Barrier Reef. These assessments are supported by the Australian Academy of Science.

These scientific assessments consistently conclude that a rapid decline in global emissions is essential if the internationally agreed target of limiting temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius above the preindustrial global average is to be achieved. In general terms, emissions need to decline rapidly from 2020 to less than half present values by mid-century. Because of Australia's particular vulnerability, Engineers Australia believes Australia should take a position consistent with its fair share of the global abatement effort. I understand that other developed economies, including the USA, UK and EU are already indicating ambitious goals of about a 30% reduction by 2025 compared to a year 2000 baseline.

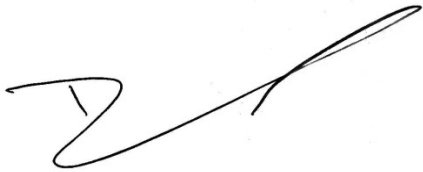
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Engineers Australia understands that adoption of strong domestic abatement targets will necessitate substantial structural change to areas of Australian industry. However, we believe there will be opportunities for positive outcomes in new low emissions industries such as large scale solar and wind energy, energy efficiency, transport electrification and innovative building design.

I therefore urge you to approach the COP 21 meeting with an ambitious outlook and a vision oriented toward not only the best possible climate outcome, but also the opportunities that are presented by the necessity to respond to a carbon constrained future. Engineers Australia would be delighted to expand further on these ideas, either in writing or through discussions, should you so wish.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Cruickshanks-Boyd', written in a cursive style.

**Dr David Cruickshanks-Boyd FIEAust CPEng EngExec
National President**