



Call for gender equality and strengthened climate ambition in the lead up to COP31

Dear Minister Bowen,

COP31: A critical responsibility and opportunity for inclusive climate leadership

As a community of women and gender-diverse people leading climate and environmental action across Australia, we note the announcement that Australia will serve as President of Negotiations for the 2026 COP31 climate summit, to be hosted in Türkiye. This is not the outcome many in our region were hoping for. In particular, we recognise and share the disappointment expressed by First Nations and Pacific leaders and civil society.

COP30 made clear the growing threats to gender equality, human rights and climate ambition — and the need for governments to hold the line against an accelerating anti-rights agenda. It also delivered momentum and new opportunities that Australia must now carry forward into COP31 and its domestic climate agenda.

Across the world, women, girls and gender-diverse people — especially First Nations and Pacific communities — are leading climate solutions while facing the harshest impacts of the climate crisis. Their perspectives and leadership remain sidelined in climate change processes and decision-making, undermining the ambition and effectiveness of climate action.

You have a crucial chance and responsibility to help reset this trajectory. This moment requires bold leadership on the world stage and here at home. **To ensure COP31 delivers for people and planet, we call on you and the Australian Government to centre gender equality, First Nations and Pacific women's leadership, and justice for communities most impacted.**

This includes:

- 1. Ambition and Action:** Driving negotiations that will enable outcomes at COP31 including a global transition away from fossil fuels; genuine and significant funding for adaptation for those who need it most; and just transitions that are place-based and women-led, so that all can share the benefits of a cleaner future.
- 2. Representation and Leadership:** Ensure diverse women's voices and perspectives are embedded in leadership and negotiating roles across all future forums, in particular recognising the critical role of First Nations and Pacific women leaders. Alongside this, ensure that women and gender diverse people across communities are widely consulted and their voices and views shape solutions in all key negotiating areas.
- 3. Resourcing:** Fund efforts to close the gender gap in climate action and ensure climate strategies address the unique needs and contributions of women, girls and gender-diverse people—particularly those who are most impacted by the climate crisis, including First Nations and Pacific women.
- 4. National action:** Drive ambitious climate action here in Australia by phasing out fossil fuels and implementing measures that will keep 1.5 degrees in reach, as well as domestically implementing the new Gender Action Plan to ensure all areas of climate and environmental action are gender-responsive.

With the world facing mounting climate disasters, and progress on human rights and gender equality under threat, Australia can chart a new course: one that shows how inclusion drives stronger climate action both at home and on the international stage. **We urge you to lead with ambition and justice, ensuring those most impacted help shape the climate solutions our future depends on.**

Yours sincerely, the WELA Community