



# A CLEAN RECOVERY PLAN

**2020 has been a challenging year for our communities. A deadly bushfire season choked our major cities with smoke over the summer, and now, a global pandemic has brought our economy to a standstill.**

Staring down the impacts of climate change and a recession, people are looking for hope in a recovery plan that will help us now and into the future. That's why we're asking the Federal Government to work with Australian communities like ours in the electorate of Higgins, to help us get back on track, by recovering our economy while renewing our climate. It's time for a Clean Recovery.

## THE PROBLEM

COVID19 has threatened our health, emotional wellbeing and employment. Almost one in four Australians don't have enough paid hours to get by<sup>1</sup>, and for every available job, there are 13 people needing work.<sup>2</sup> In Higgins, over 6,000 people are on JobSeeker.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, there has never been more work to do to protect our communities, economy and environment from climate change. Worsening bushfires, drought and heat-waves, are already threatening the people and places we love, and climate impacts are predicted to cost our economy 25% in GDP by 2100.<sup>4</sup>

But we can act. From installing solar panels to making our buildings energy efficient, we can work together to renew our economy, recover our communities and protect our planet.

**“An urgent transition to zero net emissions by 2030 is essential for adapting to the warming climate and increasing our resilience.”**

Anonymous, Higgins resident

## THE PLAN

- Make Australia a clean energy superpower
- Repower households and businesses with solar
- Upgrade houses and public buildings to be more energy efficient
- Charge Australia's electric vehicle future
- Create jobs restoring land and ecosystems

# A CLEAN RECOVERY PLAN IS A WIN-WIN

## MAKE AUSTRALIA A CLEAN ENERGY SUPERPOWER

Australia can be a clean energy superpower, exporting our energy to the rest of the world sustainably for decades to come. What's more, government investment in clean energy is shown to create five times greater employment than investment in fossil fuels,<sup>5</sup> Australia has already identified hundreds of job creating clean energy projects ready to get underway.

But the absence of federal government clean energy policy is undermining investor confidence. To unleash a clean technology boom, we need government action, including a commitment to create renewable energy zones and improve transmission infrastructure to build a reliable, connected energy system.

## REPOWER HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES WITH SOLAR

Across the country, everyday people, renewable experts and the Australian Energy Council are calling on the government to help upgrade households and businesses to solar.<sup>6</sup> A federal grants program will help businesses and households purchase solar batteries, lowering their power prices, creating immediate jobs and boosting Australia's battery industry.

## UPGRADE HOMES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS

We've all experienced sweating through stifling summer nights, and the freezing bathroom tiles of a winter's morning. And it turns out, our houses aren't helping. Poor insulation and shade control are making us uncomfortable, costing us money and leading people to use more energy than necessary. In fact, houses and buildings are responsible for nearly a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions in Australia due to poor energy efficiency.<sup>7</sup>

We have a huge opportunity to massively reduce emissions and power bills, while creating thousands of jobs, by retrofitting homes and buildings to be more energy efficient.<sup>8</sup> We can install PV solar panels and batteries, improve insulation and where needed, replace poor quality housing. This work should focus on low income households and social housing, which will benefit most from lower power bills.



## CHARGE AUSTRALIA'S ELECTRIC VEHICLE FUTURE

Fast-tracking the uptake of electric vehicles is an exciting way to create jobs, reduce emissions and save drivers' money. With prices falling, electric cars are predicted to account for 70-100% of new vehicle sales by 2040. <sup>9</sup> It's clear why: they're quieter, more reliable, cheaper to run than conventional cars, and could reduce Australian emissions by 6%. <sup>10</sup>

Unfortunately, many people considering buying electric cars are worried about how and where they'll charge it. <sup>11</sup> To prepare for an electric vehicle future, Australia needs more electric vehicle infrastructure, including more urban and long-distance charging networks, fast charging stations, and upgraded parking area wiring.

## RESTORE LAND AND ECOSYSTEMS

We can create tens of thousands of jobs in revegetation and land restoration creating healthier and greener land for our communities and farmers. According to Beyond Zero Emissions, over half of Australia's land has been 'heavily modified by clearing and/or grazing' <sup>12</sup>, and many of our waterways and ecosystems need restoration from the effects of climate change.

We can plant new trees, native species and sea grass, encourage biodiversity and create more urban gardens, building resilience to extreme weather and restoring our soil so it absorbs more carbon from our atmosphere. This will also create long term jobs open to anyone, with much of the work requiring little training or qualification.

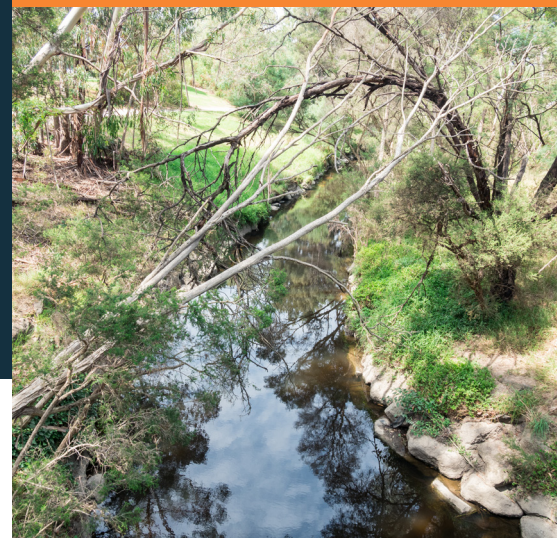
## WHAT COULD A CLEAN RECOVERY LOOK LIKE IN HIGGINS?

### RESTORE BIODIVERSITY AT GARDINER CREEK

Gardiner Creek is a special spot for many of us in Melbourne's south east, and has represented an important respite during lockdown. But the creek requires revegetation to restore and protect biodiversity, as well as continued maintenance. During events and surveying, community members have continually indicated that they would greatly value funding to support creek restoration. The project represents an opportunity to create immediate term jobs. A Clean Recovery could help achieve both aims.

**"We need to continue to work on our green corridors by revegetating landscapes, increasing wildlife habitat and cleaning up the waterways."**

**Anonymous, Higgins resident**



## HELP HIGGINS HIT ITS LOCAL TARGETS

A Clean Recovery could see the Federal government work alongside and support our local councils to achieve their targets of making our community carbon neutral by 2030. We can work with our councils to create jobs and fast-track our Clean Recovery with rooftop solar, battery storage, energy efficiency measures and by installing electric vehicle charging points.



## SOLAR FOR HIGGINS

Higgins' appetite for solar energy is clear; the Solar our Schools program is active in our electorate, and 82% of constituents we surveyed reported wanting more renewable energy. But to make sure Higgins is charged by our sun, we need federal grants for solar panels for local residents, schools and businesses.



## HIGGINS WANTS A CLEAN RECOVERY

- **83%** of people in Higgins either support or strongly support a job program
- **82%** of people would rather the government focus on creating jobs in the renewables sector rather than in fossil fuels

## REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> Roy Morgan Unemployment & Under-employment Estimates, (2005-2020), April 2020

<sup>2</sup> P. Karp, Labor demands coronavirus supports remain as figures show 13 jobseekers per vacancy, The Guardian, 2020, para. 1, [www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jul/12/labor-demands-coronavirus-supports-remain-as-figures-show-13-jobseekers-per-vacancy](https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jul/12/labor-demands-coronavirus-supports-remain-as-figures-show-13-jobseekers-per-vacancy)

<sup>3</sup> Australian Government, DSS Demographics June 2020, data.gov.au, <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/dss-payment-demographic-data/resource/c91d7ee0-59e0-4fc9-92a9-066b840d1139>

<sup>4</sup> A. Morton, Reserve Bank warns of 25% GDP loss by 2100 unless action taken on climate change, The Guardian, 2020, para. 1, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/jun/26/reserve-bank-warns-of-25-gdp-loss-by-2100-unless-action-taken-on-climate-change>

<sup>5</sup> Beyond Zero Emissions, Million Jobs Plan, Beyond Zero Emissions, 2020, p 8.

<sup>6</sup> N. Toscano, Power giant EnergyAustralia urges battery focus in federal plan, The Sydney Morning Herald, para. 1, <https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/power-giant-energyaustralia-urges-battery-focus-in-federal-plan-20200923-p55yaz.html>

<sup>7</sup> I. Martek and R. Hosseini, Buildings produce 25% of Australia's emissions, The Conversation, 2019, para. 3, <https://theconversation.com/buildings-produce-25-of-australias-emissions-what-will-it-take-to-make-them-green-and-wholl-pay-105652>

<sup>8</sup> Beyond Zero Emissions, Million Jobs Plan, Beyond Zero Emissions, 2020, p 2.

<sup>9</sup> Infrastructure Australia, Infrastructure Priority List, Infrastructure Australia, 2020, p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> Beyond Zero Emissions and MRCagney, Zero Carbon Australia: Electric Vehicles, Beyond Zero Emissions, 2016, p. 13

<sup>11</sup> Infrastructure Australia, Infrastructure Priority List, Infrastructure Australia, 2020, p. 76.

<sup>12</sup> Beyond Zero Emissions, Million Jobs Plan, Beyond Zero Emissions, 2020, p 73.