



2 September 2020

Scott Morrison MP  
Prime Minister of Australia  
Parliament House ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), I write to urge you and your colleagues to acknowledge and address the social tensions and pressures on democracy caused by COVID-19.

The negative impacts of COVID-19 on democracy and social cohesion are broad ranging. Within Australia, long-existing socio-economic, ethnic and religious division are re-emerging as sources of tension. Australia's strength, which is rooted in its shared values but diverse population, is being undermined by incidents of racism, blame, and socio-economic bias. Marginalised groups and indigenous communities have been particularly hard hit during this virus outbreak.

The tragedy of COVID-19, whilst presenting enormous challenges for the world, also provides great opportunities for the international community. As a community, we need to focus on leveraging emerging opportunities for strengthening Australia's social fabric. How these challenges are addressed and opportunities are managed will have a powerful impact on the environment we find ourselves in post pandemic. As the Hon Alan Tudge MP recently stated 'Whilst our immediate focus is on fighting the pandemic, we must also put in place the building blocks for the medium and long term so that our society emerges in a stronger place.'

We call now upon you as our political leaders to:

- Actively foster opportunities for stronger communities' during and post pandemic.
- Empower communities to disseminate essential Government information that needs to be communicated strongly and quickly.
- Ensure that COVID-19 responses are the same within and across Australian communities.
- Provide strong leadership for local, state and federal politicians with initiatives that both address the negative impacts of pandemics as well as deeper inequalities and grievances which exacerbate the current impact of COVID-19.

#### **Australia Yearly Meeting**

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- Take action on preventive measures to protect our most vulnerable Australian communities and make effort to address the multilingual nature of our society when presenting significant information affecting health and safety.
- Be willing to acknowledge and address historic grievances which have made some groups more vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 by implementing preventative measures into the future.

Yours faithfully,



Ann Zubrick  
Presiding Clerk  
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

Cc: Anthony Albanese, Leader of the Opposition

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