

# Climate Justice Petition to the House of Representatives

A **step by step guide for schools** to running your own petition

This guide is designed to help you run your own petition that can be presented to the House of Representatives.

A petition to the Parliament is the most direct way you can ask the Parliament to take action.

If our Parliament receives many petitions on climate from schools and local communities across the country, our politicians will better understand the breadth and depth of support for climate justice in Australia.

Most petitions these days are run online and therefore aren't accepted by the House of Representatives so your grassroots 'pen and paper' to the House will have even more impact.

For maximum impact, ask your federal MP to personally present your petition to Parliament. This will ensure that he or she will speak to the House about your petition, raising more awareness of the need for climate action. It will also mean that your MP knows that your school and community cares deeply about climate justice and expects strong political action.



## In this guide:

- Steps to running your petition
- What happens in Parliament
- Checklist for action
- Sample petition

*'Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.'* – Pope Francis

### Step 1. Who will the petition come from?

The petition can come from your school, or for greater reach, email [act@caritas.org.au](mailto:act@caritas.org.au) to find out what other schools, parishes and groups are doing in your electorate.

### Step 2: What will your petition say?

We have provided a sample petition on the last page of this guide but we encourage you to re-word it to reflect your school's own perspective and specific concerns. If you do use different wording, read the [House of Representatives Petitions Infosheet](#) first to make sure that your petition complies with the rules. You can also send your draft petition to the Petitions Committee and ask them to assess it for compliance with the rules. The sample petition we have provided has been checked and approved.

### Step 3: Who is going to be the principal petitioner?

Petitions to the House must have a 'principal petitioner' - someone who will be the contact person for any correspondence about the petition. Contact details are for the use of the Petition Committee only and will not be made public.

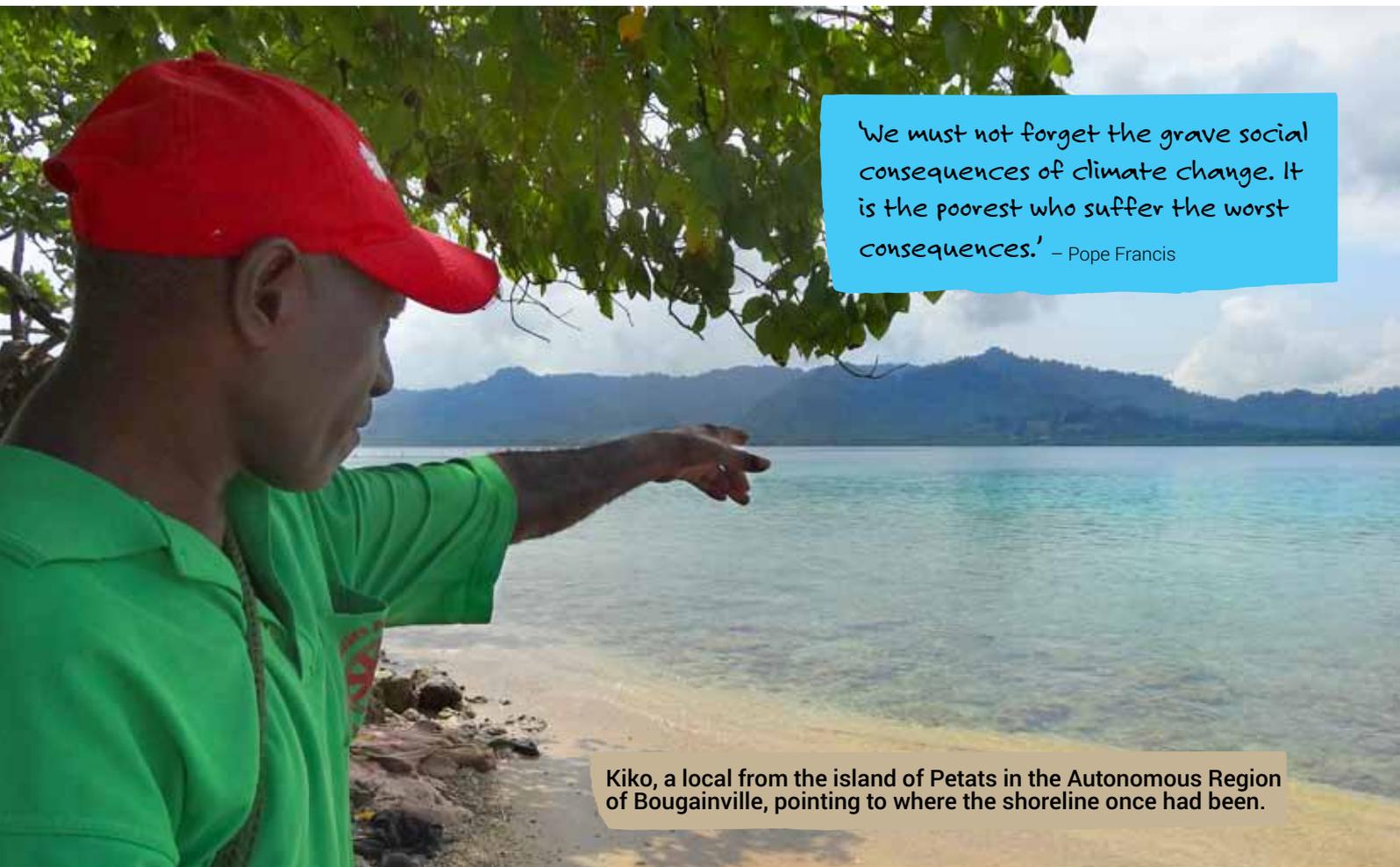
### Step 4: What is your timeline and plan of action?

Decide how you will promote your petition in your school and community. Consider the suggestions for awareness-raising activities found in our Climate Justice Action Kit for Schools (download at [www.caritas.org.au/climate/resources](http://www.caritas.org.au/climate/resources)).

Decide on a final date for collecting signatures and let everyone know. Whether you have 90 or 900 signatures, finish on that day. Every voice counts!

### Step 5: Have you got the pages printed or copied, ready for signatures?

Every signature must be handwritten on a page showing the request of the petition at the top. Signatures on the blank reverse side of such a page are not accepted. The name and contact details of the principle petitioner only need to be on the first page of the petition.



*'We must not forget the grave social consequences of climate change. It is the poorest who suffer the worst consequences.'* – Pope Francis

Kiko, a local from the island of Petats in the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, pointing to where the shoreline once had been.

## Step 6: Collect signatures and capture the action!

Take photos of your petition action to use in your communications and on social media using #hearts4climate and @CaritasAU (Facebook) or @CaritasAust (Twitter and Instagram) so we can help you spread the word.

Caritas can also help you get local media coverage of your petition action – see our [Engaging the Media Guide](#) or email us on act@caritas.org.au if you would like any support.

## Step 7: After you have finished collecting signatures, photocopy the pages and send the copies to Caritas Australia. Keep the originals!

Caritas will collate copies of all the climate petitions from schools and other groups around the country, and use them solely for the purpose of demonstrating the strength of support for climate action in the Australian Catholic community. We will not use them to contact petitioners.

Post them to: Caritas Australia, Advocacy team, 24–32 O’Riordan St Alexandria, NSW 2015 or email scans to act@caritas.org.au

## Step 8: Ask your federal MP to present your petition to Parliament

The best way to do this is to ask for a meeting with your MP where you can explain why your school and community feels strongly about climate justice, what you would like the Parliament to do on climate action, and ask him or her to personally present your petition to Parliament. See our [Engaging Your MP Guide](#) for tips.

### or: If your MP can’t or won’t help, go direct to the House of Representatives

#### Mail your petition to:

House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

#### ST JOSEPH’S PETITION

St Joseph’s Hobart ran their own petition and got Mr Andrew Wilkie MP to present it in Parliament. We asked the principle petitioner and parish priest, Fr Peter, what tips he had for other parishes. Read our Q and A with Fr Peter on page 15 of the [Climate Justice Action Kit for Schools](#).

## What happens in Parliament?

Whether your MP is presenting your petition, or you have mailed your petition directly to the Petitions Committee, the Petitions Committee will check that your petition is ‘in order’ (complies with the rules) before presentation.

If your MP is presenting your petition personally, he or she will have the opportunity to make a statement, thereby increasing awareness about the need for climate action. If your MP is not involved, petitions are usually presented on Mondays by the Chair of the Petitions Committee who announces the subject of the petition and the number of

signatories but no discussion of the subject matter of the petition takes place.

The full terms of the petition will be printed in the Hansard (the parliamentary record) for that day and they will also be published on the Petitions Committee’s webpage. The Committee may forward the terms of the petition to the relevant Minister, in which case the Minister is expected to respond within 90 days. Responses to petitions are announced in the House, printed in Hansard and published on the Committee’s webpage. The principal petitioner will also be advised.

## Checklist for preparing your petition action:

- Identify the principal petitioner.
- Check that your petition complies with the rules of the House. (If you are using the sample petition provided on page X, your petition is compliant)
- Decide on a closing date to stop collecting signatures.
- Decide how you will collect the signatures. If planning a stall, visit Caritas’ [Our Common Home resources](#) to find information on climate justice.
- Organise an awareness-raising strategy to build support and awareness of your action.
- Get your camera ready to take photos of people taking action and think about how you’ll use the photos for your parish communications and media.

# Sample Petition

You can download a Word version of this page at [www.caritas.org.au/climate/resources](http://www.caritas.org.au/climate/resources)

This is the first page of the petition with Principal Petitioner details. For subsequent pages of the petition, simply delete the Principle Petitioner details and add more rows for signatures.

## TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of concerned citizens put forward by [name of your school/group/s], inspired by our faith, draws to the attention of the House that:

- (1) Climate change is the single biggest challenge to ending poverty and ensuring the safety and security of future generations,
- (2) The impact of climate change is most severe for children, women and men living in extreme poverty,
- (3) It is still within our power to avoid the worst impacts of climate change if all countries act urgently for the common good,
- (4) Many other industrialised nations have much stronger emissions reductions targets than Australia.

We therefore ask the House to support legislation and policies that:

- **Move Australia towards a clean energy future, achieving net zero carbon pollution by 2050**, including:
  - Committing to a concrete plan to phase out coal from Australia's energy supply, and
  - Establishing emissions reduction targets of at least 45% below 2005 levels by 2025.
- **Contribute our fair share of global financial support to help poorer countries tackle climate change.** Our fair share is at least 2.4% of the globally agreed climate finance target. These funds should be **additional to**, not replacing, current Australian aid funding.
- **End non-agricultural fossil fuel subsidies in Australia, worth \$7.7billion a year.**

### PRINCIPAL PETITIONER

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

### NAMES AND SIGNATURES

NAME	ADDRESS (optional)	SIGNATURE

This part of the petition (the reasons and request) must be no more than 250 words

The Principal Petitioner's details are only needed on the first page of the petition