

**Letter to Ambassador Christopher Sharrock, Chair of the Selection Committee,  
Selection of OECD Secretary-General**

Thursday 4th of March 2021

Dear Ambassador Sharrock,

We write to you respectfully as representatives of a number of prominent civil society organisations in relation to the ongoing process to select a new Secretary-General for the OECD.

As the world begins the monumental task of recovering from COVID-19 in the context of the need to take urgent systemic action to avoid a climate catastrophe that will further entrench poverty and inequality, we firmly believe that the public record of Mathias Cormann should preclude him from being selected as the OECD's new Secretary-General.

Between 2013 and 2020 Mr Cormann served as Finance Minister in the Australian government - a government that has persistently failed to take effective action to reduce emissions at home and has consistently acted as a blocker within international forums. On the basis of his record in office, it must be considered highly unlikely that Mr Cormann would play an effective role in advocating for ambitious action in reducing emissions among OECD nations.

In his role as Finance Minister, Mr Cormann was a senior member of the Australian government which, on 17 July 2014, abolished the country's carbon pricing scheme. In supporting the repeal of the law, Mr Cormann said that Australia's emissions trading scheme was "an act of economic self-harm which does nothing to help reduce global emissions". Since then, Australia's national government has failed to introduce any replacement regulatory framework for pricing carbon, and has not committed to a zero net emissions target.

Additionally, according to 2015 IMF figures, Australia maintains post-tax fossil fuel subsidies of approximately US\$29 billion per year, representing 2.3 per cent of Australian GDP. Australia also remains committed to opening up new fossil fuel reserves.

As Finance Minister, Mr Cormann also made various public statements opposing climate action by other actors. For example, in May 2017 Mr Cormann described commercial banks placing lending restrictions on coal as 'very, very disappointing'.

We join the many voices around the world, also reflected in the media, with grave concerns about Mr Cormann's ability to truly ensure the OECD is a leader in tackling global climate change. This will be imperative for strong, inclusive growth and to ensure better lives for all, and thus rests at the heart of the OECD mandate.

On the basis of Mr Cormann's public record of participation in thwarting effective climate action, we do not believe he is a suitable candidate for Secretary-General of the OECD and urge you to not select him for this critically important position.

Yours faithfully

Catherine Abreu, Executive Director, Climate Action Network Canada

Christoph Bals, Policy Director, Germanwatch e.V.

Matt Brennan, Chief Executive Officer, The Wilderness Society Australia

Gidon Bromberg, Israeli co-Director, EcoPeace Middle East, Tel Aviv, Israel.

Suzie Brown, National Director, Australian Parents for Climate Action

Sharan Burrow, Secretary General, International Trade Union Confederation

Red Constantino, Executive Director, Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities

Dave Copeman, Director, Queensland Conservation Council

Tasneem Essop, Executive Director, Climate Action Network International

Chris Gambian, Chief Executive Officer, Nature Conservation Council

Michelle Higelin, Executive Director, ActionAid Australia

Dr Saleemul Huq, Director International Centre for Climate Change and Development Independent University Bangladesh

Rachel Kyte, Dean of The Fletcher School, Tufts University

Jonathan La Nauze, Chief Executive Officer, Environment Victoria

Nick Mabey, Chief Executive Officer, E3G

Bill McKibben, Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College, co-founder and Senior Advisor of 350.org

Nathan Méténier, Advocacy Manager of Youth and Environment Europe

Shar Molloy, Co-Director, Environmental Centre NT

Lyn Morgain, Chief Executive, Oxfam Australia

Jennifer Morgan, Executive Director, Greenpeace International

Thea Ormerod, President, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change

Kelly O'Shanassy, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Conservation Foundation

Julie-Anne Richards, Executive Director, Climate Action Network Australia

David Ritter, Chief Executive Officer, Greenpeace Australia Pacific

Manuel Rodríguez Becerra, President National Environmental Forum (Colombia), Emeritus Professor, Universidad de los Andes.

Julia Sanchez, Secretary-General, ActionAid International

Pascal Vollenweider, Climate Director Avaaz

Craig Wilkins, Chief Executive, Conservation SA

Farhana Yamin, Adviser & Deputy Chair of the Expert Advisory Group of the Climate Vulnerable Forum