

# Advocacy Pack

## 2022 Federal Election

Dear Farmers for Climate Action member,

As we approach the election, many of you will be taking action to ensure your local candidates, and the wider community, are aware that farmers want strong climate policy from government.

This briefing pack provides ideas of actions to take, useful information and resources, and helps to promote consistency in what farmers in our network are saying around the country.

Farmers for Climate Action is an independent, non-partisan organisation. We encourage you to contact candidates from across the political spectrum. Whoever forms government, all our potential representatives need to know that standing up for farmers and regional Australians means standing up for climate action.

### Key points

- **Tell your own story:** your personal experiences and perspective are a very persuasive thing, and farmers are trusted voices in the Australian public conversation
- **Use our Policy Priorities document** for key statistics about the impact of climate on agriculture, the opportunities, and our asks of candidates in this election
- **Stay non-partisan:** Our role is to keep climate on the agenda for all candidates, not to support/endorse a specific candidate. We know that whoever forms government, we need them to be ambitious - and we need whoever is in opposition to support climate policies that reduce emissions economy-wide, too. (Also, we risk losing our charitable status if we do this)
- **Share your actions on social media**, and make sure you take pictures to include
- **Keep in touch with us** if you need support, and send us feedback after action meetings or actions you take
- **Keep engaged after the election:** Whoever forms government, we're here for the long haul and we need your help to raise farming voices on climate

If you would like to discuss anything in this pack or need support during the election period, please contact [info@farmersforclimateaction.org.au](mailto:info@farmersforclimateaction.org.au).

Thank you! Your efforts are making a difference.

# Contents

About Farmers for Climate Action - our vision, mission, and strategy	3
Our role in shifting the politics - what we do and don't do	4
How you can (and can't) represent Farmers for Climate Action	5
Our key messages	7
Our policy priorities	7
Actions you can take during the campaign	9
Write a letter to the editor or submit an opinion article to your local newspaper	9
Attend your local candidate forums and have your say	10
Get active on social media	10
Paint the town! Put up a farm gate sign	10
Talk to your family, friends, and neighbours	11
Anything else you think of...	11

# About Farmers for Climate Action - our vision, mission, and strategy

**Our Vision** - Farming Forever: Farmers and our representatives are climate leaders

**Our Mission** - To influence Australia to adopt strong economy-wide climate policies and realise a prosperous and sustainable future, full of opportunity for farmers and farming communities.

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement of farmers, agricultural leaders and rural Australians working to influence Australia to adopt strong climate policies by growing the number of farmers, farming communities and elected representatives championing ambitious action.

We connect farmers with each other and support them to advocate for and enact climate solutions both on and off farm.

We are independent, non-profit and non-partisan. We represent 7,000 farmers across Australia, and our supporter base includes over 35,000 Australians committed to climate action for agriculture.

Our members and our Board can be found across the country from the tropical north of Queensland to the cooler climates of Tasmania, and from the wine growing regions of Western Australia right across to the sheep and cropping farms of New South Wales. Our staff members are spread across Australia, working remotely and from our office hubs.

We work closely with people and organisations across the agricultural and climate sectors to find opportunities to tackle the challenge of climate change and ensure rural communities' interests are represented.

We are a member of the National Farmers' Federation and a member of the Climate Action Network Australia.

**We believe that if we grow the number of farmers, their communities and their representatives who are leading on climate-smart farming solutions and championing strong economy-wide climate policy, we can influence governments to implement climate policies that mitigate climate change and benefit rural communities.**

We have a 2022-24 strategic plan, and you can [read more about that vision on our website here](#).

# Our role in shifting the politics - what we do and don't do

Farmers for Climate Action's focus and unique strength is shifting the politics of our rural communities long-term, by advocating for strong climate policies economy-wide and elevating farmer voices on climate issues.

Farmers are some of the most trusted voices in the climate space and we have a unique chance to shift the debate on climate. Your voice is incredibly powerful in the climate debate

We know that whoever forms government, we need them to be ambitious - and we need whoever is in opposition to support climate policies that reduce emissions economy-wide, too. So whoever is elected to the next parliament, we want them to know that strong climate policies are a top priority for farmers.

We are working with our local farmer networks to raise awareness of climate change impacts on farmers, and to have them heard in the media, social media, and in their communities - including by decision-makers

Examples of what FCA does (or can do):

- Gather the voices of farmers in a local area to amplify their call for strong and urgent commitment to action on climate change
- Make our calls for climate action visible - e.g. farm gate signs, digital advertising
- Bring farmers together to raise and normalise the call for action on climate change

Here's what we don't (or can't) do and why:

- We're non-partisan, we can't endorse or support candidates, parties or their campaigns, and we can't influence or comment on how voters might cast their vote (explicitly or implicitly).
- We're changing the political priorities of the electorate, so that no matter who is elected, climate action is a priority for them
- We also have constraints set by electoral laws for non-profits and charitable organisations, which strictly limits our role, and we face big legal risk during election periods.
- We want to use our resources in the most strategic and effective way, and our role is to elevate climate as a key issue now and beyond the election.

# How you can (and can't) represent Farmers for Climate Action

Farmers for Climate Action is at its heart a movement of farmers and we'd love you to represent us. ***Before publicly representing us, please do check in and let us know.*** Our reputation is key to our success and we need to make sure we're all on the same page

If you're representing us, please:

- Always remain respectful and non-partisan when acting on behalf of FCA
- Be evidence-based when talking about climate and climate change
- Be mindful of electoral laws (see below)
- Agree to abide by FCA's values when representing the organisation (see below)

## Electoral laws

As a non-partisan organisation, and as a registered charity, we don't engage in activity that is 'electoral activity'. This means we don't do anything that influences voters or supports particular candidates and activities.

We are doing activities which have the purpose of:

- Raising climate change awareness as a key public policy issue
- Engaging with and influencing candidates running for election
- Seeking to educate and inform the public
- Mobilise public support for strong climate policies

## FCA Values

When representing FCA, I will embody the following values and principles:

- *We are science-based:* Our work is evidence-based and uses the best available science to inform our advocacy.
- *We are proudly independent and non-partisan:* We work with politicians of all stripes to get the job done. FCA does not support or oppose particular candidates or parties.
- *We act lawfully:* we only engage in lawful and peaceful advocacy.
- *We embrace farmers and rural Australians of all stripes:* Our farmers come from all walks of life. We embrace this, as it allows us to learn from one another and grow stronger as a movement.
- *We are calm, friendly and respectful:* In public and with each other, we are calm, friendly, respectful at all times.
- *We are team players:* we are good listeners, we assume best intentions (no blaming or shaming), and we take care of each other.
- *We are strategic:* when making plans, we always ask ourselves, is this the most effective use of our time? What actions will have the greatest impact?
- *We avoid traditional protests and direct action:* For strategic reasons, FCA does not attend traditional climate protests or rallies. We also do not participate in direct action.
- *We do not defame anyone:* To have an impact in the climate space, we need to be seen as constructive and helpful. This means we do not defame individuals (like MPs).

- *We stay on-topic:* FCA's core business is shifting politics and ag bodies on climate change. Though many of our farmers care deeply about other issues like logging and iron-ore mining, for example, these are issues that we largely steer clear of for strategic reasons.

# Our key messages

Farmers for Climate Action's key messages

- Top message: **We need strong climate policy to protect Australian farmers**
- Key messages:
  - **Farmers are on the front lines** of climate change, facing more severe and frequent drought, heatwaves, fires and floods. Extreme weather is making farming harder and more uncertain. Extreme weather affects the food supply chain at every stage. We are adapting, but there are limits to adaptation.
  - **We need deep emissions reductions this decade** to protect Australian farmers from extreme weather events caused by climate change, and ensure we are able to continue to produce food for Australia and the world.
  - **Australian farmers have shown that agriculture is ready and able to lead.** With the right policy support, Australian agriculture can be carbon neutral well before 2050. But emissions reductions are needed across all sectors of the economy. Other sectors need to play their part and rapidly reduce emissions.
  - **If we act quickly, there are huge economic opportunities** for farmers and regional Australians. Let's not miss the opportunity to create secure, resilient jobs and livelihoods for farmers and regional Australians.

When speaking with **conservative audiences** about climate and agriculture, there are a number of ways to find common ground:

- Focus on opportunities more than threats, eg "Strong climate policy brings investment in new regional industries and creates jobs" rather than "If you don't act on climate, bad things will happen"
- When talking about the impacts of climate change, focus on the impacts that are already being experienced by farmers right now, rather than future modelling
- Don't state, demonstrate: eg, if you want to illustrate there are regional jobs in strong climate policy because it sends a signal to the market, you might list three hydrogen projects which are going ahead where governments created renewable energy or hydrogen zones
- Connect on shared beliefs and values, eg protecting regional Australia's future, creating regional jobs, a belief in handing down something to our children, rather than beliefs you don't share, eg the value of the environment
- *We have a more detailed framing document which we're happy to share if you're looking for more information about conversations*

# Our policy priorities

This election, we're asking all candidates to commit to:

- 1. Strong national policy to reduce emissions across the economy this decade**
- 2. Prioritise emissions reductions, before offsets**
  - a. Incentivise uptake of electric vehicles
  - b. Prepare for a clean energy grid
  - c. RD&E for methane and nitrous oxide reduction in agriculture
- 3. Support farmers to make the most of participation in carbon markets**
  - a. National rollout of Carbon + Biodiversity pilot and Enhanced Remnant Vegetation pilot
  - b. Restore trust in Australia's carbon market integrity

*More detail of each of these policy priorities is contained in the attached Policy Priorities document.*

# Actions you can take during the campaign

This election, we want to:

1. **Raise awareness nationally** amongst all election candidates that farmers want strong climate action
2. **Elevate farmer voices** to highlight the opportunities that strong climate policy offers to farmers and farming communities
3. **Continue to build our movement** of farmers and supporters

There are different ways you can get active and have your voice heard, to keep climate on the agenda in your local community and heard by your local candidates.

We've collated some ideas and examples. Remember how powerful your story is for all candidates to hear.

Avoid negative commentary on particular candidates, and try to stay positive and talk about the ways that climate action can bring your farm and your community a prosperous future.

Contact us if you'd like feedback or support - we are happy to help. Email [info@farmersforclimateaction.org.au](mailto:info@farmersforclimateaction.org.au).

## Write a letter to the editor or submit an opinion article to your local newspaper

During an election letters-to-the-editor are a great way to get climate on the agenda in your local seat. Avoid negative commentary on electoral candidates, and stay positive throughout your letter. Letters that spend too much time discussing opposing candidates can have the effect of consolidating those candidates' profile in the community.

Tips to get your letter published:

- **Open with a greeting**, using the editor's name if you know it.
- **Make it interesting**: try to capture the reader's attention from the very first sentence. If writing in response to another letter or article, cite its date and title.
- **Make a convincing case**: try to be persuasive and back up your facts with solid evidence.
- **Make a call to action**: be clear about what you want done about a particular issue
- **Priority areas to discuss**: Refer to our Policy Priorities document (summary below, and full document attached)
- **Keep it short**: Your letter has a better chance of making it into the newspaper in its entirety if it is 250 words or less in length. Editors may edit or shorten letters to ensure they fit the space that is available on the letters page, so write a draft, proofread, cut

and tighten up your language as much as possible – aim for brevity, short sharp sentences.

- **Sign off with your name and contact details** (they won't publish your contact details but may need to contact you to follow up or verify your identity)

**TIP:** Drafting a letter to the editor, or an opinion article to submit to your local paper? Not sure if it's quite right? Send it to our media team for review and feedback, at [info@farmersforclimateaction.org.au](mailto:info@farmersforclimateaction.org.au).

## **Attend your local candidate forums and have your say**

Many community groups host local 'meet the candidates' forums for election candidates to hear from their community on issues that matter to them.

These can be a great opportunity to share your story as a local farmer, and talk about the opportunities that strong climate policy would bring to your farm and your community.

Remember our key messages and make them part of your message to the candidates.

**TIP:** search your local paper, Facebook groups, local newsletters and noticeboards to find candidate forums happening near you.

## **Get active on social media**

One of the least time-intensive ways to get the message out about climate is through social media.

Ways you can get involved:

- Follow [Farmers for Climate Action on Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and like/share our posts
- Follow [@Farmingforever on Twitter](#) and love/share our tweets
- Write your own posts and tweets and tag us. And include the #farmingforever hashtag
- Personal posts on Facebook can be a powerful way of communicating about climate. You can write to your friends but you might also like to consider making the odd post public. If you're doing this, write from the heart about why climate action is important to you, your farm business and your community and consider including a photo of yourself on farm.

**TIP:** Join your local community Facebook groups and share our social media posts there. Your voice sharing into your community helps us keep climate on the agenda.

## **Paint the town! Put up a farm gate sign**

Visibility of climate as an issue is key to ensuring our pollies and our communities know we care.

Get your climate change farm gate sign today - you can sign up on our website at [farmersforclimateaction.org.au/get-involved/i\\_am\\_a\\_farmer\\_for\\_climate\\_action](https://farmersforclimateaction.org.au/get-involved/i_am_a_farmer_for_climate_action)

**TIP:** Share this link with your neighbours and friends, and encourage them to sign up for their own sign

## **Talk to your family, friends, and neighbours**

One-on-one conversations with family, friends and acquaintances is another great way to raise awareness of climate change. Below are some tips on having climate conversations:

Do:

- Localise the problem: how is climate change impacting your region and your farm business
- Focus on opportunities and positive outcomes that we can get from taking action, e.g. “Strong climate policy brings investment in new regional industries and creates jobs”
- Make the problem immediate – this is not just a challenge for future generations
- Focus on the potential impact on people
- Emphasise how widespread concern about climate is – focus on solutions – we have the answers, we just need to act
- Draw attention to the benefits of renewable energy (and give examples)

Don't:

- Talk about ‘belief’ – the facts have now been established. Instead try ‘accept the science’
- Refer to a ‘debate’ – see reason above
- Bamboozle your audience with long lists of facts

## **Anything else you think of...**

Got another idea to put climate on the agenda in your local area? If you come up with any ideas you would like to ‘workshop’ with us, please get in touch.

We are happy to discuss them and see how Farmers for Climate Action might be able to support you.

Email [info@farmersforclimateaction.org.au](mailto:info@farmersforclimateaction.org.au) or call our office on 1800 491 633