



22 January 2020

Dear Friends,

Australian Friends are appreciative of the concern and care shown by worldwide Friends during our unprecedented bushfire season in Australia.

The extent of the damage, at least six times the area of the recent Amazonian forest fires, is on a scale never before seen here. The wellbeing of millions of humans and countless other species has been knocked by fire, smoke, and prolonged heat. We do count the cost: the loss of human life, the harm to health, and exposure to ongoing and developing risks; we acknowledge more than a billion animals that are known to have died so far. There is the damage already done to human homes, habitats, the land, the waterways; and the intense threat to particularly biodiverse regions of eastern Australia. The climate emergency is around for all to see.

We grieve at what has been lost in these fires, and at our failures in the past to persuade successive governments to act directly on global heating, to divest and transition from fossil fuels, and to be responsive to creative solutions. Meanwhile, the unleashed carbon emissions from the burning eucalypt forests have joined the global commons, making this a disaster for the planet as well as one for the Australian continent.

We are also conscious this disaster is not yet over. Our summer fire season has many weeks, if not months, to go, and the threat of further fires remains palpably with us. It is a painful time, reminding us that we are all experiencing a shared calamity, one that makes new demands on every citizen in Australia, as it does on people all around the world. We hope together that we will address the climate emergency vigilantly, yet with openness to each other with cooperative spirit, unfettered by the restraints of national boundaries.

Your care for us is a warm reminder of the value of friendship and the common spiritual underpinnings of Friends, and the long, arduous work that lies ahead for us all.

In peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Zubrick".

Ann Zubrick
Presiding Clerk

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