

## A DIFFERENT APPROACH COMMUNITY Pty Ltd

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Senator the Hon P. Wong  
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate  
PO Box 6100, The Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Senator the Hon P. Wong

A year ago, most Australians would have thought it unthinkable that a pandemic would shut our international borders and threaten to cripple our economy. This is despite many warnings over the previous decades about the probability of such an event.

Many Australians now see it unthinkable that Australia's lifestyle and economy could be shattered overnight by the insecurity of its energy resources. However, let us look at the facts. Australia's current economy and lifestyle is heavily dependent on its refined oil supplies, without which transport would be brought to a standstill and the ability of the nation to feed its people would be destroyed. Australia imports 90% of its refined oil and stockpiles less than three weeks of its needs. The oil it uses is transferred as crude oil from the Middle East to refineries in Japan, South Korea and Singapore. The refined oil is then shipped to Australia.

Any one of four events could damage Australia's economy and lifestyle. First, a conflict in the Middle East would drastically reduce or even eliminate the supplies of crude oil to the Asian refineries. Second, a hostile navy could blockade the sea routes from the Middle East to the refineries in Asia in the Straits of Hormuz, the Straits of Malacca or the South China Sea. Third, a naval blockade, in the South China Sea, could make it very difficult for refined oil to reach Australia.

Fourth, if humans keep using oil at the current rate, the known oil reserves will be exhausted in about thirty years. Even if new reserves are found, the costs of extraction will not only render them less competitive with renewable energy. The resulting scarcity will threaten international stability.

Australia can avert disaster if it acts now to become self-sufficient by basing its economy on renewable energy. It has ample opportunities to develop energy resources based on sunlight, wind, tide, and hydro-electricity. It could become a world leader in the development of hydrogen as a fuel using these technologies. The logic is inescapable. Private companies are rapidly recognising this. Our Parliament has to recognise it too. Action is needed to protect our nation's economic security and at the same time avert the worst effects of climate change.

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