



Australian Community Futures Planning

Fact Sheet on the Petition to the Prime Minister demanding that Australia lead the world at COP26 to stop global heating

This fact sheet provides supporting information behind the Petition.

For more information visit

<https://www.austcfp.com.au/supporting-activities>

Sign the petition at

<https://me.getup.org.au/p/australian-petition-cop26>

Information in this fact sheet is also available in a video explainer on YouTube:

[Snapshots from Australia Together: Episode 1 – A plan for fixing climate change](#)

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Demand that Australia lead the world at COP26 to stop global heating

Why has this petition been proposed?

Australia, every other country, and the planet are all in serious trouble due to climate change. But it is still possible to fix it and prevent heating above 1.5° Celsius as Australia agreed to do, with every other nation, when signing the Paris Agreement¹ in 2015. However, two things stand in our way.

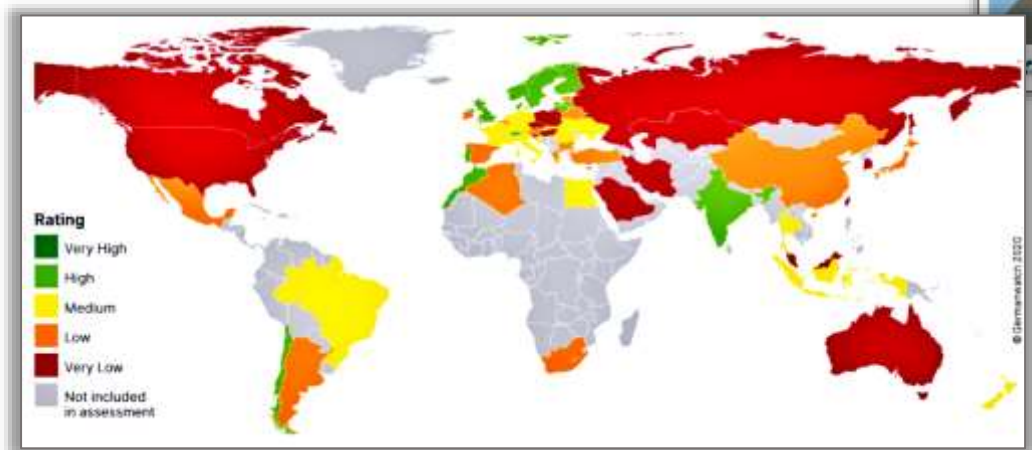
This petition has been proposed because the world's current negotiating framework in the Paris Agreement will not stop global heating.

1. Australia's uncooperative stance on the international stage.
2. The world's focus on negotiating frameworks which will not stop global heating.

Australia's uncooperative stance on the international stage

Global heating will not be stopped without fair and cooperative behaviour on the international stage. Unfortunately Australia is among the least cooperative nations in Paris Agreement negotiations and rates as one of the worst performers in energy use, greenhouse gas emissions and climate policy. For rankings of Australia's performance see the CCPI Climate Change Performance Index 2021².

Australia's performance in global rankings on climate change – CCPI 2021	
Component	Australia's rank out of 61 countries
Overall performance	Very low – 54 th place
Emissions	Very low – 52 nd place
Renewable energy	Low – 52 nd place
Energy use	Very low – 51 st place
Climate policy	Very low – 60 th place



¹ United Nations Climate Change webpage, The Paris Agreement, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

² Climate Change Performance Index 2021, <https://ccpi.org/download/the-climate-change-performance-index-2021/>

Australia's uncooperative stance was most apparent at the 25th Conference of the Parties to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in Madrid in 2019 when members of Australia's coal mining lobby stalked the negotiation halls hand in hand with Australia's Minister for Energy Angus Taylor and derailed international efforts to reach agreement on emissions reduction targets necessary to contain global heating to between 1.5° and 2° Celsius.

By accounting tricks and collusion, Australia set a wrecking ball going in the COP25 process, which if it is not corrected will result in our planet heating by at least 4° Celsius above pre-Industrial revolution averages.

This behaviour must not be permitted at COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021 or Australia will lock in heating over its land of at least 5° or 6° Celsius³, with devastating consequences for social cohesion, human health, biodiversity and our economy.

The world's focus on negotiating frameworks that will not stop global heating

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement made in 2015 under the UNFCCC rely on the expectation that countries will make voluntary pledges of percentage reductions in emissions. The UNFCCC has increasingly come to rely on encouraging countries to:

- meet targets of net zero emissions by 2050, and
- post more ambitious commitments of percentage reductions in emissions by 2030.

This framework for negotiation can no longer function to stop global heating because it does not oblige each country to reach net zero before they emit too much carbon to the atmosphere in total. **It is the total volume of carbon emitted to the atmosphere that matters, not the date by which net zero is achieved.**

The world needs to permanently limit the total volume of greenhouse gas (CO₂-e) emissions if we are to keep temperature rises to no more than 1.5° Celsius.

This means the UNFCCC should now abandon the easily escapable and plainly unsuccessful framework that has so far relied on each nation's willingness to make voluntary pledges of percentage reductions of annual emissions. This voluntary pledging approach was successful in encouraging countries into the Paris Agreement in 2015 but for a number of reasons it will not be successful in achieving the temperature targets and as such has now outlived its usefulness. It should now be replaced with a negotiating framework based on capping total volumes of emissions. This is the only way to stop global heating.

**This petition therefore proposes that the current negotiating framework for the Paris Agreement should immediately be replaced with a negotiating framework based on capping total volumes of emissions.
This is the only way to stop global heating.**

³ Expected temperature increases quoted in IPCC reports and the UNFCCC are averages across the planet. Increases will be lower over the oceans than over land. Australia's land area means it will suffer disproportionate temperature increases, higher than the expected averages. These will increase the incidence of bushfires, droughts, floods, water shortages, biodiversity losses and attendant decline in agricultural yields and marine abundance.

What is the new negotiating stance proposed in the petition?

The petition calls on the Australian government to move the following Motion at the forthcoming Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Glasgow (UNFCCC) in November 2021 – COP26:

“Australia proposes that a new basis of negotiation within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change should be established to meet the temperature objectives of the Paris Agreement and that this should henceforth be based on pledges to stay permanently within specified total tonnage limits for emissions – such tonnage limits per country to be determined by the following formula:

- A. A pre-determined budget of total global emissions necessary to ensure a near 100% probability of staying below 1.5 degrees Celsius (estimated to be no more than 235 billion tonnes between 2020 and whenever net zero is reached by all countries), *multiplied by*
- B. The percentage of the total load of global carbon emitted by each country to the atmosphere in 2019.”

In Australia’s case this would be roughly equivalent to 235 billion tonnes multiplied by 1.5% which is the approximate proportion of global emissions from domestic sources in Australia in 2019. If the formula were accepted this would give Australia a final carbon budget of approximately 3.5 billion tonnes. Australia’s obligation under the UNFCCC would then be to reach net zero emissions without exceeding the 3.5 billion tonne limit of emissions.

Why does the petition propose capping total global emissions at 235 billion tonnes?

In its 2021 report on the Physical Science Basis for global heating, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change⁴ has calculated that the safe limit of total global emissions from 2020 onwards is 400 billion tonnes. This is the upper limit of what the whole world can emit if we wish to give ourselves a 67% chance of capping heating at 1.5° Celsius.

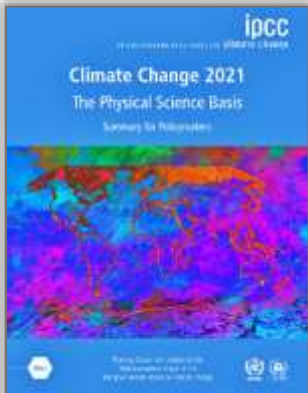


Table SPM.2: Estimates of historical CO₂ emissions and remaining carbon budgets.

Approximate global warming relative to 1850–1900 until temperature limit (°C)*(1)	Additional global warming relative to 2010–2019 until temperature limit (°C)	Estimated remaining carbon budgets from the beginning of 2020 (GtCO ₂)					Variations in reductions in non-CO ₂ emissions*(3)
		Likelihood of limiting global warming to temperature limit*(2)					
		17%	33%	50%	67%	83%	
1.5	0.43	900	650	500	400	300	Higher or lower reductions in accompanying non-CO ₂ emissions can increase or decrease the values on the left by 220 GtCO ₂ or more
1.7	0.63	1450	1050	850	700	550	
2.0	0.93	2300	1700	1350	1150	900	

⁴ IPCC, Climate Change 2021, The Physical Science Basis, https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg1/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGI_SPM.pdf

For Australia’s purposes, however, a 67% chance of stopping the heating is not the best basis for a plan for a number of socio-economic reasons, not least of which is that if temperatures rise by more than 1.5° Celsius the cost of dealing with climate change impacts becomes so big that it significantly exceeds the cost of preventing the heating. This is a big problem for countries with small populations like Australia relative to their land area and their potential resource losses. **This ratio means that the cost per capita in Australia of failure to meet the temperature targets is one of the highest in the world and many times higher than the cost of stopping the heating in the first place.**

Based on research by Melbourne University’s Sustainable Society Institute⁵ in 2019:

- It will cost Australia a minimum of \$584 billion by 2030 if the world does not keep temperature increases to 1.5° Celsius, whereas
- the cost to Australia if the world solves global heating is likely to be in the order of a mere \$35 billion – a tiny fraction of our GDP.



Cost to Australia of not stopping global heating:

- **\$584.5 billion by 2030**
- **\$762 billion by 2050**
- **more than \$5 trillion in cumulative damages from now until 2100**

Cost to stop it:

- **\$35.5 billion**

In the decade to 2030, the cost to Australia of allowing heating above 1.5° Celsius is at least 16 times higher than the cost of preventing the heating.

For Australia – and for the whole world – the safer and cheaper course is to emit not 400 billion more tonnes but only another 235 billion tonnes of CO₂-e.

Capping global carbon emissions to 235 billion tonnes would give the world close to a 100% chance of keeping temperature rises below 1.5° Celsius.

For more information on safe global emissions, view [Episode 6 Part 2 of The State of Australia in 2020: Climate policy failure and how to fix it.](#)



⁵ University of Melbourne, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, “Australia’s Clean Economy Future: Costs and Benefits”, June 2019, accessible at <https://sustainable.unimelb.edu.au/publications/issues-papers/australias-clean-economy>

Why does the petition propose capping Australia's total emissions at 3.5 billion tonnes?

235 billion tonnes of CO₂-e is the remaining load of greenhouse gases that can be safely emitted to the atmosphere to keep the world from bursting through the 1.5° Celsius heating mark. Australia's fair share of that 235 billion tonnes is probably no more than 1.5% since this was our share of actual emissions from domestic sources in 2019.

1.5% of 235 billion = 3.5 billion.

Hence it is assumed that keeping within that budget is the only way to safely, fairly and affordably work with the world to stop heating.

Is it too late to cap temperature rises to 1.5° Celsius?

It is almost too late but not impossible if the world shifts to a cooperative stance and all nations commit to emit no more than a fair share of the remaining safe load of global emissions, which is approximately 235 billion tonnes.

It is likely, however, that it will be too late to stop heating if the world does not come to agreement before the end of 2022 about sharing the remaining carbon budget.

Fair shares of remaining carbon loads may be determined by the formula proposed in this petition or by any other formula which is deemed to ensure fairness and which does not result in pledged tonnages of emissions that add up to more than the remaining safe load of global emissions. As the IPCC reported in 2018,

Pathways limiting global warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot would require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land, urban and infrastructure (including transport and buildings), and industrial systems. These systems transitions are unprecedented in terms of scale, but not necessarily in terms of speed, and imply deep emissions reductions in all sectors, a wide portfolio of mitigation options and a significant upscaling of investments in those options.⁶

The rapid transformations are unprecedented but not beyond human capability if we start now with deep planning and funding of programs to decarbonise. Significant policy shifts in Australia are required but they are not impossible and they provide extraordinary opportunities for achievement of sustainability in our environment, our economy, our social cohesion and our quality of life.

For more information on the required policy shifts in Australia view

[Episode 1 of Snapshots from Australia Together, A plan for fixing climate change](#)



⁶ IPCC SR1.5, Summary for Policy Makers C2, page SPM-21, https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2019/05/SR15_SPM_version_report_LR.pdf

Can Australia afford to stop global heating?

Yes. Availability of public funds is not a limitation in our case. Australia has all the financial capacity, wealth and expertise it needs to achieve net zero and can meet that target by 2033, as long as investment is planned, selected and incentivised on the basis of the national interest, not corporate interest.

Also, as a nation, Australia saves and makes much more money by preventing heating above 1.5° Celsius than we would by doing nothing or by slowing the pace of change. Because of Australia's particular competitive advantages in the world economy, the quicker we track to net zero, the more wealth we amass.

As our foremost climate economist, Professor Ross Garnaut, has said:

The 2019-20 bushfires reminded us of what Australia has to lose from the world's failure to deal with climate change – we are more vulnerable than any other developed country. [But] we also have more to gain than any other country from the world moving early to zero net emissions necessary for cessation of warming, and from full participation in the global transition to zero emissions.⁷

Australia could increase its returns from projects to decarbonise if it reinstated a price on carbon.

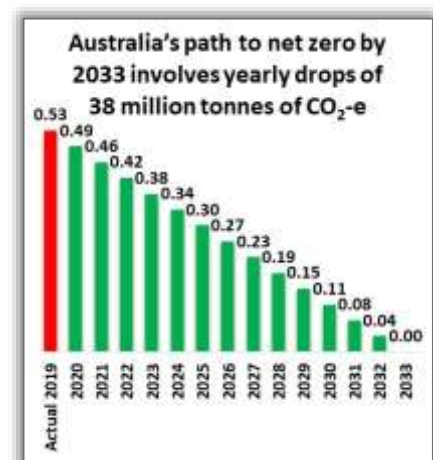
What Australia can't afford is to do nothing about climate change or slow the pace with which we transition to a fully decarbonised economy. The fact is that Australia **can't not** afford to finance its way towards net zero emissions and towards a new structure for its economy.

What else must Australia do to stop global heating?

Global heating will not be stopped without fair and cooperative behaviour on the international stage. This means **it is imperative that Australia and the world will need to achieve net zero carbon emissions not by 2050 but by about the year 2033** – or sooner depending on when we start with effective strategies to stop the heating, and we will need to reach net zero without exceeding our fair share of the remaining global emissions.

To achieve that, Australia must adopt the following targets as minimums:

- By 2022, adopt a carbon emissions budget committing to emit no more than 3.5 billion tonnes of carbon to the atmosphere from 2020 onwards and to reach net zero by 2033.
- By 2022, adopt a carbon emissions reduction interim target of 79% reduction by 2030 on annual emissions in 2019 and maintain a steep, straight and steady drop in annual emission of at least 38 million tonnes per annum, year on year, until zero is reached (otherwise Australia will be likely to emit more than its fair share of the safe remaining global carbon load).



⁷ Professor Ross Garnaut, "Reset: Restoring Australia After the pandemic recession", La Trobe University Press, 2021, page 254.

- By 2025, wind all fossil fuel subsidies back to zero.
- 100% of electricity comes from renewable sources by no later than 2030 and no later than 2025 if other sectors do not reach emissions reduction targets.
- By 2030, transport, industry, commerce, cities and agriculture are all powered in full by electricity using 100% genuine renewables.
- By 2030, establish Australia as a renewable energy superpower, with exports in renewable energy replacing all fossil fuel exports, and rare earth mining plus zero-emissions metals processing replacing export incomes from lost coal mining.

What are the key Strategies that Australia should implement to fix climate change?

Australian Community Futures Planning is working with Australians to develop an integrated long term plan that will help them travel safely from 2020 to 2050 and ensure we arrive there with an acceptable degree of wellbeing and security. That plan is called ***Australia Together***.

Starting drafts of ***Australia Together*** are available at <https://www.austcfp.com.au/australia-together>

Australia Together includes a range of strategies for fixing climate change. These Strategies are integrated so that they can operate efficiently to help Australia to:

1. manage the necessary transitions in our economy;
2. re-build vital national assets and infrastructure and establish resilience and preparedness for future shocks;
3. create markets that will flourish in the 21st century global economy; and
4. shift the nation onto the necessary footing of global cooperation and leadership.



These Strategies constitute a program for an economic re-structure without increasing inequality. They are designed to help create the best conditions, policy frameworks, institutional reforms, and incentives so that the plans of all participating Australians and ethical private interests can succeed.

These Strategies include significant reforms of the state and federal public services. Australia will not reach net zero in time unless these or similar reforms are implemented.

For more information:

- On YouTube: [View Episode 1 of Snapshots from Australia Together, A plan for fixing climate change.](#)
- Or read the [Fact Sheet: Snapshots from Australia Together, Episode 1 – A plan for fixing climate change.](#)

Would it suffice to rely on technology to stop global heating?

No. As at 2021, a technology strategy is preferred by the federal government to reduce emissions. However, the reality is that focussing on technology development such as Carbon Capture and Storage will help, but only in very small part and in a small number of locations. And to the extent that government support for unproven or commercially unattractive and impracticable technologies such as CCS may allow corporations to delay switching to renewables, they are likely to be self-defeating.

A gas-led recovery from the Covid-19 recession is likewise not a viable means of either securing our economy or rescuing the planet. New gas developments are fully antithetical to achieving a target of net zero emissions.

It is already too late to attempt to substitute technology strategies for actual cessation of fossil fuel use and expect that this will secure the planet from irreversible loss. It will not.

What does Australia gain by supporting this petition?

1. Australia can rescue its economy.
2. We rescue our reputation as a trustworthy trading partner – something we need more than ever now if we are to re-build markets lost recently due to the deterioration of our relationship with Australia's biggest trading partner, China.
3. And most of all, we rescue the planet, and everything it means to our safety, security and wellbeing. It is not possible to rescue these things with our current uncooperative negotiating stance.

Please join with Australian Community Futures Planning in signing the petition and urge the federal government to reform Australia's negotiating stance and conduct in Paris Agreement negotiations and commit to emitting no more than a fair share of a global carbon budget.

Australian Community Futures Planning
acfp

Join the campaign to make Australia a great global leader in fixing global heating.

Australia Together – Strategy Env01.01
Reformation of Australia's negotiating stance and conduct in Paris Agreement negotiations – Commitment to emitting no more than a fair share of a global carbon budget

Sign the petition to Prime Minister Morrison
Demand that Australia lead the world at COP26 to stop global heating!

Global cooperation and leadership

COP26
UNITING THE WORLD TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE.

Click on the picture to sign the petition.