



BLOG ALERT

The Australian government is far behind the world with its climate change targets. Time has run out for cutting back emissions to meet the UN Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming by 2 degrees compared to pre-industrial levels by 2050.

Whilst it has become clear that the Paris targets outlined in 2008 remain outwith the capacity of national governments to reach, due to a lack of substantive action within the realm of environmental policy reform - there is some hope that interim target may serve to catalyze governments to finally address the looming climate disaster that we are currently faced with if real and large-scale action is not taken.

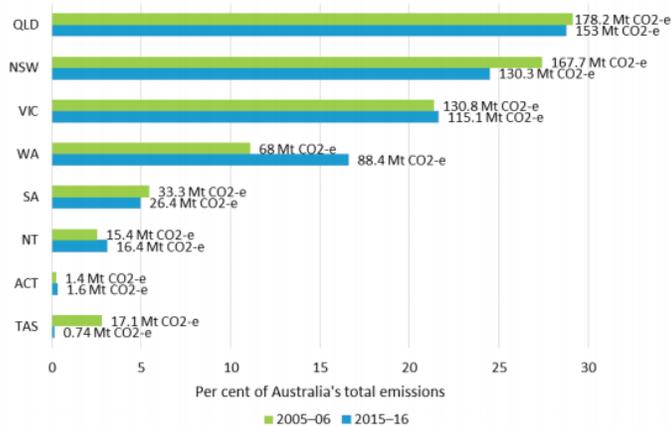
Despite commitments on behalf of state and territory governments to curb the use of single-use plastics and reduce carbon usage to net-zero by 2050 - to name but a few - the Australian Federal Government remains firm in its stance that, "Australia is doing its part", and further climate policy and environmental reform is not necessary to achieve the goals adhered to under the Paris Agreement.

So what does net zero mean?

[Net-zero](#) refers to a state in which the greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere are balanced by removal out of the atmosphere. Net-zero is important because it becomes the point where human-induced global warming will stop or balance out. The Paris Agreement underlines the need for net-zero, requiring states to 'achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century.'

In an ideal world, the goal remains an absolute reduction in greenhouse emissions to reduce the severity and scale of deterioration in climatic conditions, evidenced globally. However, we must be realistic; an absolute reduction in all pollutant emissions is unachievable due to the mechanisms and trading patterns upon which the global economy rests. Herein, the goal for nation-states should be to balance the number of greenhouse emissions released into the atmosphere with sustainable and progressive

FIGURE 2 BREAKDOWN OF AUSTRALIA'S EMISSIONS BY STATE AND TERRITORY, 2005-06 AND 2015-16





climate policy that serves to mitigate the impact of hazardous and damaging activity.

Australia's annual domestic greenhouse gas emissions are about 1.4 percent of the global total. Coal and other fossil fuel exports mean Australia's global carbon footprint is much bigger than domestic pollution alone.

Below is a table that shows a summary of Australia's emissions reduction targets broken down for states and territories. As shown, the states have more ambitious targets compared to the federal government. The federal government is the only one on the list that does not have a net-zero target.

	2020	2030	2050
Australia	14 percent below 2005 levels <i>Announced in 2010</i>	26-28 percent below 2005 levels <i>Accounted in 2015</i>	
Queensland		30 percent below 2005 levels <i>Announced in 2017</i>	Net-zero <i>Announced in 2017</i>
New South Wales			Net-zero <i>Announced in 2016</i>
Victoria	15-20 percent below 2005 levels <i>Announced in 2017</i>		Net-zero Committed in 2017
South Australia			60 percent below 2005 levels Net Zero <i>Announced in 2015</i>
Australian Capital Territory	40 percent below 2005 levels Committed in 2010	65-75 percent below 2005 levels Committed in 2018	Net-zero by 2045 Committed in 2018
Tasmania			64 percent below 2005 levels Committed by 2018 Net Zero <i>Announced in 2017</i>



The COP26 is coming up and the Australian federal government is the [least ambitious](#) of all countries. COP26 is an annual climate summit convened by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a climate body of the UN. COP stands for Conference of the Parties — meaning a gathering of countries — and 2021 will be the 26th time that it's taken place. Hence: COP26.

The UK is leading the way with a pledge to cut emissions by 68 percent by 2030. The world needs to cut emissions roughly in half by 2030, and rich countries such as Australia are expected to lead the way but Australia has stuck with the same commitment it made in 2015 under Tony Abbott: 26-28 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

The Australian government's tactic is to promote technology and not taxes as a way to tackle climate change. The Coalition's Technology Investment Roadmap guides \$18 billion into five priority areas: hydrogen, carbon capture and storage, soil carbon, energy storage options, and "low-carbon" steel and aluminum production. This is not recognized as a reliable way of reducing CO2 emissions because there is no guarantee these technological breakthroughs will happen at all, let alone quickly and successfully enough to make them competitive with existing methods of electricity generation and manufacturing in the next decade.

Overall, the Australian federal government is far behind in its net-zero targets. The world already is on the path for 2 degrees warming so countries across the world need to put in reduction strategies to ensure no greater warming occurs.