

MOVE TO A ZERO CARBON ECONOMY

Australia has all it needs to be part of today's climate and energy solutions, creating a brighter future for Australia and the world at large.

The world is acting. In December 2015, governments reached a landmark global agreement on climate change. Globally, investment in renewable energy has overtaken fossil fuels. But 2016 has already brought harrowing reminders of the impacts of climate change on our region.

A clear majority of Australians want the Australian Government to commit to stronger action on climate change. Australia must substantially increase its emissions reduction targets, begin transforming our energy sector and move swiftly to a zero carbon economy.

WHAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD DO

STRENGTHEN NEAR-TERM EMISSIONS TARGETS.

Set a target for national emissions reductions of at least 45% to 65% below 2005 levels by 2025 and at least 65% to 80% by 2030.

ACHIEVE ZERO EMISSIONS WELL BEFORE MID CENTURY.

TRANSFORM THE ENERGY SECTOR.

Develop a plan to transform the energy sector and reach 100% renewable electricity before 2035, beginning with the phase-out of coal power, including support for affected communities.

PROVIDE GREATER SUPPORT TO ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES.

Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with climate solutions that value and integrate their knowledge, provide new sources of income for communities and support climate change adaptation and resilience building initiatives.¹

WHY

While important progress has been made internationally towards limiting global emissions, current commitments still have us on a path to very dangerous levels of warming. The month of February recorded a disturbing and unprecedented upward spike in the global average temperature. Cyclone Winston, the most powerful cyclone ever recorded in the southern hemisphere, became the second category 5 cyclone to make landfall in the Pacific in as many years, bringing devastation to Fiji. The combined effects of climate change and the 2015–2016 El Niño have taken an immense toll on many communities. Damage to the Great Barrier Reef has been found to be far worse than initially feared.

All countries will need to aim for substantially greater

emissions reductions over the coming years, a reality recognised by the Paris Agreement, under which the first review of national commitments will begin in 2018.

Based on growing evidence that a global temperature rise of 2°C will push many beyond their limit to adapt, under the Paris Agreement all governments have agreed to keep the global temperature rise to "well below 2°C" and to "pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C". No region has a greater stake in global action on climate change than our own, with many Pacific island countries among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

To play its fair part in the global mitigation task, Australia must substantially increase the pace with which we reduce our emissions, transform our energy sector and move towards a zero carbon economy. This means catalysing innovation and deepening international cooperation. Australia's current target would still leave our country in 2030 with among the highest per capita emissions and most carbon-intensive economy in the world. Falling further behind the rest of the world will cost us dearly, stranding the Australian economy and leaving us uncompetitive. By contrast, fully embracing our renewable energy assets will diversify the Australian economy and create thousands of new jobs.

Multiple surveys have shown that a clear majority of Australians want the Australian Government to commit to stronger action on climate change. This popular support was powerfully demonstrated by the People's Climate March, the largest public demonstration of support for leadership and action on climate change in Australia to date.

ABOUT OXFAM

Around the world, one person in three lives in poverty. Oxfam is determined to change that by mobilising the power of people against poverty. Globally, Oxfam works to find practical, innovative ways for people to lift themselves out of poverty and thrive. We save lives and help rebuild livelihoods when crisis strikes. And we campaign so that the voices of poor people influence the local and global decisions that affect them. In all we do, Oxfam works with partner organisations and alongside vulnerable women and men to end the injustices that cause poverty.

Oxfam Australia, a partner of the Australian Government, is an independent, not-for-profit, international development organisation. We have more than 550,000 supporters in Australia who contribute skills, time and financial support to advance our work in Australia and around the world.

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- 1 For a detailed background and explanation of these policy proposals, see Oxfam's recent report *Bringing Paris Home – How Australia measures up against the new global climate agreement*, available at www.climatefrontline.org/report/Oxfam-Australia-Bringing-Paris-Home-Report.pdf