

Australia blames mining for greenhouse gas rise

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The [climate change](#) department predicted Australia's emissions will surge by as much as 24 percent by 2020 compared to 2000 levels, four percent higher than last year's projections.

"Growth to 2020 is dominated by emissions associated with the extraction and processing of energy resources driven by strong export demand," the department said in its annual emissions report.

"Fugitive emissions from [coal mines](#) and oil and gas projects, as well as direct fuel combustion emissions from LNG projects, account for almost half of the growth in Australia's total emissions from 2010 to 2020."

The report found Australia was on track to reduce emissions to 106 percent of 1990 levels by 2012, two percent lower than its target agreed under the [Kyoto protocol](#).

But it also said total emissions would grow 1.8 percent annually over the coming decade, compared with 0.4 percent since 2000.

By 2030 the report said emissions could be 44 percent above 2000 levels, though it cautioned this was a less reliable prediction.

Australia is the world's worst per capita polluter and home to its biggest coal export port, shipping millions of tonnes of energy and steelmaking coal to Asian markets annually, as well as [iron ore](#) and other minerals.

It is also heavily dependent on coal-fired power stations for electricity, a sector the report said accounted for 36 percent of Australia's total emissions in 2010.

Direct fuel combustion and agriculture each contributed about 15 percent and transport was the third biggest, at 14 percent.

The energy sector had spurred most of the [emissions](#) growth since 1990, "driven by Australia's relatively high rates of economic growth and international demand for Australia's resources," it added.

But renewable energy incentives would see growth in electricity-related pollution slow to just six percent over the next decade, the report said.

Meeting its reductions targets of between five and 25 percent offered

after the Copenhagen climate summit would require "strong and concerted action on multiple fronts" in Australia, the report added.

The Labor government abandoned an attempt to introduce a cap-and-trade carbon programme early last year. Prime Minister Julia Gillard supports charging for [carbon emissions](#), but is still investigating how to price them.

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