

Australia pledges 26% emissions cut by 2030

August 11 2015, by Madeleine Coorey



Environmentalists accused Australia of not doing enough to curb the pollution blamed for global warming, saying the government fell well short of doing its fair share globally

Australia plans to reduce carbon emissions by at least 26 percent from 2005 levels by 2030, Prime Minister Tony Abbott announced Tuesday, but environmentalists said the target fell well short of what was needed to tackle global warming.

Abbott said his conservative government's target was "fairly in the

middle" of those made by comparable economies which will be taken to an upcoming global [climate conference](#) in Paris.

"We have come to the position our 2030 [emissions reduction](#) target will be in the range of 26 to 28 percent," Abbott told reporters in Canberra.

"There is a definite commitment to 26 percent but we believe under the policies that we have got, with the circumstances that we think will apply, that we can go to 28 percent."

With its use of coal-fired power and relatively small population of 23 million, Australia is considered one of the world's worst per capita greenhouse gas polluters.

Abbott said while Australia understood it had to reduce its emissions, its commitment was comparable with other economies, although not quite as high as the European Union at 34 percent on 2005 levels.

"It's immeasurably better than the Chinese," Abbott said, in reference to the world's top carbon polluter which last month promised to peak emissions within about 15 years, in a move widely hailed as a boost for the global effort to curb planet warming.

Abbott said Australia's pledge was a "good, solid, economically responsible, environmentally responsible target".

"We are not leading but we are certainly not lagging," he said.

"Where we are leading, of course, is in emissions reduction per person—50 percent-plus emissions reduction per person which is the best in the developed world."

Australia is expected to meet its current emissions reduction target of

five percent below 2000 levels by 2020.

'Vastly inadequate'

Paris will host the UN climate conference at the end of the year, with organisers hoping to conclude a pact limiting [global warming](#) to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) over pre-industrial levels.

Environmentalists accused Australia of not doing enough to curb the pollution blamed for global warming, saying the government fell well short of doing its fair share globally.

Australia's target put it "at the back of the pack", and well below efforts being made by the United States, China, Britain and others, WWF-Australia said.

"Australians are already feeling the effects of increasing extreme weather made worse by global warming, on our food, farms, health, economy, and iconic places like the Great Barrier Reef," said WWF-Australia's Kellie Caught.

"If every country matched Australia's effort the world would be on track for three to four degrees of warming. Australians and our precious environment deserve better."

The Climate Council also said the emissions reduction targets were out of step with the science and the rest of the world—saying the government needed to slash emissions by some 40-60 percent of 2000 levels.

"These targets are vastly inadequate to protect Australians from the impacts of [climate change](#) and do not represent a fair contribution to the world effort to bring climate change under control," the council's Tim

Flannery said.

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