

# Australia boosts climate science research in u-turn

August 4 2016

---



Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has long been seen as in favour of action on climate change

Australia made an abrupt climate change u-turn Thursday, with the issue set to again become a key focus of the national science agency just months after it saw hundreds of jobs cut in a heavily criticised move.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull—a former environment

minister—has long been seen as a supporter of action on [climate change](#) but his government oversaw bitterly opposed cuts to national [science](#) body CSIRO earlier this year.

But following the government's narrow re-election last month, new Science Minister Greg Hunt stressed both he and Turnbull had "clear and strong views" about the importance of [climate science](#).

"It's critical to our long-term planning... so [climate](#) science will be a bedrock function for research of the CSIRO," Hunt told national broadcaster ABC.

"It's a new government and we're laying out a direction that climate science matters — and that's both the science relating to the long-term trend, the long-term influences, where the impacts are, as well as mitigation."

The conservative government's commitment to fighting global warming has been under international scrutiny since former prime minister Tony Abbott said evidence blaming mankind for climate change was "absolute crap" when he was opposition leader.

With its heavy use of coal-fired power and relatively small population of 24 million, Australia is considered one of the world's worst per capita greenhouse gas polluters.

Hunt, who was environment minister for a decade before moving to the science portfolio after last month's national elections, said 15 new jobs would be created and Aus\$37 million (US\$28 million) injected into climate research at CSIRO over the next decade.

CSIRO's chief executive Larry Marshall announced earlier this year that 275 roles would be cut from the national science body, including 75 in

the oceans and atmosphere division and 70 in the land and water section.

The cuts were slammed by environmental campaigners, while almost 3,000 international scientists signed an open letter in February calling the move alarming and a reflection of the lack of insight about Australia's importance to global and regional climate research.

Greenpeace welcomed Hunt's announcement, adding that they hoped it was the "start of more positive leadership from the Turnbull government on the critical threat of climate change".

"The decision to cut climate science jobs at CSIRO during such a critical time for Australia's climate was preposterous, so this partial u-turn is a welcome move," Greenpeace Australia's senior climate and energy campaigner Nikola Casule said in a statement.

© 2016 AFP

Citation: Australia boosts climate science research in u-turn (2016, August 4) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-08-australia-boosts-climate-science-u-turn.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.