

Resources giants ramp up calls for Australia carbon tax

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Australia's conservative government is under pressure to act on climate change by curbing pollution

Energy giant Woodside has joined the world's largest miners in calling for Australia to re-introduce a tax on carbon emissions as pressure mounts on the conservative government to act on climate change by curbing pollution.

Australia is considered one of the world's worst per capita greenhouse gas polluters, and is a heavy user of coal-fired power.

But Canberra has struggled to introduce climate policies over the past decade amid political infighting and turbulence.

Former prime minister Malcolm Turnbull was ousted in a party coup in August, in part triggered by his effects to embed in law carbon [emission](#) targets agreed at the 2015 UN climate conference in Paris.

Turnbull's plan was ditched after his removal, but in the private sector, a growing number of major Australian companies are calling for policy change.

"We need a price on carbon, we need to ensure that the most effective energy gets into the system," Woodside chief executive Peter Coleman told national broadcaster ABC late Tuesday.

The stance is a reversal for the country's biggest oil and gas producer, which campaigned against a previous Labor government's emissions pricing scheme, under which some firms would have been required to pay a tax per tonne of carbon dioxide.

"We think there is a will to act, the time is now, and we need to start having good policy debate," Coleman added.

Anglo-Australian firms BHP and Rio Tinto—the world's two biggest miners—have already called for an emissions price.

Tech billionaire Mike Cannon-Brookes, the co-founder of Australian software giant Atlassian, earlier this month launched a green energy campaign to push for more renewables that has gained momentum on social media.

The government is also under pressure from voters. Action on [climate change](#) was the top priority for voters at a crucial Sydney by-election, triggered by Turnbull's departure, that saw the coalition suffer an embarrassing loss.

Even so, Energy Minister Angus Taylor said Wednesday his government could meet the Paris targets without a carbon price, and that it was already "bringing emissions down".

"We reached our Kyoto outcomes easily, we will reach Kyoto two, over and above what is required," he told ABC Radio, referring to earlier climate treaties. "And we are well on track to reach Paris."

Australia has a chequered past when it comes to reducing emissions.

Former Labor PM Kevin Rudd's flagship carbon-trading scheme to cut emissions was shelved in 2010. His successor Julia Gillard introduced a [carbon](#) tax in 2012.

The Liberals' Tony Abbott, who defeated Labor in national elections in 2013 and who famously called [climate](#) change "absolute crap", repealed the scheme.

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