

STATEMENT BY HONOURABLE SCOTT MORRISON MP, PRIME  
MINISTER OF AUSTRALIA AT THE KAINAKI II TO COP 26 –  
PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE ON  
URGENT CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

11 December 2020

Well, thank you, Dame Meg, and to all of our Pacific family, friends, it's wonderful to see you. It's been such a difficult year for all of us and I want to thank you all for your leadership.

I've been able to speak with many of you over the course of this year and sometimes on more than one occasion and we've been very, very pleased to be able to stand with you as you've dealt with the terrible pandemic.

But we also need and we also understand and we are also undertaking the important action that is necessary when it comes to addressing the realities of climate change. Global emissions reductions, we know, are essential for our Blue Pacific.

Our commitment to the Paris Agreement has never wavered. We've made it. We're reducing emissions through practical, clean energy technology, which is also a key part of how our own economy is recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic.

These two things go together.

We're committed to achieving net zero emissions as soon as possible. Our long term emissions reduction strategy to be launched ahead of COP26 will provide the necessary detail on our plan. But much has already been released.

We believe the what and the why are really no longer the issue. I think we're well beyond that now. Unless we can actually understand the how, then these things won't be achieved and achieving them is what matters.

The how is so critically important and that's where Australia is focusing our efforts.

When we make a promise, as our Pacific friends understand and family here in Australia, we keep it.

We stuck with Kyoto when others wavered or quit, and we have beaten our Kyoto targets by 459-million tonnes. That is almost a full

year of Australia's annual emissions. And indeed it is a full year, I understand, of the UK's emissions.

The overachievement didn't happen by accident. It came through very hard work and cost and sacrifice by Australian families, farmers, businesses who made hard decisions to invest in one of the highest rates of solar panels takeup on suburban roofs of any country in the world. Taking out loans to install efficient equipment. To farm differently to store carbon.

So the credits that have been gained by overachieving on our Kyoto targets were hard-earned. They are the product of Australian's action.

Australia is translating our climate change commitments into reality through effective action. This is not prospective. This is now. This is what has already been occurring. We are acting now. We are achieving and we are exceeding our goals.

Today, I can announce that Australia is very confident that we will now achieve our 2030 target without the need to draw on our carry over credits that Australians earned from overachieving on our Kyoto-era commitments.

Just in the last year, this is the effective equivalent of reducing our carbon budget out to 2030 by nine per cent. Again, almost a full year of Australia's national emissions.

In fact, in the last just two years, our 2030 position as we proceed towards that target has improved by some 639-million tonnes.

Now, to put that in perspective, that is the equivalent of taking all Australia's cars off the road for 15 years.

This is not a small achievement.

Australia's action and performance also compares favourably around the world. On data from 2005 to 2016, the OECD cut emissions by nine percent. Here in Australia, we were down by 13 percent. Off our 2005 figure, we are currently at 16.6 percent down on the 2005 levels and on our peak emissions, which were achieved in 2007, it is just under 19 percent.

Ambition is of course important and we share it. But it's only the action and results that change the outcomes for the world.

Emissions don't have accents. They don't have nationalities.

The ocean, the environment, none of it recognises where those emissions come from, just their cumulative impact. It doesn't distinguish between emissions that come from developed countries, advanced economies or developing countries.

We believe that developing countries need practical pathways to lift their living standards without increasing their emissions. The way to do this is through making low carbon, zero carbon and in fact, sub-zero carbon technologies viable and at scale.

That's why we're working with Japan, Korea, Singapore, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States to develop clean technology supply chains. I've appointed a new special advisor for low emissions technologies, Dr Alan Finkel, who was just about to retire as Australia's Chief Scientist and is well regarded all around the world who will spearhead our global efforts.

Our technology roadmap will guide \$70 billion in investment to scale up clean energy technologies and drive outcomes.

Now, these are very important targets, and I want to stress this, if you can achieve this, then you can reduce emissions.

Hydrogen produced at less than \$2 Australian per kilo, long duration energy storage at less than \$100 per megawatt hour, green steel produced at less than \$900 per tonne, and green aluminium at less than \$2,700 per tonne. CO2 compression transport and storage at under \$20 per tonne and soil carbon measurement at less than \$3 per hectare.

Global targets are important, but unless those practical targets can be met with these types of technologies, then they will only remain ambitions and the emissions will continue to rise, particularly in large developing countries.

Getting these technologies right will help those developing countries able to change the nature of their economies just as they are changing the Australian economy.

But beyond that, I agree with so many who have spoken today about the need to adapt and build resilience, mitigation and adaptation.

Scientists estimate climate impacts will continue for many years to come and we know that here in Australia. We've just had our Royal Commission into the Black Summer bushfires, which have noted the stored up impact of climate change to date will mean that we will be

dealing with that on its own without any change to emissions for at least the next 20 years.

So we need to invest and are investing in these important technologies.

Today, I announce that we will extend our 2015 to 2020 \$1 billion climate finance commitment. We will increase that by 50 per cent to \$1.5 billion between 2020 and 2025.

Now, this includes and builds on the \$500 million that we pledged last year for climate and disaster resilience in the Pacific, not through some other fund. Directly, bilaterally, directly to our Pacific family partners.

This also complements the Asia Pacific Rainforest Partnership and the International Partnership for Blue Carbon, which deliver innovative solutions to combat climate change and build resilience.

We do stand with our family, our Pacific family, to scale up mitigation and ensure adaptation support for countries that need it.

I also want to thank Prime Minister Natano for convening this event, and I thank the other leaders that have been in contact with me since I've written to you recently thanking Australia and we stand with you as we move forward with this most significant global challenge.

Thank you very much, Dame Meg.