
THURSDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2019

Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory – **pollution levels on the rise under the Coalition**

- Annual greenhouse gas emissions in Australia have increased by 21.9 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (4.26%) since 2013.
- Emissions from the Australian Electricity sector have declined during recent quarters, including a 3.2% decline in the year to September 2018. However, these declines were more than offset by growing fugitive emissions such as those from the production, processing, transport, storage, transmission and distribution of fossil fuels and stationary energy use which includes emissions from direct combustion of fuels.
- While Australia's per capita emissions have declined marginally under the Coalition Government (0.9%), per capita emissions across the rest of the OECD have decreased more than four times as much (4.4%).
- Australia's current emissions trajectory is not consistent with the Government's commitment at Paris to limit global warming well below 2°C.

September 2018 Quarterly result

The Federal Government has released its quarterly update of [the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the September 2018 quarter](#).

In the year to September 2018 Australia's emissions increased 0.9% (including land use, land use change and forestry).

Fugitive emissions from the production, processing, transport, storage, transmission and distribution of fossil fuels such as coal, crude oil and natural gas increased by 7.3% over the year to September 2018, driven by a 12.8% increase in natural gas production and 0.8% increase in coal production.

There was a 3.2% decrease in emissions from the electricity sector over the year to September. According to the Environment and Energy Department reduced electricity emissions are a result of increased renewable energy generation in the National Electricity Market principally replacing a reduction in brown coal generation.



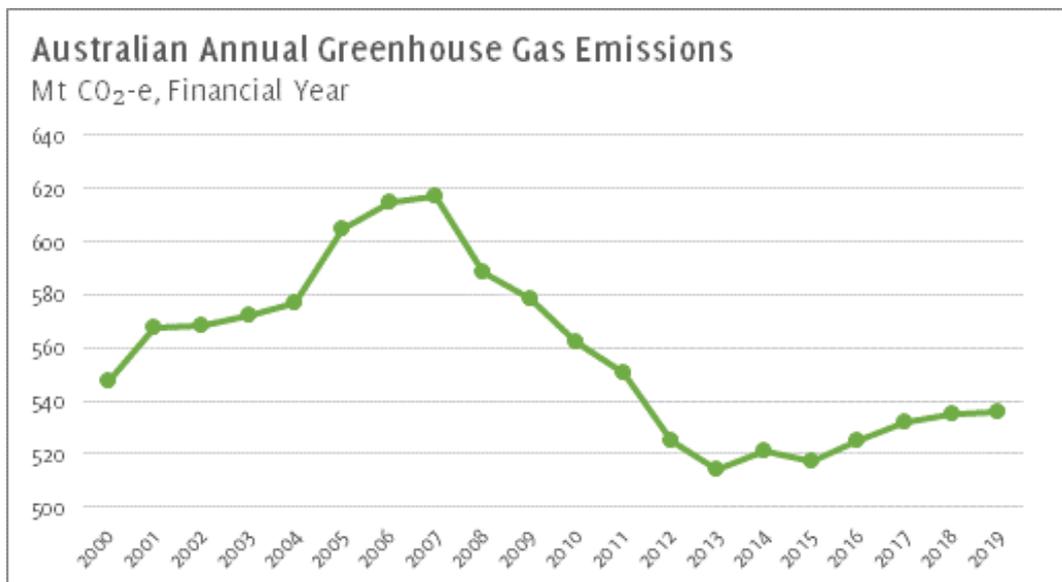
Stationary energy use emissions which includes emissions from direct combustion of fuels, predominantly in manufacturing, mining, residential and commercial sectors increased by 5.8%. This was largely caused by an 19.7% increase in LNG exports in the year to September 2018.

Transport sector emissions increased 2% over the year to September 2018. The growth in transport was reflected in an 8.4 per cent annual growth in diesel consumption for the year to September 2018. According to the Department the past six years have seen a decrease in the consumption of petrol (including ethanol-blended) of 2.7 per cent and a strong increase in diesel consumption of 23.5 per cent.

The Government's record on emissions

Since coming to office in September 2013 the Coalition has made no progress in reducing Australia's overall emissions. In fact, there is an upward trend. Under the Coalition's watch, Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions have increased by 21.9 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂-e). Australia's annual greenhouse emissions are now 4.26% higher than they were in 2013.

The Government's decision to repeal the national carbon price in June 2014 exacerbated the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. Quarterly emissions have risen 5.45% since the repeal, reversing emission reductions made while the law was active. Current national greenhouse gas emissions are higher than 2012 levels.

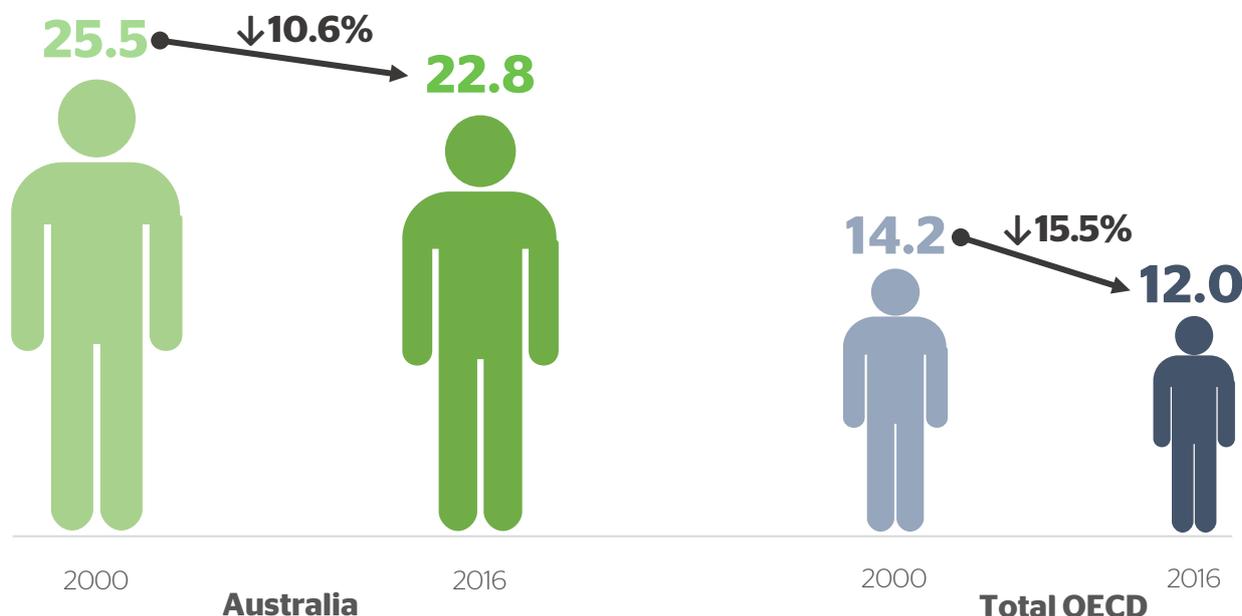


The current Government has set Australia’s 2030 emission target at 441 – 435 Mt CO₂-e. Australia’s forecasted emissions for 2018 are at 536 Mt CO₂-e. This target is not consistent with the Government’s commitment at Paris to limit global warming well below 2°C.

The Coalition has defended successive years of overall emissions increases by pointing to simultaneous decreases in per capita emissions. However, the decreases are marginal (less than 1% from 2013 to 2018) and have consistently been outpaced by per capita emissions reductions across the OECD. Since 2000, per capita emissions across the OECD have decreased by 15.5% while Australia’s per capita emissions have decreased by 10.6%.

Per capita Greenhouse Gas Emissions - Australia vs OECD

Mt CO₂-e per capita, 2000 & 2016



During the Coalition’s time in government, the disparity between Australia and the rest of the OECD has accelerated with average per capita emissions across the OECD decrease more than four times as much as Australia. Since 2013, average per capita greenhouse gas emissions have decreased by 4% across the OECD. At the same time, Australia’s per capita emissions have decreased by only 0.9%.

Australia’s marginal improvement in per capita emissions over the last five years is more readily explained by external factors such as continued population growth and technological improvement rather than any material energy or climate policy intervention.



Policy history

After five years of leadership, the Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison Coalition Government has failed to deliver a national energy policy that takes advantage of the opportunities of Australia's vast renewable energy resources. Instead, federal policy uncertainty has hindered a smooth energy transformation to a modern clean energy system.

Since forming government in 2013, the Coalition has abolished the carbon price, lowered the Renewable Energy Target by more than a quarter, tried to abolish the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) once, the Climate Change Authority twice and the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) three times. The result, at a time when policy certainty is essential to ensuring energy security, has been chaos, frozen energy investment, spiralling gas-driven energy prices and growing carbon pollution caused by a continued reliance on centuries-old energy sources.

Since the Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF), now re-badged the 'Climate Solutions Fund', has been Australia's main mechanism for combatting climate change, the nation's climate emissions have been on an upward trajectory. There remain serious questions about the governance, effectiveness and value for money of the ERF and its successor.

The Coalition Government has squandered its five years on dismantling or attempting to dismantle successful policy, replacing it with deeply inadequate alternative. In 2014 its attacks on renewable energy were so extreme that Australia experienced an 88% drop in renewable energy investment. It has proved unwilling to steer Australia's energy transformation to ensure Australia reduces its climate pollution in an efficient and timely way. Worse, it has used public money to prolong Australia's reliance on coal and failed to position Australia to meet our international climate change obligations.



Timeline of major policy decisions and annual emissions

