



## TRANSCRIPT

**E&OE TRANSCRIPT  
PRESS CONFERENCE  
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**Subjects: *COP28***

**CHRIS BOWEN:** Thanks for coming out this morning. Obviously, I've got a pretty jam-packed schedule of negotiations and bilateral meetings, but I thought it's important to give you a brief update on where we're at. We're expecting a draft decision text from the COP Presidency shortly, which obviously we'll engage with, like every other member of the Conference of the Parties, with a view to a very good outcome from this COP.

Where we've come from is of course, we came to this COP with the G7 having agreed to a phase out of unabated fossil fuels in energy systems by 2050, a position that the Umbrella group decided to support which I chair obviously, at the beginning of the negotiations, contrary to an erroneous report I read suggesting the Umbrella group does not support that position, let me make it very clear - the Umbrella group supports the phase out of fossil fuels of energy systems by 2050, that's very important - that group of United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada, Australia, Israel, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Japan, Iceland, and Norway.

Now, of course, what's most important is that this COP finishes with a commitment to keep 1.5 degrees of warming alive. And we all know that the future of fossil fuels is key to that ambition. That is the key test for COP, keeping 1.5 alive and having an appropriate decision in the text about the future of fossil fuels. So we've engaged in very good faith knowing that there are countries that respectfully, I say, have a different view. Saudi Arabia, for example, is on the public record as having a very different view. I've engaged with the Saudi Arabia Minister over the course of last 24 hours, talking through the issues, one of the many bilateral discussions that we have in these negotiations. We've made it very clear, we will support the COP

Presidency, who is looking for a good outcome on finding a way which maximises the chance for a successful outcome of this COP and the future of fossil fuels is the key to that. Consistent of course, with our domestic approach, building to 82% renewables, the Capacity Investment Scheme, moving, ensuring very clearly from the government's point of view, no new coal fired power generation in Australia, working with countries on their transition.

Some countries are at a different pace in the transition, we're working with Germany, for example, on joint funding of green hydrogen, working with Korea and Japan on their energy futures and ensuring that we are continuing to be a good and reliable energy supplier whilst working with them on the decarbonisation of their grids. So this is where we're up to, as I said at the outset, we'll see the draft decision text shortly. Ministers are engaging in good faith and goodwill, working very, very closely with Ministers across the board, those Ministers with whom we're like-minded in the Umbrella group and the EU in particular. And those Ministers for which we have a different perspective, where we're trying to find common ground and a good way forward. Whether we succeed or not, of course, we'll know in the next 24 hours or so.

But we'll leave nothing on the field, we come to this COP determined to return Australia's place as a respected, constructive leader, as we should, as a country with a great economic potential as a renewable energy superpower, and as a constructive international citizen. That's what we came to do. That's what we're doing. That's what we did well into the night last night and what we'll be doing over the next 24 hours. As I said, I do have a busy schedule, but I am of course happy to take a few questions.

**JOURNALIST:** What's at stake for Australia here? What's would a low ambition outcome mean for Australia and Australians and the government?

**CHRIS BOWEN:** Well, I think, as I said, Australia's biggest economic potential is as a renewable energy superpower, and this transition, of phase out of fossil fuels is Australia's economic opportunity as renewable energy superpower. I mean, obviously, there's a lot at stake for the planet. And as this government always has done, we come at it as a good international citizen, we come at it with a clear-eyed view of this massive comparative advantage, economic potential that Australia has been gifted as a potential renewable energy superpower that requires domestic policies to engender it, requires an international environment to nurture it.

**JOURNALIST:** Do you have any confidence that Saudi Arabia will back in the consensus eventually that includes the wording of fossil fuels?

**CHRIS BOWEN:** We're not there yet. We're not there yet. But you know, we're still in the field. I will say the COP President, I mean he convened a Majlis yesterday which is the first time it's happened. I thought a very good faith effort to try and get everything on the table. Normally COP Presidents negotiate in silos, in groups. So you don't hear what each other saying. We've got to be on the table in front of each other yesterday, I thought that was a constructive way forward by the COP President. Obviously, I'm talking to him regularly and he's pretty

determined for a good and positive outcome, but obviously, it's over to him and we'll see the draft text shortly.

**JOURNALIST:** If your plans get up, will you need to change government policy?

**CHRIS BOWEN:** No, as I said, we are very committed, we've got our 82% renewable energy policy, which, you know, I announced the latest steps on last week, which has come up, you know, in these discussions, a lot of Climate Change and Energy Ministers very interested in the Capacity Investment Scheme announcement we made last week and interested in how it's going to work and interested in many countries have similar schemes, interested in its relevance to them. We announced our-- or released our projections and Climate Change Statement last week, of course, showing us by and large on track for our emissions reductions target, a bit more work to do but in the zone, in striking distance. We'll continue with that. And of course, we have a process underway which have already begun the setting of our 2035 targets in a normal way, under the Climate Change Act.

**JOURNALIST:** You mentioned climate financing, is this an open cheque?

**CHRIS BOWEN:** On what basis could that be true?

**JOURNALIST:** Well, you spoke about next year,

**CHRIS BOWEN:** Yeah. And it's been commonly understood that climate financing will be the key agenda for next year's COP. In the majlis, for context, a number of developing countries raised the fact that obviously they are in different circumstances to achieve their NDCs to be consistent with 1.5 and raised climate financing. I pointed out accurately and factually, that that's on the agenda for next year.

**JOURNALIST:** Does language, in line with phase out of phase down still exist in the text the president..

**CHRIS BOWEN:** We haven't seen the text yet.

**JOURNALIST:** INAUDIBLE

**CHRIS BOWEN:** Look, we've been engaging in very good faith. You know, I've referred to the Sunnylands Declaration in my discussions, I've referred to the PIF language in my discussions, you know, there are many, many ways to skin the cat. What we want to see is a strengthening of the international efforts on fossil fuels and mitigation. And we've, you know, we've outlined our position, our suggestion of phase out of unabated, fossil fuels in line with the G7, in line with all Umbrella Group members. I mean, in the Majlis yesterday, there were Ministers of Norway and United Kingdom, both Umbrella Group members, had very similar speeches, to me very similar contributions, they weren't speeches, we were asked to do it without notes, in the spirit of a proper engagement, very similar contributions to mine. There's a lot of goodwill, a lot

of goodwill around the COP, a lot of goodwill amongst the like-minded. The Umbrella Group, I chaired a meeting yesterday of Umbrella Group Ministers and EU Ministers together, comparing notes on our negotiating strategies, a lot of goodwill, a lot of alignment, a lot of determination to give the COP presidency the support, he needs to get the job done.

**JOURNALIST:** Bolivia reportedly accused Australia and several other countries of hypocrisy on this.

**CHRIS BOWEN:** It was a colourful contribution from Bolivia, as you would probably come to expect with all due respect to them. It was much in it, it was a long contribution, going through the history of colonialism and the north and the south. I didn't take particular offence because it was well in keeping with Bolivia's well-known views about North South relations. I did point out that, you know, every country has things at stake, we're a fossil fuel exporter, we've got things at stake, we also see the economic opportunities for our country, and we see the opportunity for us to work with other countries on their decarbonisation journey.

**JOURNALIST:** INAUDIBLE

**CHRIS BOWEN:** Oh, look, I don't really want to get into running commentary on Saudi Arabia in particular. OPEC's position is clear. I think I've seen some things in writing from them. The Saudi Minister in the Majlis made their position, it was blunt and clear. We have a different perspective. I had a meeting, a long meeting with the Saudi Minister yesterday where we compared notes on different perspectives. I think, you know, respectful conversation is the way to do it. I know that many countries-- not every country is yet on the same page. That's why we're here. We didn't all arrive, get off the plane with the same speaking notes. That's what these conferences are about, to draw out the issues and reach consensus. We've got time for one more.

**JOURNALIST:** There is language being used that there's a supermajority of countries with a different position to Saudis. Is that the way you would describe it?

**CHRIS BOWEN:** Well, COP doesn't really work on majorities or super majorities, but the President has a very hard job of steering the process through and he's doing it very well. I might leave it there. Thank you.

**JOURNALIST:** Renewables have been a big feature here. Have you had a lot of conversations about the Capacity Investment Scheme and what that might mean for Australia and meeting our target?

**CHRIS BOWEN:** It has come up in terms of interest from other Ministers who are aware of it, but don't follow the final details as much as we do. They've asked how it works, a lot of Ministers have said it has a lot of complementarity, a lot of overlap with their policies. A lot of people interested in Australia's journey to 82%, which is a pretty common target in that

ballpark for 2030 amongst like-minded countries. Yes, it has come up, there has been people interested in it and how it will work and frankly people are complimentary of the approach.

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