



## Actions Australia is taking

Australia is meeting our climate change targets through Direct Action policies that reduce emissions, increase productivity and improve the health of the environment.

At the core of these policies is the \$2.55 billion Emissions Reduction Fund and Safeguard Mechanism. This is complemented by the Renewable Energy Target, energy efficiency improvement, phasing out very potent synthetic greenhouse gases, and direct support for investment in low emissions technologies and practices.

**The Emissions Reduction Fund** is supporting Australian businesses, communities and landholders to take actions that reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions. The Fund provides positive incentives for Australians to reduce their emissions, reduce energy costs, or store carbon in the land.

Businesses, communities and landholders can propose new projects using emissions reduction methods covering all sectors of the economy—including activities like improving energy efficiency, capturing methane from landfills and storing carbon in forests and soils.

The Emissions Reduction Fund is achieving results. The first Emissions Reduction Fund auction in April 2015 saw 47 million tonnes of carbon abatement contracted at an average price per tonne of abatement of \$13.95. Through this auction, the Government committed \$660 million to projects that will reduce emissions in Australia. The emissions reductions from these projects will be delivered over the next 10 years, which means that reductions purchased in the first auction will contribute not just to Australia's 2020 target, but to its post-2020 targets as well.

The Emissions Reduction Fund is complemented by the Safeguard Mechanism which will ensure that emissions reductions purchased by the Government are not offset by significant rises in emissions elsewhere in the economy. The safeguard mechanism will start on 1 July 2016.

Photo: (top) River red gums in the Barmah State Forest (John Baker), (right) Tree planting (Dragi Markovic)



**The Renewable Energy Target** helps Australian households and businesses to install solar and other renewable energy technologies, transforming our electricity sector to cleaner and more diverse sources, and supporting growth and employment in the renewable energy sector.

The Renewable Energy Target allows sustainable growth in both small and large scale renewable technologies, delivering more than 23 per cent of Australia's electricity from renewable sources by 2020. Since the scheme began in 2001, \$10 billion has been invested in renewable energy in Australia, and the Government estimates that a further \$20 billion will be invested between now and 2020. The Renewable Energy Target will see a doubling of the existing amount of renewable energy in the next five years.

Through the Renewable Energy Target, the Government is continuing to support households wishing to install rooftop solar panels or solar hot water systems. So far 2.3 million household solar systems have been supported by the scheme—one of the highest percentage uptakes in the world.

**New commitments to reduce emissions**—Australia will be taking further actions to reduce emissions and deliver valuable co-benefits.

The National Energy Productivity Plan, including a target to improve Australia's energy productivity by 40 per cent between 2015 and 2030, will see improvements in how households and businesses use energy in their homes, offices, and industrial facilities. The Plan will include measures to make energy choices easier and will encourage improvements in the efficiency of appliances, equipment, buildings and transport. The Plan will be progressed in collaboration with the states and territories through the Council of Australian Governments' Energy Council.

The National Energy Productivity Plan will explore opportunities to improve the efficiency of vehicles. Australia will also continue to work through international fora, including the G20 Transportation Task Group, to identify further opportunities to achieve greater vehicle efficiency.

Australia will look to fast track a domestic phase out of hydrofluorocarbons and will work with other countries to reduce global use of these very potent greenhouse gases.

The Government will consider Australia's emissions reduction policies in detail in 2017–2018, in close consultation with businesses and the community.

**Removing barriers to new technologies**—Technology will underpin our low emissions transformation. The Government will prepare a Low Emissions Technology Roadmap that identifies opportunities and barriers to research, development and take-up of new and emerging technologies across Australia.

The roadmap will build on Australia's existing significant investments in low emissions science and technology. The Australian Government has committed over \$1 billion to around 230 renewable energy projects, with industry matching this investment with more than \$2 billion. In addition, through the CSIRO's Energy Flagship, the Government is supporting around 350 scientists to pursue a dedicated research program exploring new energy technologies for Australia. The Government's recently announced science and research priorities will encourage a wider range of technological options for addressing climate change.

These investments allow Australia to find new solutions for reducing emissions at home, while at the same time capturing the benefits of the emerging international demand for low emissions technologies like renewable energy, carbon capture and storage, and energy efficiency.

**Preparing for climate change and building resilience in Australia's environment**—Actions to reduce emissions go hand-in-hand with efforts to improve the health and resilience of Australia's unique landscapes, biodiversity and communities.

The Government's actions to build the resilience of our unique natural icons, including the Great Barrier Reef, will help them adapt to climate change. The Reef 2050 Plan sets out a long-term strategy and targets for managing pressures from invasive species, run-off and development, while the \$140 million Reef Trust is supporting a wide range of on-the-ground projects.

Through the Green Army and National Landcare Programme, the Government supports local projects to build the resilience of our environment. The 20 Million Trees Programme is storing carbon in forests while also improving the connectivity and condition of native vegetation that supports native species.

**Find out more**—You can learn more about the Government's actions to reduce emissions and improve the resilience of Australia's environment at [www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au).

## Acting to phase out hydrofluorocarbons

Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are extremely potent greenhouse gases commonly used in air conditioners and refrigeration units. In many cases, HFCs were introduced to replace chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other substances that were damaging the ozone layer.

HFCs can be several thousands of times more potent as greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide, so action to phase down their use in Australia and overseas can have significant benefits for the climate.

Australia will show international leadership and encourage all countries to agree to a global HFC phase-down under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Australia will look to fast track work to reduce domestic HFC emissions by 85 per cent by 2036, in-line with the most ambitious phase-down proposals under the Montreal Protocol.

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