



AUSTRALIAN  
COUNCIL  
FOR  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

## **Setting Australia's post-2020 target for greenhouse gas emissions**

**ACFID submission to the Prime Minister's UNFCCC Taskforce in response to the Issues Paper**

April 2015

## **1. About ACFID**

The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) unites Australia's non-government aid and international development organisations to strengthen their collective impact against poverty. Our vision is of a world where gross inequality within societies and between nations is reversed and extreme poverty is eradicated.

Founded in 1965, ACFID currently has 135 members and 13 affiliates operating in more than 100 developing countries. The total revenue raised by ACFID's membership from all sources amounts to \$1.3 billion (2012/13), \$719 million of which is raised from over 1.9 million Australians (2012/13). ACFID's members range between large Australian multi-sectoral organisations that are linked to international federations of NGOs, to agencies with specialised thematic expertise and smaller community based groups, with a mix of secular and faith based organisations.

ACFID has a Climate Change Working Group which brings together around 15 of its member agencies working on climate change and development. A full list of ACFID's current members and affiliates can be found in Annex A.

## **2. Executive summary**

ACFID welcomes the opportunity to submit to the Prime Minister's UNFCCC Taskforce regarding Australia's post-2020 target for greenhouse gas emissions. We stress the need for strong global action on climate change to safeguard future economic, environmental and social prospects, and to protect development gains, with Australia fairly playing its role.

As outlined in this submission, Australia must not only implement fair and effective policies to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions, but must also encourage ambitious and concerted international action on climate change, and support climate change adaptation and mitigation in developing countries which will be hardest hit by the impact of climate change, particularly those with limited resources to respond.

ACFID recommends that with due consideration to climate science, the needs of Australia, the centrality of climate change action to reducing poverty and promoting development, Australia's position as a high income and high emitter country, and our international standing, the Australian Government should:

1. Set a post-2020 target for Australia's domestic emissions of at least 40% below 2000 levels by 2025 and at least 60% by 2030.
2. Make a clear commitment to achieving net zero emissions by at least mid-century.
3. Building on the G20 commitment originally made in Pittsburgh in 2009, commit to completely phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. Targeted policies will be needed to ensure the removal of subsidies does not adversely affect low income earners.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As recommended by the C20 2014: <http://www.c20.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/c20-Climate-and-sustainability-2014.pdf>

4. Re-commit to the current Renewable Energy Target to encourage investment in renewable energy sources in Australia.
5. Proactively support a strong and effective global climate change agreement in 2015 with legally binding commitments. This should include adequate support for developing countries.
6. With regards to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promote efforts to ensure that:
  - 6.1 Climate change is maintained as a stand-alone goal with specific and measurable targets and indicators;
  - 6.2 Principles of environmental sustainability continue to be integrated across all other goals;
  - 6.3 The SDGs set the scene for a strong climate change agreement through the UNFCCC.
7. Contribute to global climate finance by:
  - 7.1 Scaling up Australia's current contribution to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to reach a fair share of the international goal to provide \$100 billion in climate finance by 2020;
  - 7.2 Continuing to provide assistance at the bilateral level and to support the development of new sources of finance;
  - 7.3 Ensuring that climate finance is new and additional to Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA), to avoid the diversion of funds for delivering on other aspects of the SDGs and Australia's development policy.
8. Develop and implement a climate change policy for Australia's aid and development program to ensure climate change is integrated across other sectoral priorities as well as providing dedicated assistance to people in poor countries to prepare for, and adapt to, the impacts of climate change and to focus on low-carbon development solutions.

### **3. Setting Australia's post-2020 target**

ACFID emphasises that setting a fair and effective post-2020 target, and implementing other policy proposals to support effective action on climate change, is squarely in Australia's own interests. As noted by the Climate Change Authority, as a comparatively hot and dry country, Australia is highly exposed to the adverse impacts of climate change. Increasing average temperatures and decreasing average rainfall – coupled with more frequent and severe extreme weather events – pose a direct threat to the quality of life and livelihoods of Australians.<sup>2</sup>

As the peak body for aid and development NGOs, ACFID is also acutely aware that global action on climate change is crucial to protecting development gains, reducing poverty and inequality, and ensuring the prosperity and stability of our region and beyond. This also aligns with Australia's own moral, security and economic interests.

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<sup>2</sup> Climate Change Authority, 2015, Australia's Future Emissions Reduction Targets – Special Review Draft Report: <http://climatechangeauthority.gov.au/special-review/first-draft-report>

Climate change presents perhaps the single greatest threat to poverty reduction and development today. Small island developing states and other developing countries, many of which are in Australia's region, will be the hardest hit by the impacts of global warming given their dependence on natural resources for food, shelter and livelihoods and their vulnerability to environmental risks such as cyclones, floods and pollution. Developing countries are already feeling the effects of global warming including loss of life, infrastructure and industry from cyclones in the Pacific, reduced crop productivity and increased food insecurity in Southeast Asia, water shortages on the African continent and increased rates of water and vector borne diseases such as cholera and malaria.<sup>3</sup>

The World Bank has mapped the climate change impacts already being felt in the developing world and has predicted that they will worsen unless action is taken to limit warming.<sup>4</sup> The Climate Change Authority warns that temperature increases beyond 2°C (above pre-industrial levels) would see progressively more serious climate impacts, with more extreme weather events and associated human deaths, species extinction and risks to global and regional food security. The combination of rising sea levels and more frequent weather could contribute to large scale migration of populations in affected regions and increased risk of insecurity and conflict in fragile states.<sup>5</sup> A study by the Asian Development Bank estimates that without strong global action on climate change, the economic loss to the Pacific alone could range from 2.9 to 12.7 per cent of annual GDP by the year 2100, including adverse impacts on crop yield, fisheries, human health and tourism.<sup>6</sup>

As a country situated in a region that is significantly exposed to the impacts of climate change, Australia should therefore set an effective bar for post-2020 emissions reduction targets, to encourage other countries to do likewise. Global efforts today are not consistent with the emission reductions needed to limit global mean temperature rise to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, let alone the 1.5°C limit that many developing countries continue to seek in order to better protect the world's most vulnerable communities.

Australia must also set an effective bar in recognition that we are part of the problem. The recent report by the Climate Change Authority emphasised that Australia has no grounds to argue that it should have lower targets than other countries as part of a new global climate agreement. The report found that while Australia is a small emitter in global terms (1.3 per cent), it is still the 13<sup>th</sup> largest emitter in the world. Australia also has only 0.3 per cent of the world's population, yet on a per capita basis the latest data shows Australia's emissions are the highest of all developed countries.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, Australia should take effective action on climate change in the interests of its public diplomacy and international standing, particularly within the Asia Pacific region. In the last two years, Australia has been a highly visible player on the international stage as President of the G20, and has made effective use of a coveted seat at the United Nations Security Council.

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<sup>3</sup> World Bank, 2013, *Turn down the heat: climate extremes, regional impacts, and the case for resilience*; IPPC, 2014, *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Climate Change Authority, 2015, Australia's Future Emissions Reduction Targets – Special Review Draft Report (page 6).

<sup>6</sup> Asian Development Bank, 2013, *Economics of Climate Change in the Pacific*.

<sup>7</sup> Climate Change Authority, 2015, Australia's Future Emissions Reduction Targets – Special Review Draft Report.

However, Australia is now punching well below its weight in terms of our contribution to the world's shared problems – particularly given recent significant cuts to our aid and development budget.

Countries have recently questioned the creditability of Australia's climate change targets and the Government's direct action policy to pay polluters to reduce emissions. Developing countries, in particular, are calling upon Australia to show leadership as a wealthy and high-emitting country by bringing forward an ambitious post-2020 target and promoting efforts in 2015 for an international agreement with legally binding commitments and the adequate provision of support for developing countries.

The Australian Government should:

- 1. Set a post-2020 target for Australia's domestic emissions of at least 40% below 2000 levels by 2025 and at least 60% by 2030.**
  - 2. Make a clear commitment to achieving net zero emissions by at least mid-century.**
- 4. Other policy proposals to support effective Australian action on climate change**

ACFID emphasises the need for Australia to have a strong climate change policy framework and initiatives to ensure it can meet its post-2020 emissions reduction target, and to monitor and report on progress towards it. As the peak body for Australian aid and development NGOs, we also emphasise the need for Australia to take action on climate change through its aid and development program, as well as through domestic policies and international mechanisms.

#### Renewable energy

It is vital that economic growth is pursued in a climate compatible and sustainable way. It is clear that growth based on fossil fuels is already presenting human and economic costs and will continue to do so. Australia (along with other countries) continues to facilitate, fund and encourage the expanded use of fossil fuels, undermining efforts to tackle climate change. It is estimated that to keep global warming below 2°C, between 60-80 per cent of coal, oil and gas reserves are 'unburnable' and need to be left in the ground.<sup>8</sup> It is only by investing in efficient and renewable energy at home and with its developing country neighbours that Australia can help to ensure long-term prosperity and stability for the region.

The Australian Government should:

- 3. Build on the G20 commitment originally made in Pittsburgh in 2009, commit to completely phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. Targeted policies will be needed to ensure the removal of subsidies does not adversely affect low income earners.<sup>9</sup>**

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<sup>8</sup> Carbon Tracker Initiative, 2013: Unburnable carbon 2013: Wasted capital and stranded assets, <http://carbontracker.live.kiln.it/Unburnable-Carbon-2-Web-Version.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> As recommended by the C20 2014.

**4. Re-commit to the current Renewable Energy Target to encourage investment in renewable energy sources in Australia.**

International agreements

2015 is an important and opportune time for bold action on climate change and sustainable development. Australia has a responsibility to not only adopt ambitious policies to reduce its domestic emissions, but also to contribute to achieving a robust international agreement on climate action. The 2015 climate agreement is an important first step in committing to and building upon this international collaboration, and to supporting developing countries to pursue sustainable and climate compatible development.

In addition to 2015 climate agreement through the UNFCCC, world leaders will meet at UNGA in September to agree on a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to replace the Millennium Development Goals, which are set to expire at the end of 2015. The SDGs seek to integrate environmental sustainability across all aspects of development and speak directly to the importance of action on climate change to safeguard development progress.<sup>10</sup>

As negotiations continue over coming months, it is crucial that climate change is maintained as both a stand-alone goal, with specific and measurable targets and indicators, and that the principles of environmental sustainability continue to be mainstreamed across all aspects of the SDGs.

The Australian Government should:

- 5. Proactively support a strong and effective global climate change agreement in 2015 with legally binding commitments. This should include adequate support for developing countries.**
- 6. With regards to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), promote efforts to ensure that:**
  - 6.1 Climate change is maintained as a stand-alone goal with specific and measureable targets and indicators;**
  - 6.2 Principles of environmental sustainability continue to be integrated across all other goals;**
  - 6.3 The SDGs set the scene for a strong climate change agreement through the UNFCCC.**

Climate finance

Climate finance for developing countries is central to combatting climate change, building resilience and promoting sustainable growth and development. As the Climate Change Authority notes, some developing countries will need help (and time) to reduce their emissions and grow their economies in less emission-intensive ways. Climate finance, technology cooperation and

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<sup>10</sup> See the Open Working Group proposal for Sustainable Development Goals, available online: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

capacity building programs exist to help poorer countries onto a cleaner development path so that they too can contribute to the global emissions reduction task.<sup>11</sup>

ACFID welcomed Australia's contribution of \$200 million over four years to the Green Climate Fund (GCF).<sup>12</sup> The GCF is the first multilateral fund solely dedicated to fund mitigation and adaptation activities in developing countries and also the largest climate fund to date. However, ACFID emphasises that Australia's contribution to the GCF should be scaled up to ensure we are contributing our fair share to the international goal to provide \$100 billion a year by 2020. Such funding must be new and additional to Australia's Official Development Assistance, to avoid the diversion of funds for delivering on other aspects of the SDGs and Australia's development policy. This is particularly pertinent in the wake of large funding cuts to Australia's aid budget.

Moreover, Australia's contribution to the GCF should only be considered as one component of Australia's contribution to international climate finance. Finance and other resources should continue to be provided to developing countries through bilateral assistance. Climate finance also needs to be seen as opportunity to explore new forms of finance. There is, for example, potential for official climate finance from developed countries to catalyse and shift private investment, and in this way it is an opportunity to engage the private sector and promote the expansion and export opportunities of sustainable sectors.

The Australian Government should:

**7. Contribute to global climate finance by:**

- 7.1 Scaling up Australia's current contribution to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to reach a fair share of the international goal to provide \$100 billion in climate finance by 2020;**
- 7.2 Continuing to provide assistance at a bilateral level and to support the development of new sources of finance;**
- 7.3 Ensuring that climate finance is new and additional to Australia's Official Development Assistance (ODA), to avoid the diversion of funds for delivering on other aspects of the SDGs and Australia's development policy.**

Australia's aid and development policy

The Government's aid and development policy, released in June 2014, does not prioritise action on climate change.<sup>13</sup> The policy appropriately has a focus on building resilience in the face of humanitarian disasters and while this is vital, Australia's aid and development program must also include measures to adapt to slow-onset impacts of climate change.

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<sup>11</sup> Climate Change Authority, 2015, Australia's Future Emissions Reduction Targets – Special Review Draft Report, page 9

<sup>12</sup> ACFID Media Release, 10 December 2014, "A step in the right direction", available online: <http://www.acfid.asn.au/media/media-releases/a-step-in-the-right-direction>

<sup>13</sup> DFAT, 2014, Australian aid: promoting prosperity, reducing poverty, enhancing stability, Available online: <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/australian-aid-promoting-prosperity-reducing-poverty-enhancing-stability.aspx>

ACFID emphasises that climate change should be integrated across Australia's aid and development program, in addition to providing dedicated assistance to people in poor countries to prepare for, and adapt to, the impacts of climate change and to focus on low-carbon development solutions. Australia should also invest in research, development and deployment of new technologies particularly relating to adaptation, mitigation and food security. In doing so, the Government's approach would be in line with the spirit of the SDGs and would ensure our aid program contributes to effective global action on climate change.

The Australian Government should:

- 8. Develop and implement a climate change policy for Australia's aid and development program to ensure climate change is integrated across other sectoral priorities as well as providing dedicated assistance for people in poor countries to prepare for, and adapt to, the impacts of climate change and to focus on low-carbon development solutions.**

## Annex A: ACFID Members

### Full Members:

- 40K Foundation Australia
- ACC International Relief
- Act for Peace - NCCA
- ActionAid Australia
- ADRA Australia
- Afghan Australian Development Organisation
- Anglican Aid
- Anglican Board of Mission - Australia Limited
- Anglican Overseas Aid
- Anglican Relief and Development Fund Australia
- Asia Pacific Journalism Centre
- Asian Aid Organisation
- Assisi Aid Projects
- Australasian Society for HIV Medicine
- Australia for UNHCR
- Australia Hope International Inc.
- Australian Business Volunteers
- Australian Cranio-Maxillo Facial Foundation
- Australian Doctors for Africa
- Australian Doctors International
- Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations
- Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific
- Australian Himalayan Foundation
- Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League
- Australian Lutheran World Service
- Australian Marist Solidarity Ltd
- Australian Medical Aid Foundation
- Australian Mercy
- Australian Red Cross
- Australian Respiratory Council
- Australian Volunteers International
- Beyond the Orphanage
- Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia)
- Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation
- Bright Futures Child Aid and Development Fund (Australia)
- Burnet Institute
- Business for Millennium Development
- CARE Australia
- Caritas Australia
- CBM Australia
- ChildFund Australia
- CLAN (Caring and Living as Neighbours)
- Credit Union Foundation Australia

- Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Overseas Aid Fund
- Diaspora Action Australia
- Diplomacy Training Program
- Door of Hope Australia Inc.
- Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia)
- EDO NSW
- Engineers without Borders
- Every Home Global Concern
- Fairtrade Australia New Zealand\*
- Family Planning New South Wales
- Food Water Shelter
- Foresight (Overseas Aid and Prevention of Blindness)
- Fred Hollows Foundation, The
- Global Development Group
- Global Mission Partners
- Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
- GraceWorks Myanmar
- Grameen Foundation Australia
- Habitat for Humanity Australia
- Hagar Australia
- HealthServe Australia
- Hope Global
- Hunger Project Australia, The
- International Children's Care (Australia)
- International Christian Aid and Relief Enterprises
- International Detention Coalition
- International Needs Australia
- International Nepal Fellowship (Aust) Ltd
- International RiverFoundation
- International Women's Development Agency
- Interplast Australia & New Zealand
- Islamic Relief Australia
- Kokoda Track Foundation
- Kyeema Foundation
- Lasallian Foundation
- Leprosy Mission Australia, The
- Live & Learn Environmental Education
- Mahboba's Promise Australia
- Marie Stopes International Australia
- Marist Mission Centre\*
- Marsh Foundation
- Mary MacKillop International
- Mary Ward International Australia\*
- Mercy Works Ltd.
- Mission World Aid Inc.
- Motivation Australia
- MSC Mission Office
- Nusa Tenggara Association Inc.

- Oaktree Foundation
- Openaid 1000 Villages
- Opportunity International Australia
- Oro Community Development Project Inc.
- Oxfam Australia
- Palmera Projects
- Partners in Aid
- Partners Relief and Development Australia
- People with Disability Australia
- PLAN International Australia
- Project Vietnam
- Quaker Service Australia
- RedR Australia
- Reledev Australia
- RESULTS International (Australia)
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children
- Salesian Missions
- Salvation Army (NSW Property Trust)
- Save the Children Australia
- Service Fellowship International Inc.
- Scarlet Alliance: Australian Sex Workers Association
- School for Life Foundation\*
- SeeBeyondBorders
- Sight For All
- SIMaid
- So They Can
- Sport Matters
- Surf Aid International
- Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation Australia\*
- TEAR Australia
- Transform Aid International
- Transparency International Australia
- UNICEF Australia
- Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA
- UnitingWorld
- University of Cape Town Australian Trust
- Volunteers in Community Engagement (VOICE)
- WaterAid Australia
- Women for Women in Africa
- World Education Australia
- World Vision Australia
- WWF-Australia

### **Affiliate Members:**

- Australian National University – School of Archaeology and Anthropology, College of Arts and Social Sciences
- Deakin University – Alfred Deakin Research Institute
- La Trobe University – Institute of Human Security and Social Change
- Murdoch University – School of Management and Governance
- Refugee Council of Australia
- RMIT – Global Cities Research Institute
- University of Melbourne – School of Social and Political Sciences
- University of Queensland – Institute for Social Science Research
- University of Sydney – Office of Global Engagement\*\*
- University of the Sunshine Coast – International Projects Group
- University of Technology, Sydney – Institute for Sustainable Futures\*\*
- Vision 2020
- University of Western Australia – School of Social Sciences\*\*

\* Denotes Interim Full Member

\*\* Denotes Interim Affiliate Member