



# CROW Newsletter

Making a noise about climate change

November, 2021

## Why should we worry?

2030 a bridge too near



Scott Morrison, Barnaby Joyce and Lachlan Murdoch in 2050 (Image: Private Media)

(From Bernard Keane in Crikey)  
There's a reason why 2050 is such an attractive target for the Morrison government's climate plans: none of them will be around to be held accountable. Scott Morrison will be 82 in 2050, and likely long gone from politics. Barnaby Joyce will be 83.

Those that survive will be enjoying comfortable retirements, perhaps funded by the shareholders of the mining and fossil fuel companies whose boards they may join after public life is over. They'll be safe from any electoral retribution as Australia succumbs to bushfires, droughts and ever more extreme weather driven by the accelerating global warming they helped enable.

Oh, the third oldie is 79 year old Lachlan Murdoch, still waiting for 119 year old Rupert to hand over the reins of News Corp.

## Note from Joe McGirr about the Net Zero Wagga Webinar

The recording of the webinar is now available online at <https://joemcgirr.com.au/webinar-net-zero>

Should you have any further feedback, please send this through to [waggawagga@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:waggawagga@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

## COP 26

### How did Ozzie perform oy, oy, oy.

- Multiple investigations indicate Australia is significantly underreporting its emissions, as COP26 organisers ramp up pressure on the nation to strengthen its 2030 emissions target.
- **Australia is among** of a host of countries systematically underreporting emissions to the UN, including the removal of substantial emissions from megafires fanned by climate change ([The Washington Post](#));
- **Separate analysis** of satellite imagery of land clearing indicates Australia is also probably understating emissions from deforestation ([The Guardian](#));
- **Resources Minister Keith Pitt** made international headlines for his promise that Australia will continue exporting coal "for decades to come" ([France 24](#));
- **Analysis by Global Witness** finds that "there are more delegates at COP26 associated with the fossil fuel industry than from any single country" ([BBC](#));
- **COP26 organisers** are working out a plan to pressure countries like Australia that have not strengthened their 2030 targets at the summit to do so in 2022 ([The Guardian](#));
- In the [Climate Change Performance Index](#) Australia **was down four places on greenhouse gas index (to 54 out of 60) and was the only one to score zero on policy**

- Australia refused to join 80 countries in signing a pledge to reduce **methane emissions** ([The conversation](#))
- Australia has been named the “colossal fossil” of the Glasgow climate talks for its “appalling performance” at the summit ([The Guardian](#))

## So what did COP26 achieve?

(If you are keen you can read the full agreement here. The dot points below come from various sources.)

- **Forests:** 141 countries commit to working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation
- Forty countries agreed to phase out **coal use**. The full conference agreed only to phase **down** coal.
- Urges developed countries to at least double their collective provision of **climate finance** for adaptation to developing country Parties from 2019 levels by 2025
- *Requests* Parties to revisit and **strengthen the 2030 targets** in their nationally determined contributions (with annual revisions)
- Transition towards **low-emission energy systems**, including by rapidly scaling up the deployment of clean power generation and energy efficiency measures.
- Reduce by 2030 non-carbon dioxide greenhouse gas emissions, including **methane**

## And some analysis

- **Backers** of the agreement said it would keep the goal of limiting global heating to 1.5C, within reach.
- The pledges fell well short of those required to limit temperatures to 1.5C, [according to scientific advice](#).
- **António Guterres:** “Our fragile planet is hanging by a thread. We are still knocking on the door of climate catastrophe. It is time to go into emergency mode”.
- **Jennifer Morgan,** (Greenpeace): “It’s meek, it’s weak and the 1.5C goal is only just alive, but a signal has been sent that the era of coal is ending. And that matters.”
- **Mary Robinson** (The Elders group of leaders): “Leaders have extended by a year this window of opportunity to avert the worst of the climate crisis. The world urgently needs them to step up more decisively next year.”
- **Tina Stege** (Marshall Islands, representing the High Ambition Coalition) of developed and developing countries, said: “This package is not perfect. The coal change and a weak outcome on loss and damage are blows. But it is real progress and elements of [it] are a lifeline for my country.
- **Lia Nicholson,** (Alliance of Small Island States) : “We are extremely disappointed and we will express our grievance in due course.”
- **Matt Canavan:** “It’s been a complete flop”

## POLITICS AND POLICIES

### [Dodgy modelling for a do-nothing plan](#)

Modelling of the Morrison government’s strategy to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 shows its “technology not taxes” plan will leave the nation relying on offsets and unknown technology breakthroughs, but leave the gas sector to grow.

The 100-page report reveals a swathe of assumptions made in the modelling to lend the plan credibility, which left some analysts puzzled. Under a catchphrase “The Australian Way”, prime minister Scott Morrison [released the long-term emissions reduction strategy](#) last month after confirming the government would adopt a net zero target by 2050.

That plan included no new policies, and instead relied on voluntary actions and government backing of technology to cut emissions. But the [modelling report](#) shows the government’s technology plan falls 215Mt short of reaching only an 85% reduction by 2050. Australia’s current annual emissions are at 494.2m tonnes.

## [A case of Carbon Price regret – economists say we need it back](#)

Eight in ten of Australia's leading economists back action to cut Australia's carbon emissions to net-zero. Almost nine in ten want it done by a carbon tax or a carbon price – mechanisms that were explicitly rejected at the 2013 election.

The panel of 58 top Australian economists selected by the Economic Society of Australia wants the carbon price restored to the public agenda even though it was rejected seven years ago, some saying Australia's goods and services tax was rebuffed in 1993 and then restored to the public agenda seven years later.

Among those surveyed are former heads of government departments and agencies, former International Monetary Fund and OECD officials and a former and current member of the Reserve Bank board.

## [Liberal-Labor-Greens climate alliance](#)

Three state and territory governments have reached a self-described "historic" cross-party agreement to help each other work towards reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions. The Coalition and Liberal Party governments in New South Wales and [South Australia](#) and the ACT's Labor-Greens administration said the collaboration – known as the net zero emissions policy forum - would help sub-national jurisdictions address the practical challenges of achieving net zero.

The announcement follows widespread criticism of the Morrison government for releasing a net zero plan that contained [no new policies](#) to rapidly cut greenhouse gas emissions, as scientists say is necessary. It instead relies on unspecified technology breakthroughs, global trends, and carbon offsets for more than a third of the abatement task.

The states and territories involved hope other sub-national governments around the world will join the group, which will share policies and resources and work together to speed up the transition.

## **As Australia's fossil fuel government snaps at everyone's heels at COP26, suddenly this:**

The world's two biggest polluters, China and the US, have committed to redouble their efforts to fight climate change this decade, leaving Australia ever more isolated on the world stage as a 'climate laggard'.

The Climate Council's Dr Simon Bradshaw says:

"This is a big deal. One of the big fears going into Glasgow is China and the US would be at loggerheads, but in fact what this statement says is they will collaborate, despite their differences. The focus on accelerating action this decade – in the 2020s – is significant. That's what we have to do to keep 1.5°C alive, and that's the memo the Australian Government has missed.

"Right now Australia is being left in the dust as other countries race to embrace renewable energy. The cost of inaction on climate is not just Australia's international standing, but also the economic cost of not leading the race on renewables."

## [Dubbo becomes first official NSW Renewable Energy Zone](#)

The NSW government has officially established Australia's first dedicated Renewable Energy Zone, making a formal declaration of the Central-West Orana zone that will host at least 3GW of solar, wind and storage.

The new zone, centred around the regional hub of Dubbo, is the first of at least five REZs to be created in NSW as part of its infrastructure plan to replace its rapidly ageing fleet of coal fired power stations.

## South Australia reaps benefits of world leading renewable power

South Australia's world leading green energy transition to a grid dominated by wind and solar has delivered the lowest wholesale prices in the country, slashed emissions, and presents no concerns on the issue of reliability, according to the latest annual assessment by the market operator.

Wind and solar, the report confirms, has delivered a world leading share of 62 per cent of local generation in the past 12 months, wholesale sales were the lowest on the mainland at an average of \$48/MWh, and grid emissions fell to a record low.

The achievements have been celebrated by the Liberal state government who, against many expectations, has thrown its support behind the switch to renewables, aiming for "net 100 per cent" renewables by 2030 and 500 per cent renewables by 2050 as it looks to low cost wind and solar to drive green hydrogen and a green industrial revolution.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **Cleaning up Newcastle's greenhouse gas emissions in ammonia production**

Orica's plant on Newcastle's Kooragang Island manufactures vast quantities of ammonium nitrate to make explosives for the Hunter Valley's coal mining industry.

Each year the plant's chemical process to make nitric acid generates about 1,900 tonnes of the potent nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), a greenhouse gas 300 times stronger than carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). Orica says its new emissions reduction technology will reduce nitrous oxide emissions by 92 per cent.

"Basically at the end of our [nitric acid] plant we install this catalyst which turns the nitrous oxide that we generate from our manufacturing process into nitrogen and water,"

Paul Hastie says the new technology will reduce the plant's overall emissions by 48 per cent. The new equipment is jointly funded by the NSW and Federal Governments

### Cute Yewt could be the start of Australia's EV industry – ACE EV



An Australian start up is offering a range of four electric vehicles for delivery in 2022. They range from this ute at about \$30,000 to a small delivery van at \$60,000 and include a small urban runabout.

The EVs are aimed mainly at the Asian market, where they will be delivered in a ready to assemble pack

### OK, I give up. You can write your own headline.



A company based in Canada has created the world's very first plane that's made mostly from hemp and powered by cannabis oil, giving completely new meaning to the term "sky high".

Designed and built by the weed company Hempearth the plane is claimed to be much stronger, lighter, and much more environmentally friendly than normal planes.

Almost the entire plane is made from composite hemp fibers that are said to be 10 times stronger than steel, and this includes not only the chassis, but also everything inside of the plane including the seats, walls, and cushions

## More from the Carbon Capture and Storage saga

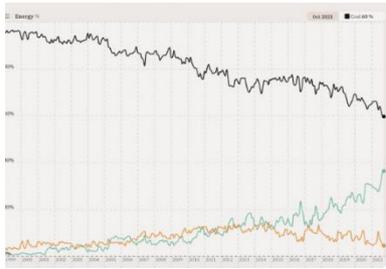
The world's largest carbon capture and storage system dedicated to emissions reduction at Chevron's Gorgon LNG plant off the West Australian coast has failed to bury 9.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in its first five years of operation.

In response to the shortfall, Chevron on Thursday announced it would buy 5.23 million tonnes of carbon offsets and invest \$40 million in lower carbon projects in WA.

Chevron has struggled to consistently bury CO<sub>2</sub> under Barrow Island since Gorgon started production in 2016. *SUPPLIED*

At the recent record high spot price of Australian Carbon Credit Units of \$36.50 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>, the total cost of offsets and the lower carbon projects is about \$230 million.

## Graph of the month



In October coal power generation fell below 60% in the national grid for the first time.

The graph show the last 20 years.

Black is coal.

Blue is renewables.

Red is the gas-led recovery.+

The volume of coal exports in the June qtr 2021 fell to its lowest level since the September qtr 2013. From the peak volume of coal exports in the December qtr 2016, coal exports have fallen 15%