



**The Climate  
Reality Project**

**AUSTRALIA & PACIFIC**



# WHAT MUST THIS REGION COMMIT TO AT COP27?

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Climate change is an existential threat and time is running out. Urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support adaptation is crucial to the survival of many of our communities...

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Climate justice is about viewing the systemic causes and impacts of climate change from an ethical perspective. Climate justice reimagines the climate crisis...

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Climate finance refers to local, national, or transnational funding, which may be drawn from public, private, and alternative sources of financing. Climate finance is critical to addressing climate change...

**#ClimateReality2Egypt**

# WHY IS COP27 IMPORTANT?

The 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP27) to the United Nations is a crucial climate event at which countries are expected to provide additional support for adaptation and ramp up commitments to reduce emissions this decade. COP27 will be held in Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt from 7 – 18 November 2022.

In 2021, COP26 in Glasgow saw countries unite to work on climate action. COP26 was a significant advance from the Paris climate negotiations (COP21) in 2015, however all governments

recognised that their climate commitments still fell far short of holding the target of 1.5°C.<sup>1</sup>

In the Glasgow Pact all countries agreed to bring updated commitments to COP27 in Egypt, **so this COP is critical as the key mechanism that keeps countries moving forward to align their commitments with a 1.5°C future.** COP27 requires much stronger emission reduction targets and increased climate finance for both adaptation and loss and damage.

## KEY MESSAGES FOR POLICYMAKERS

1. Climate change is an existential threat and time is running out. Urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support adaptation is crucial to the survival of many of our communities.
2. Every fraction of a degree matters. To avoid catastrophic impacts, we must go harder and faster to hold heating to a maximum of 1.5°C. Developed economies, like Australia and New Zealand, must continue to strengthen their 2030 targets.
3. All developed economies should strengthen their funding to support emission reductions and adaptation in developing economies. The global target of committing at least USD\$100 billion per annum in climate finance must be delivered at the Egypt COP.
4. Developed economies should support new and additional commitments for a special 'loss and damages' fund that helps with payments to impacted communities. This is particularly important for the Pacific Island nations already facing grave impacts from climate change.
5. Governments of this region should join agreements that protect and restore forests and oceans. They should also join agreements that cut methane emissions, commit to no new fossil fuel developments, and support a just transition for regional communities.



Skye Hohmann / Alamy



Graham Jepson / Alamy



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## SIX WAYS TO ACT FOR CLIMATE ON THE ROAD TO AND DURING COP27

- 1 Learn about what this region must commit to at COP27 by reading our briefing paper.
- 2 Invite us to talk to your community - our Climate Reality Leaders are trained by Hon. Al Gore and ready to give presentations about COP27. Request a virtual presentation by clicking below.

REQUEST A PRESENTATION

- 3 Download and watch Hon. Al Gore's 10-minute *'Truth in 10'* slideshow and organise to give a presentation to your community.



- 4 Contact your local MP and tell them why you think COP27 is important:
  - a. Call or write to them using our key messages.
  - b. Organise with a group of friends or colleagues to request a meeting.

Find your MP's contact details: [here](#) for Australia and [here](#) for New Zealand.

- 5 Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper using our key messages.
- 6 Share and discuss our **#ClimateReality2Egypt** Toolkit with your community and networks, and please tag us in your social media posts!

 [climatereality.org.au](https://www.climatereality.org.au)

## OTHER RESOURCES TO HELP YOU #LeadOnClimate

Australian Conservation Foundation: *Connecting with your elected representative: effective MP meetings.* Read [here](#).<sup>2</sup>

Climate Council: *How to write an effective letter to the editor.* Read [here](#).<sup>3</sup>

Read Dr Rebecca Huntley's book: *'How to talk about climate change in a way that makes a difference'*. Available for purchase via [Booktopia](#).<sup>4</sup>

# TALKING POINTS FOR KEY MESSAGES

## TALKING POINT 1: URGENT ACTION NEEDED

**Climate change is an existential threat and time is running out. Urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support adaptation is crucial to the survival of many of our communities.**

Australia, New Zealand, and some Pacific nations should bring stronger Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) including emission reductions and adaptation plans to Egypt, and together urge the world to act for 1.5°C.

If we fail to act urgently, there will be catastrophic consequences for this entire region. Governments and businesses must act now to decarbonise their supply chains and introduce climate justice mechanisms to make up for past and future damage to people and the planet.

We have the solutions, and this is the moment when we must act as one. This is the crucial decade for action.

## TALKING POINT 2: STRENGTHEN 2030 TARGETS

**Every fraction of a degree matters. To avoid catastrophic impacts, we must go harder and faster to hold heating to a maximum of 1.5°C. Developed economies, like Australia and New Zealand, must continue to strengthen their 2030 targets.**

1.5°C is key to the survival of this entire region including vulnerable Pacific Islands and the ecosystems they depend on, such as coral reefs.

This year, Australia improved its 2030 emission target by committing to reduce emissions by 43% (from 2005 levels) by the end of the decade.<sup>5</sup> Previously it had committed to cutting emissions by 26–28% by 2030.

The new Australian Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, has said that this target is a floor, not a maximum. This was welcomed by leaders from the Pacific and by other nations. However, for Australia, a 2030 emissions reduction target of 74% compared to 2005 emissions levels and net zero by 2035 is consistent with the latest climate science.<sup>6</sup>

Australia's 'Nationally Determined Contribution' (NDC) should include state and territory government commitments. For instance, Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, representing two thirds of the Australian economy, have all committed to 2030 emission reductions of 50%.<sup>7</sup>

New Zealand has set a 50% NDC target by 2030, alongside 2025 targets of 100% renewable electricity generation and a carbon neutral public service. Questions remain on whether the NDC target will truly reduce emissions, particularly methane from agriculture. New Zealand plans to purchase international carbon offsets but this approach should not be a substitute for cutting emissions at the source.<sup>8</sup>

The remaining Pacific Islands Forum partners — including the United States, France, and China — also need to strengthen their 2030 commitments.



## TALKING POINT 3: ASSIST DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

All developed economies should strengthen their funding to support emission reductions and adaptation in developing economies. The global target of committing at least USD\$100 billion per annum in climate finance must be delivered at the Egypt COP.

Climate finance commitments are essential for enabling projects that reduce emissions and to help countries adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. At COP27 wealthy countries must make up the shortfall on — and increase — their commitment of USD\$100 billion per annum in climate finance to developing countries.

## TALKING POINT 4: COMMIT TO A 'LOSS AND DAMAGES' FUND

Developed economies should support new and additional commitments for a special 'loss and damages' fund that helps with payments to impacted communities. This is particularly important for the Pacific Island nations already facing grave impacts from climate change.

Tragically, some impacts from climate change are already locked in and

## TALKING POINT 5: ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENTS TO JOIN, SUPPORT AND COMMIT

Governments of this region should join agreements that protect and restore forests and oceans. They should join agreements that cut methane emissions, commit to no new fossil fuel developments, and support a just transition for regional communities.

At the Glasgow climate negotiations, several crucial agreements were

Australia played a key role in the inception of the United Nations Green Climate Fund however withdrew funding in 2019. Australia must now re-join with ambition and finance.

At the Egypt COP, developed economies including Australia, New Zealand, the United States and France should also provide support for emission reductions and adaptation throughout the African continent. All countries have diaspora communities of African heritage and should engage these communities in a special effort to support African needs.

vulnerable communities are already suffering damage.<sup>9</sup> Developed economies should support **new and additional funds** for a special loss and damage facility that helps with payments to vulnerable communities. This is particularly important for Pacific Island nations on the front line of climate change.

struck by willing countries to advance critical action on climate change solutions. These included agreements on forests, coal, oil, gas and methane. The Egypt COP is an opportunity to strengthen progress on these critical 'side agreements'.



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Silke von Brockhausen  
/ UNDP

# 'FORESTS, FISH AND FOSSIL FUELS'

## Forests and Land Use

145 countries struck an agreement to work collectively to “halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030”<sup>10</sup> including Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. At the Egypt COP all signatories need to report back on this crucial action. More needs to be done to reverse the loss of forests and woodlands in Australia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands.

## Fish and Oceans

The Blue Pacific is an ‘ocean continent’ made up of large ocean island states. Australia, New Zealand, the Americas, and East Asia are all washed by its waters and rely on the health of its ecosystems. The fisheries of the Pacific — whether for commercial or subsistence purposes — are a vital lifeline for communities. The coral reefs of the Pacific,

including the Great Barrier Reef, are treasure troves of biodiversity.

There is a strong case for a new global agreement on oceans. Protected areas need to be expanded and their resilience built. Fisheries and other uses of marine resource must be sustainable and where they have been damaged every effort should be made to improve their health and resilience.

## Fossil Fuels

At the Glasgow COP, a crucial side agreement, the Global Methane Pledge, was launched by the United States, the European Union and over 100 countries. It commits them to cutting methane emissions by at least 30% by 2030.<sup>11</sup> Australia was a notable absentee from this agreement.

Methane is over 80 times more powerful a climate pollutant than CO<sub>2</sub> but breaks down faster. Australia should join the methane agreement as a matter of urgency and move forward to rapidly cut methane emissions from both gas production and agriculture.

Agricultural emissions, particularly methane, make up the bulk of New Zealand’s emissions profile. Having signed on to the Methane Pledge, the country can accelerate existing innovations to improve farming practices.

It should also invest in research to develop more solutions to reduce methane emissions.

At COP26, over 40 countries and organisations declared their support

for the Global Coal to Clean Power Transition<sup>12</sup>, while 28 new members joined the 167-strong Powering Past Coal Alliance<sup>13</sup>. Australia did not join either of these.

Emissions from Australia’s exported coal (‘scope three’ emissions) are a major contributor to global heating. Key destination markets for Australian coal have now committed to achieving net zero emissions.

This has effectively set an ‘end date’ for Australian coal exports.<sup>14</sup> Australian governments must now support a just transition for regional communities as they make the inevitable transition away from coal mining to clean energy opportunities.

As the world’s third largest fossil fuel exporter,<sup>15</sup> Australia should work alongside New Zealand and other governments at COP27 to strengthen climate action that aligns oil and gas production with the Paris Agreement by joining the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance (BOGA).<sup>16</sup>



## CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS AND SOLUTIONS

This region is facing some of the most severe climate impacts internationally. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s *Working Group III Contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report* demonstrates that a 1.5°C future would be catastrophic for Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.<sup>17</sup>

People and ecosystems in Australia, New Zealand and over 25,000 islands in the Pacific face an existential threat from the impacts of climate change. Climate

impacts include intense bushfires, heatwaves, storms, cyclones, rising sea levels, reduced crop yields and the destruction of coral reefs. These are already causing loss of life and impacting people’s wellbeing.

This global crisis requires a global response of bold collective action and commitment to reverse our losses and replenish our common future.

Despite immense challenges, securing a safe climate presents an enormous economic opportunity.

Over the past two years, more than 100 countries have committed to achieving net-zero emissions.<sup>18</sup> This mega-trend is transforming the global economy and driving massive demand for clean energy technology. Countries like Australia — with vast, untapped, renewable energy resources — are well placed to supply the clean energy needs of nations switching to zero-emissions economies.

### CLIMATE CHANGE TRENDS IN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND THE BLUE PACIFIC



**TEMPERATURES HAVE RISEN**  
**1.1°C**

Globally, between ~1910 and 2020, and in Australia by 1.4°C<sup>19</sup>.



**EXTREMES ARE TRENDING UP**



Heat extremes are increasing, and cold extremes are decreasing.



**OCEANS ARE CHANGING**



Marine heatwaves and ocean acidity are increasing.



**SEA LEVELS ARE RISING**



Sea levels are rising faster here than in other parts of the world.



**EXTREME WEATHER**  
**+++**

Frequency, intensity, and duration of extreme weather is increasing, causing more floods, storms, fires, and droughts.



Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert / Alamy

## FIVE CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

- 1 Phase out all fossil fuels and ensure a just transition.** The International Energy Agency (IEA) has made it clear that there must be no **new coal, oil, or gas** projects if governments intend to make good on their net zero 2050 targets.<sup>20</sup>
- 2 100% renewable energy** (wind, solar and renewable hydrogen) to power our homes, cities, and industries will decarbonise our energy systems and cost less than the status quo.<sup>21</sup>
- 3 By electrifying all our energy** needs including industrial and transport sectors, we can curtail greenhouse gasses emitted from combustion fuels.
- 4 By improving energy efficiency** in our buildings, we can save wasted energy and cut emissions, while also reducing costs for energy users.<sup>22</sup>
- 5 Protecting and restoring terrestrial and marine ecosystems** will draw down greenhouse gasses from the atmosphere while ensuring their survival.



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“Today, I am calling on every leader to take immediate action that limits global warming to the Paris Agreement’s 1.5-degree Celsius threshold – the only threshold with any hope of staving off seismic and irreversible harm to our climate. We must keep the goal of 1.5 alive. It is not only critical for the survival of Pacific nations, it is imperative for the well-being of the global community and the economies that connect us.”

HON. JOSAI A V. BAINIMARAMA  
Prime Minister of Fiji<sup>23</sup>

# WHAT IS CLIMATE JUSTICE?

Climate justice is about viewing the systemic causes and impacts of climate change from an ethical perspective. Climate justice embraces human rights and examines historical responsibilities and their impacts.

Climate justice compels us to act on the challenges faced by people, communities, and ecologies most vulnerable to climate change. As a movement it embraces the belief that by working together, we can build a system that considers the rights and experiences of past, present, and future generations.

**“[Climate justice] insists on a shift from a discourse on greenhouse gases and melting ice caps into a civil rights movement with the people and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts at its heart”**

MARY ROBINSON  
First woman President of Ireland  
and Chair of The Elders’

The global average temperature has already heated to 1.1°C and is set to reach 1.5°C by 2030 — negatively impacting communities, ecosystems, and economies everywhere.<sup>24</sup> Often, the countries that have contributed the least to the causes of climate change are the same countries already experiencing its worst effects, including sea level rise, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events.

First Nations peoples have sustainably cared for the climate and environment for tens of thousands of years but are among the first to experience impacts of climate change to their way of living and culture.

“Despite contributing only 0.141% to global green house gas emissions,”<sup>25</sup> Pacific Island Countries bear the brunt of harm caused by global heating.

**The world’s highest emitters like Australia have a responsibility to urgently rectify the inherent injustice in this situation.**

There are steps to take now. Governments must commit to stronger 2030 targets and follow through with policies to match, including, no new coal, gas, and oil projects in their regions. They also must make good on their climate finance commitments and allocate additional finance for an international loss and damage mechanism.

## A JUST TRANSITION

The climate crisis presents an enormous economic opportunity to revitalise economies with clean technologies and millions of jobs,<sup>26</sup> however, high emitting industries will decline. Without adequate policy and financial mechanism in place to support workers in high emitting industries, regional hub face losing jobs and economic activity.

**We must leave no one behind in the energy transformation.**

In addition to the side agreements listed in our ‘key messages’ the Australian Government must join New Zealand and more than 18 other nations (including core coal producing countries) in signing the Just Transition Declaration at COP27 in Egypt.<sup>27</sup>



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# WHAT IS CLIMATE FINANCE?

Climate finance commitments are essential for enabling projects that reduce emissions and for helping countries adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

The **Copenhagen Accord in 2009** set a target of mobilising US\$100 billion a year by 2020 by developed countries for developing countries. In the Paris Agreement in 2015 this target was further reinforced, with a goal to raise the target after 2025.<sup>28</sup> This level of funding has not yet been reached and at the Glasgow Climate Conference all countries committed to urgently increase funding. Countries also agreed to negotiate a new Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (to replace the USD\$100billion per annum target), with a work program in place for negotiations up to 2024.<sup>29</sup>

**“Climate finance refers to local, national, or transnational funding, which may be drawn from public, private, and alternative sources of financing.**

**Climate finance is critical to addressing climate change because large-scale investments are required to significantly reduce emissions, notably in sectors that emit large quantities of greenhouse gases. Climate finance is equally important for adaptation, for which significant financial resources will be similarly required to allow societies and economies to adapt to the adverse effects and reduce the impacts of climate change”**

United Nations Environment Program, 2022<sup>30</sup>



## AT WHAT COST?

The **WWF’s Living Planet Index 2018** observes that nature underpins all economic activity, with “ecosystem services” such as clean air to breathe, healthy water to drink, and habitat for biodiversity worth an estimated US\$125 trillion annually.<sup>31</sup> For example, the Great Barrier Reef contributes US\$5.7 billion a year to the Australian economy and supports 69,000 jobs.<sup>32</sup>

If we don’t change course, up to one million known plant and animal species could disappear by mid-century.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, sea levels are rising - increasing the risk of flooding and tropical storms in coastal regions across the globe.

All our national leaders are aware of the choice between the extraordinary economic losses that will result from inaction versus the economic gains of action. What is needed now is action.

### International Investment

The International Energy Agency, in a landmark report in May 2021 laid out pathways to ‘net zero’ by 2050. It says, ‘to reach net zero emissions by 2050, annual clean energy investment worldwide will need to more than triple by 2030 to around \$4 trillion’.<sup>34</sup> This will create millions of new jobs, significantly lift global economic growth, and achieve universal access to electricity and clean cooking worldwide by the end of the decade.

The private financial sector is moving quickly. The ‘Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero’ announced at the Glasgow COP that over USD\$130 trillion of capital from over 450 financial firms across 45 countries committed to transforming the economy to net zero.<sup>35</sup>

However, far more can be done by governments and the private sector to ensure finance flows to climate solutions and not destruction. Individuals and households can also take action by ensuring our superannuation, banking, investments, insurance etc. are aligned with our climate concerns.

At COP26 in Glasgow, all countries accepted the science of climate change and while many new commitments were made, they remained well short of what is needed. Countries were requested to bring new 2030 targets and financial commitments to the next COP in Egypt in November 2022.

## Loss and damage

Emissions must be halved this decade to limit temperature increase to 1.5°C. So far, collective efforts to limit global heating are not enough to tackle the speed and scale of climate impacts, meaning that some losses and damages from climate change are inevitable.

Put simply, ‘loss and damage’ refers to climate impacts that exceed what people can adapt to, or when solutions exist but people don’t have the resources to access them. Major investments from governments and financial entities must be made to protect vulnerable

communities from loss and damage now and in the future.<sup>36</sup>

The Pacific Young Leader Alliance lists ‘loss and damage’ as a key priority for the region including the introduction of a dedicated funding mechanism to support the deployment of finance. Climate justice is also key in ensuring those responsible are held accountable.<sup>37</sup>



Silke von Brockhausen  
/ UNDP

## WHAT IS NEEDED?

In Egypt, developed economies need to achieve the USD\$100 billion per year promise of funding to support clean economies and emissions reduction and adaptation — and to start negotiations on scaling up stronger financial flows for climate solutions from 2025.

Australia played a key role in the inception of the the United Nations Green Climate Fund but withdrew funding in 2019.

Australia must now rejoin with ambition and funding.

The Australian Government should strongly increase funding of national, regional, and international climate action and policy.

The private sectors across Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific need to rapidly ramp up investment in activities that shift from polluting to clean economy activities.

**“COP27 needs to be an implementation COP, and we in the Pacific must not settle for anything less. We must demand all States to urgently turn their pledges and commitments into concrete actions”**

Henry Puna – Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, 2022<sup>38</sup>



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands on which we work, learn, and live: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples.

The Climate Reality Project - Australia & Pacific is committed to fostering an environment in which the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their fellow Australians is characterised by deep mutual respect, leading to positive change in our nation’s culture and capacity.



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