

Climate Change Authority says heavy lifting required on renewables to meet 43% emissions target by 2030

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2023 Annual Progress Report released today

The Climate Change Authority says the Australian Government is pursuing a broad and deep climate change policy agenda, but this has yet to translate into the emissions reductions needed.

The assessment is contained in the authority's [Annual Progress Report](#) released today to coincide with the government's Annual Climate Change Statement. The authority's advice and 42 recommendations, provided to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy on 27 October, are a key input for the government's statement.

The 2023 report states Australia's greenhouse gas emissions were 467 million tonnes in the year ending June 2023, an increase of four million tonnes. To achieve a 43% reduction in emissions by 2030 compared with 2005 levels, and net zero emissions by 2050, Australia will need to decarbonise at an average annual rate of 17 million tonnes.

"Our report found that Australia is not yet on track to meet its 2030 targets," said Brad Archer, CEO of the Climate Change Authority.

"We are tracking the highest priority measures that the government is pursuing towards achieving the 2030 target and supporting Australia becoming a prosperous, net zero economy. It's going to take time for these measures to take effect.

"Achieving the 82% renewable energy target is going to be crucial for Australia's ability to meet the 43% emissions reduction target. This will require some heavy lifting."

"Renewables have been rolling out at a fast rate, but we have to go even faster, all around Australia, to hit the 82% target," Mr Archer said.

"This will be challenging because of the sheer scale and pace of what needs to happen in the context of supply chain and workforce pressures. Communities are also raising concerns about the broader environmental impacts of renewable energy infrastructure in the vicinity of their homes and communities.

"The government has to navigate and address these concerns in a way that demonstrates to these communities how they, and Australia, will benefit in the long term."

Many of the authority's [42 recommendations](#) call on the Australian government and states and territories to work more cooperatively to achieve policy objectives to meet the legislated 2030 target. This includes the final recommendation which calls for a set of agreements with the state and territory governments for coordination and cooperation on climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience planning as part of the net zero transition.

“With 2030 only seven years away, we believe the time is right for a new commonwealth-state agreement process that would provide a framework for cooperation on the response to climate change, including where coordinated action is required in the national interest,” said Brad Archer, CEO of the Climate Change Authority.

“There is broad community support for strong action on climate change, but delivering the changes needed in the economy and in society to meet our emissions reductions targets are immense and urgent. These are the changes that will underpin a successful transition to a net zero economy and ensure Australia’s future prosperity and resilience.

“Governments hold the policy levers, including regulatory, fiscal, market-based and informational, to guide businesses and individuals to choices that support Australia’s climate change goals. Meeting federal, state and territory targets will require a national strategy, implemented locally. The necessary changes go beyond the reach of any government acting alone,” Mr Archer said.

Download the 2023 Annual Progress Report

The full Annual Progress Report can be viewed here: [PDF](#)

Media contact:

Patrick Southam, Reputation Edge
E: psoutham@reputationedge.com.au
M: 0419 415 998

Key facts in the 2023 Annual Progress Report

Overview

Australia emitted 467 million tonnes of CO₂ in the year ending June 2023, an increase of one per cent, or 4 million tonnes, over the previous year. Overall, this is 116 million tonnes more than is required to meet the 2030 emission target.

To achieve the 2030 target Australia will need to decarbonise at an average annual rate of 17 million tonnes

The slight increase in Australia's emissions during 2022–23 was driven by the ongoing increase in transport emissions following the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recovery of agricultural activity following drought conditions early in the current decade.

Emissions by sector

Electricity

- Electricity accounted for 152 million tonnes (around one-third of Australia's emissions) in 2022–23, which was a 3.6% reduction compared to the previous year. The strong uptake of renewable energy generation, and the withdrawal of significant fossil fuel generation capacity, is driving the reduction in electricity sector emissions.
- Australia is not on-track to meet the government's 2030 target of 82% renewable electricity. Renewables accounted for 32% of Australia's electricity generation in 2022. To meet the 82% renewables target electricity generation from solar and wind capacity in the national energy market needs to roughly double between now and June 2030.
- At least 3,612 km of new transmission infrastructure is needed by 2030 to support the additional renewable energy generation required to meet the 82% renewables generation target.
- The Australian Government has committed \$20 billion into the Rewiring the Nation policy to upgrade and expand Australia's transmission grid, of which \$12 billion was allocated in the May 2023 budget.

Industry and resources

- Emissions from mining and manufacturing were 185 million tonnes, an increase of less than one per cent. Around 40% of Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions are produced in these sectors.
- Around 138 million tonnes of these emissions are produced by around 215 large facilities that are covered by the Australian Government's recently reformed Safeguard Mechanism. Around 40% of Australia's annual greenhouse gas emissions are produced in these sectors.
- Fugitive emissions associated with coal and gas production alone produce 48 million tonnes of emissions in Australia

Transport

- Transport emissions were 98 million tonnes in 2022-23. Over half of those emissions came from light vehicles such as cars, utes and SUVs, and these emissions are growing.
- Australia imported over 1.2 million passenger vehicles in 2022-23, of which nearly 97,000 (7%) were electric vehicles, up from less than 1% in 2019. Electric vehicle imports as a proportion of all car imports have more than doubled every year since 2019.

Agriculture

- Agricultural emissions increased in 2022-23, from 79 to 82 million tonnes. This represents 18% of Australia's total emissions. Livestock is the biggest contributor to agricultural emissions, with cattle contributing over half and other livestock another quarter. Around 80% of emissions from agriculture are methane emissions.
- Most agricultural emissions are difficult for farmers to abate. Although new options are emerging, trends in agricultural emissions over the past decade have generally followed livestock numbers, which in turn track seasonal conditions. Emissions have been rising following the breaking of the drought in many areas in 2020.

Waste sector

- Greenhouse gas emissions from landfill, incineration and wastewater treatment have been relatively stable over the past decade. In 2022-23 they remained stable at 14 million tonnes.

Land use, land use change and forestry

- Australia's land sector removed more carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than it released, resulting in net negative emissions of 64 million tonnes. This is equivalent to removing 14% of Australia's national emissions.
- This reflects the long-term decline in land clearing and the influence of La Nina weather conditions.