



# The Climate Reality Project

## AUSTRALIA & PACIFIC

### WHAT DOES NET ZERO EMISSIONS MEAN AND WHY ARE 2030 AND 2050 IMPORTANT?

Atmospheric pollution from burning fossil fuels, methane leaks, deforestation and agriculture has driven up the thermometer 1.1°C on average. This is not only impacting on lives and livelihoods, but the very planetary systems we rely on. Currently we are not on track for 1.5°C but more than twice that. Decisive action is needed at the COP26 in Glasgow.

Every fraction of a degree matters to secure a livable climate. Greenhouse gas emissions must decline **50% by 2030** and **100% by 2050** if we are to keep temperature increases in range of 1.5°C. For developed nations such as Australia, the date may need to be earlier.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions alone is not sufficient either. 'Net zero' means firstly dramatically reducing emissions to as close to zero as possible and then absorbing emissions from the atmosphere, for example through planting trees.

Net zero is the only way to stop runaway climate change.

### WHO IS MOVING TO NET ZERO?

A number of countries have committed to net zero by 2050 or earlier. They include the UK, US, Germany, France, Spain, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal, Canada, New Zealand, Japan, Chile, Costa Rica, Sweden, Iceland, Austria and Finland. The micro-economies of Bhutan and Suriname are already carbon-negative, and the European Union recently enshrined the commitment in European Climate Law.

The Pacific Island Countries have made commitments and proposed legislation for net zero. However, all developed nations have an obligation to lead the way.

### WHERE IS THE 'RACE TO ZERO' UP TO?

- 61% of global greenhouse gas emissions are covered by countries' net zero commitments
- 68% of global GDP is covered by commitments
- 56% of the world's population is covered by commitments

While this coverage is encouraging, less than a fifth of targets meet key quality criteria set by the UN's 'Race to Zero' campaign which follow the four principles of Pledge, Plan, Proceed and Publish. Only 5% of countries have a robust plan to meet their net zero.



Australia's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) currently falls short of aligning with net zero or the 1.5°C target, representing an opportunity for Australia to take ambitious steps to increase its ambition going into COP26.