



POWERED BY THE PEOPLE: CLIMATE COUNCIL FIVE YEARS ON

Thank you for supporting the Climate Council.

The Climate Council is an independent, crowd-funded organisation providing authoritative, expert information on climate change impacts and solutions to the Australian public.

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The Climate Council: Five Years On

Five years ago, in September 2013, the Climate Council launched as an independent, not-for-profit organisation providing authoritative, accurate information on climate change to the Australian public. This was in response to public outcry at the disbanding of the Climate Commission by the Abbott Government. The Climate Council was launched with the help of more than 16,000 Founding Friends who chipped in more than \$1.1 million dollars in just over a week. The message was loud and clear: Australians demanded to know about climate change.

Five years on, the Climate Council has:

- › Become Australia's leading voice communicating on climate change.
- › Educated the public on the links between climate change and extreme weather.
- › Focused on local, tangible impacts and solutions.
- › Played a key role in shifting the public discourse forward from a debate about whether or not climate change is real to what we can do about it.
- › Elevated climate and energy policy to be a top-tier political issue in Australia.
- › Called out misinformation and discredited climate denial by prominent people and the media.

To achieve these outcomes, the Climate Council has produced 98 publications, more than 80 videos, hosted landmark summits on climate security, heat and health, and energy policy and reached millions of people through both traditional and social media.

The Climate Council has also developed major projects like the Cities Power Partnership, designed to celebrate and accelerate the emissions reduction and clean energy successes of Australian towns and cities. We've also taken the media to the front line of climate impacts, such as the Great Barrier Reef, and to see effective climate action firsthand in California.

As the events of recent weeks have demonstrated, from bushfires to severe drought, climate change continues to drive more intense and severe extreme weather events across the country. As Australia's greenhouse gas pollution levels continue to rise, alongside the continuing lack of credible national climate policy, the Climate Council's role as a strong, independent voice on climate change remains more important than ever. In the absence of Federal Government action on climate change, state, territory and local governments, as well as Australian households and businesses, are increasingly leading the transition to a renewable powered future.

Australians increasingly regard climate change as a serious problem, and want to see action taken to reduce greenhouse gas pollution.

Changing Australian attitudes on climate change are reflected in Lowy Institute polling which shows the proportion of Australians who regard climate change as a serious and pressing problem has grown significantly over the past five years (Lowy Institute 2018). The Climate Council (and previously the Climate Commission) have played a key part in these shifting attitudes, through educating the Australian public about climate change. The Climate Council's use of a wide-range of trusted voices to communicate a resonant message consistently, repeatedly and loudly, has helped to shift public opinion.



Published

98

publications



Over

80

videos



Hosted landmark

SUMMITS



Reached

MILLIONS

via media & social media

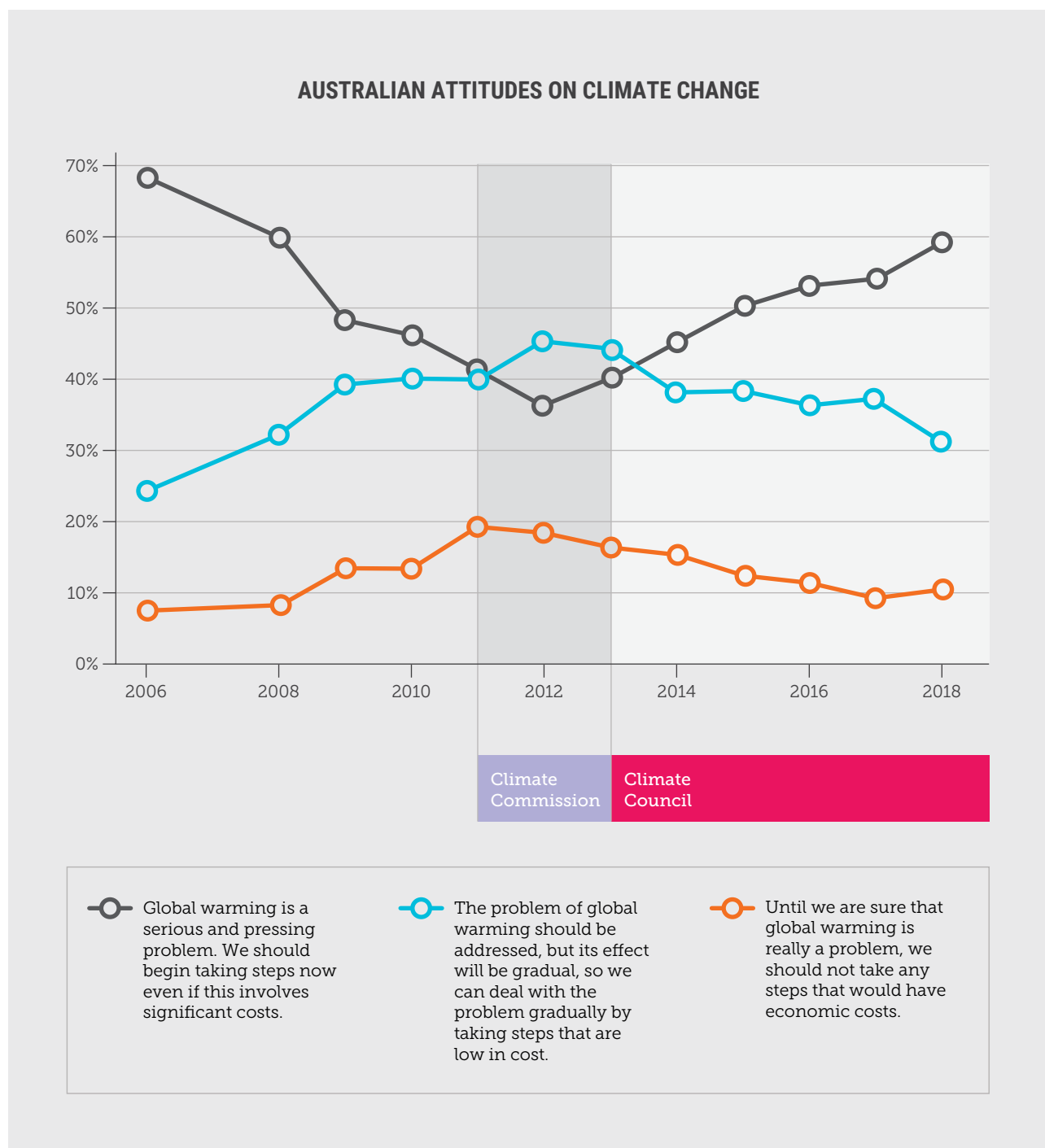


Developed

**MAJOR
PROJECTS**

like the Cities Power
Partnership

Figure 1: Public concern about climate change has grown significantly over the past five years.



Source: Lowy Institute 2018.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Climate Council has built a reputation as a trusted and go-to authority on climate change throughout Australia and the world. This reputation has enabled us to secure more than 28,000 media items (not including syndicated items) on climate change, worth more than \$100 million in advertising coverage.

The Climate Council is the number one organisation communicating on climate change nationally, with more media mentions than the next four organisations combined.

CITIES POWER PARTNERSHIP

In 2017 the Climate Council launched the Cities Power Partnership program - a free, national program that brings together Australian towns and cities making the switch to clean energy.

The Cities Power Partnership seeks to accelerate Australia's transition to a renewable energy future. In only a year, the Cities Power Partnership has become Australia's largest climate program for local government with 70 member councils representing over 250 towns and cities and over 8 million Australians. In November the program will grow to 100 member councils.

The Cities Power Partnership supports local councils to increase renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable transport in their local government areas, as well as increasing collaboration between local governments around the country.

Figure 2: Mayors representing the 35 member councils from round one gathered in Canberra for the national launch of the Cities Power Partnership.



RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

To date the Climate Council has produced 98 publications: 75 reports, 10 fact sheets, 10 briefing papers and 3 joint statements.

Written by our expert in-house Climate Councillors and researchers, and peer reviewed to ensure accuracy, these publications distil complex climate science and impacts, solutions and international action into accessible, relatable content for everyday Australians. Climate Council reports are the backbone of our media success, providing the basis of much of our traditional and social media content. The reports are used by a range of influential stakeholders as an authoritative and trusted source of information on climate impacts and solutions. We have also briefed ministers, senior policy advisors and the leaders of some of our major sectors, such as agriculture and tourism.

Figure 3: A snapshot of Climate Council reports over the past five years.



Here is a snapshot of some of our key report messages from the past five years.

Climate change and extreme weather events

- › Climate change is influencing all extreme weather events in Australia.
- › Heatwaves are becoming hotter, lasting longer and occurring more often.
- › Climate change is exacerbating drought conditions in southwest and southeast Australia.
- › Climate change is increasing extreme fire weather and the length of the fire season, leading to an increase in bushfire risk.
- › Climate change is fuelling more intense and damaging storms.
- › Marine heatwaves that cause severe coral bleaching and mortality are becoming more intense and occurring more often.
- › Sea level has already risen and continues to rise, driving more devastating coastal flooding during storm surges.
- › Strong climate change action is needed to protect Australians from worsening extreme weather events such as heatwaves, bushfire weather, and severe droughts.

Climate change impacts

- › Rural and regional communities are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change.
- › Climate change is making weather patterns more extreme and unpredictable, with serious consequences for Australia's agricultural production.
- › Australia's top five natural tourist attractions (beaches, wildlife, the Great Barrier Reef, wilderness areas and national parks) are already suffering impacts from climate change and are at risk of even more severe impacts.
- › Climate change is a security threat. Climate change poses a significant and growing threat to human and societal wellbeing, threatening food, water, health and national security.

Heatwaves: hotter, longer, more often.

Australia's electricity sector: ageing, inefficient and unprepared

- › Coal is always polluting. Continuing to burn coal for power is incompatible with deep cuts to greenhouse gas pollution.
- › Australia's coal-fired power stations are old and inefficient and will need to be retired in coming years and decades.
- › Australia's ageing fossil fuelled power stations are also unreliable and prone to breaking down in extreme weather events.
- › Gas is not sufficiently less polluting than coal to garner any climate benefit, and is therefore not a suitable replacement for coal.

International impacts and action

- › The burning of coal, oil and gas is intensifying climate change and driving up temperatures. The 2013 - 2017 period has been the hottest five-year period ever recorded.
- › At the Paris climate talks in December 2015, 195 countries around the world, including Australia, agreed to keep global temperature rise to under 1.5 - 2°C above pre-industrial levels.
- › The Paris Climate Agreement is a landmark agreement to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed to effectively tackle climate change.
- › As part of the Paris climate talks, countries submitted their emissions reduction targets. Australia's 2030 emissions reduction target of 26-28% by 2030 (on 2005 levels) is a woefully inadequate response to climate change and is not aligned to what science says is necessary.
- › Australia is failing to tackle climate change with emissions rising and a lack of any credible national approach to reduce greenhouse gas pollution.
- › Australia is a global laggard when it comes to tackling climate change.

Australia's coal fired
power stations are ageing,
inefficient and unreliable.

The Australian renewable energy race

- › Renewable power is clean, reliable and lower cost than new coal plants.
- › States, territories, local governments, businesses and households have been leading the way on renewable energy, despite the ongoing lack of credible national climate policy.
- › Australia's transition to a future powered by clean, affordable and reliable renewable energy and storage is underway, driven by the Renewable Energy Target and state and territory policies.
- › 50% renewable electricity by 2030 could create over 28,000 new jobs in Australia, with every state experiencing net jobs growth. These numbers take into account job losses in coal fired electricity generation, which are more than compensated for by increased employment in the renewable energy sector.
- › Australian businesses and households are turning to renewable energy to take control of their power bills.

Figure 4: Wind turbine in Toora, Victoria.



States and territories are leading the way in the absence of national action.

MYTH BUSTING, FACT CHECKING AND CALLING OUT MISINFORMATION

Over the past five years, the Climate Council has consistently combated misinformation, critiqued climate policy decisions that would have limited impact in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and called out high profile climate deniers using the best and most up-to-date science available.

Key moments when the Climate council has made high profile interventions to influence the national conversation on climate change

2014

- › Climate sceptic Dick Warburton being tasked to review the Renewable Energy Target.
- › Maurice Newman, business advisor to Prime Minister Tony Abbott, calling climate change a United Nations hoax.

2015

- › Australian Government announces \$4 million funding for Danish climate contrarian Bjorn Lomborg to establish new centre.
- › Claims by politicians that wind farms have detrimental health impacts.

2016

- › Funding cuts and job losses for CSIRO's climate science division.
- › \$15 million in funding announced for a new centre for fossil fuels at the CSIRO.
- › South Australian storms, which toppled transmission towers leading to power outages.
- › Australian Government pressuring UNESCO to remove all mentions of Australia from a report on climate threats to World Heritage Sites.
- › Climate Change Authority report ignoring its own prior recommendations on climate change.

2017

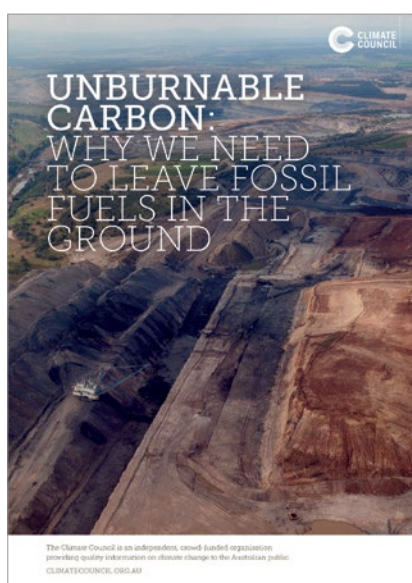
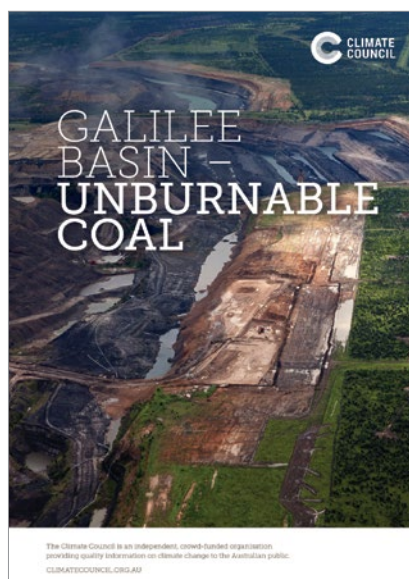
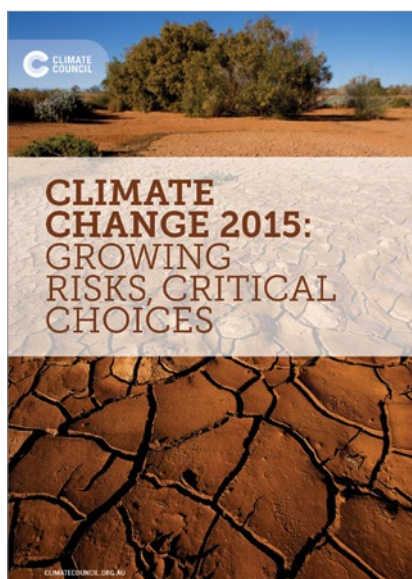
- › Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's claims on renewable energy at a National Press Club Address.
- › Australian Government falling six months behind in releasing quarterly emissions data.

2018

- › CSIRO chief ignores the scientific evidence of climate change as the biggest threat to the reef.
- › 2018 budget failing to tackle climate change.

Our most shared reports

Figure 5: The following reports have been shared the most times by our supporters.



Digital content

The Climate Council's digital content - our videos and social media content - enable us to efficiently and effectively share our key messages with more people and new audiences.

Our most viewed videos

The following videos have been viewed the most times.



Hottest Year on Record (Again)
Released Jan 2017



Mining the Sun
Released Dec 2016



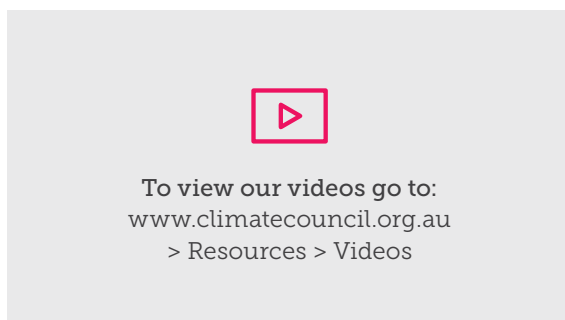
Solar Smackdown: Australia vs UK
Released Aug 2016



Blaming the Solution
Released Oct 2016



Renewables Cup 2017 - NZ vs AU
Released Nov 2017



OUR COMMUNITY

The Climate Council now has a network of more than 100,000 donors, supporters, members and volunteers powering our work and more than 420,000 online supporters.

The community still provides the lion's share of the Climate Council's funding, along with a dedicated group of major donors and philanthropists.












Some of our 'rock star' community members include:
















- › Jen - a Tassie mum, who in 2015 ran 160km through the Tasmanian wilderness in 48 hours to raise \$15,000 for the Climate Council.
- › Alida - one of our most passionate supporters who undertook a huge challenge to raise funds for the Climate Council by cycling from Canberra to Perth!
- › Josh - currently climbing 30 peaks around the world to raise funds for the Climate Council.
- › Marisol and Trixie (with the help of their Dad) who set up a stall in the heart of Sydney and sold brownies and lemonade to "stop climate change", raising \$40 for the Climate Council.

There are too many people to name individually, but the Climate Council is deeply grateful to all of our supporters who have backed our work over the past five years.

Our community powers the Climate Council.

Table 1: 2013 - 2018 Tracking key climate change events, Climate Council moments and landmark reports.

	PRE-2013	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
		Jul-Dec	Jan-Jun	Jul-Dec	Jan-Jun	Jul-Dec
Global (external events)		2013: New renewable energy capacity exceeds net additions of coal, gas and nuclear combined.	2014: Hottest year on record.		2015: Hottest year on record (again).	Paris Climate Conference.
National (external events)	2009: Renewable Energy Target (RET) increased to 45,000 GWh (at least 20%) by 2020.	Climate Commission dissolved.	Carbon Pricing Mechanism repealed.	Federal Government repeals Carbon Price Mechanism & proposes to reduce the RET by 37%. CCA, CEFC & ARENA retained.	National Health and Medical Research Council finds no evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects.	Climate Change Authority recommends 45% to 65% emissions reduction target by 2030 (below 2005 levels).
	2011: Climate Commission established to communicate reliable and authoritative information about climate change.		Emissions Reduction Fund legislation introduced.	Carmichael Coal Mine approved by Federal Environment Minister.	Federal Government reduces RET to 33,000 GWh.	Federal Government announces emissions reduction target of 26-28% by 2030 (below 2005 levels).
	2012: Clean Energy Future policy establishes Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC), Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA), Climate Change Authority and the Carbon Price.	Legislation to abolish the Carbon Price, CEFC, and Climate Change Authority introduced.		Warburton RET review recommends cutting or delaying the target, repealing elements of the scheme.		Federal Government appoints National Wind Commissioner to investigate wind farm complaints.
State/Territory Renewable Energy Targets	2009: South Australia: 33% renewable energy target by 2020 2012 Australian Capital Territory (ACT): 90% renewable energy target by 2020.		South Australia: 50% renewable energy target by 2025.		Victoria: "at least" 20% renewable energy target by 2020 Queensland: 50% renewable energy target by 2030.	
State/Territory Zero Emissions Targets						South Australia: Zero net emissions by 2050.
Climate Council Reports - Snapshot			 HEATWAVES The Angry Summer	 BUSHFIRES Climate Change & The Australian Bushfire Threat	 CARBON BUDGET Unburnable Carbon: Why We Need to Leave Fossil Fuels in the Ground	 CARMICHAEL COALMINE Galilee Basin - Unburnable Coal
			 INTERNATIONAL ACTION Lagging Behind: Australia and the Global Response to Climate Change	 ELECTRICITY Australia's Electricity Sector: Ageing, Inefficient and Unprepared	 RENEWABLES BOOM The Global Renewable Energy Boom: How Australia is Missing Out	 SECURITY Be Prepared: Climate Change, Security and Australia's Defence Force
				 COASTAL FLOODING Counting the Costs: Climate Change and Coastal Flooding	 DROUGHT Thirsty Country: Climate Change and Drought in Australia	 FOOD & FARMING Feeding a Hungry Nation: Climate Change, Food and Farming in Australia
Climate Council - Key Moments		Climate Council re-launched as a non-profit.			Climate Security Summit. Launch of Climate Media Centre. Climate Council presence at Paris climate conference.	
Australia's Emissions (MtCo2e Excl. LULUCF)		538.4 (year to December 2013)	535.7 (year to December 2014)		529.2 (year to December 2015)	

	2016		2017		2018	
	Jan-Jun	Jul-Dec	Jan-Jun	Jul-Dec	Jan-Jun	Jul-Present
Global (external events)	2016: Hottest year on record (again). Paris Agreement comes into force.		2017: World invested more in solar than coal, gas and nuclear combined.			
National (external events)	Federal Government releases vehicle emissions discussion paper.	South Australia state-wide black out after 1 in 50-year weather event topples 23 transmission towers.	Finkel Review into the Future Security of the National Electricity Market recommends Clean Energy Target.	National Energy Guarantee proposed.		
State/ Territory Renewable Energy Targets	ACT: 100% renewable energy target by 2020. Victoria: 25% renewable energy target by 2020 and 40% by 2025.			Northern Territory: 50% renewable energy target by 2030.	Tasmania: 100% renewable energy target by 2022.	
State/ Territory Zero Emissions Targets	Victoria: Zero net emissions by 2050. ACT: zero net emissions by 2050.	New South Wales: Zero net emissions by 2050.	ACT: Zero net emissions by 2045. Tasmania: Zero net emissions by 2050.	Queensland: Zero net emissions by 2050.		
Climate Council Reports - Snapshot	 CLIMATE SCIENCE Flying Blind: Navigating Climate Change Without CSIRO	 RURAL Climate Change & Rural Communities	 LOCAL LEADERS Local Leadership: Tracking Local Government Progress on Climate Change	 CLIMATE ACTION The Critical Decade 2017: Accelerating Climate Action	 TOURISM Icons at Risk: Climate Change Threatening Australian Tourism	 COAL End of the Line: Coal in Australia
	 HEAT & HEALTH The Silent Killer: Climate Change and the Health Impacts of Extreme Heat	 LAND CARBON Land Carbon: No Substitute for Action on Fossil Fuels	 SOLAR State or Solar 2016: Globally and in Australia		 ENERGY STORAGE Fully Charged: Renewables and Storage Powering Australia	 TRANSPORT Waiting for the Green Light: Transport Solutions to Climate Change
	 CORAL REEFS Australia's Coral Reefs Under Threat From Climate Change	 STORMS Super-charged Storms in Australia: The Influence Of Climate Change	 GAS Pollution and Price: The Cost of Investing in Gas		 RENEWABLE ENERGY Clean & Reliable Power: Roadmap to a Renewable Future	
Climate Council - Key Moments	Heat & Health Summit. Great Barrier Reef Statement. SA storms & power outages response.		Great Barrier Reef Media Trip #1. Cities Power Partnership Launched. California Media Trip.		Cities Power Partnership Round 2. Australian Energy Forum. Energy Facts Australia launched.	
Australia's Emissions (MtCo2e Excl. LULUCF)	554.5 (year to December 2016)		556.4 (year to December 2017)		2018 emissions data yet to be released.	

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE CLIMATE COUNCIL?

The Climate Council is looking ahead to the next five years. The Climate Council has brought on new Councillors to deepen and broaden our expertise in climate impacts and solutions.

The Climate Council will continue to:

- › Provide independent and authoritative information on climate change impacts and solutions.
- › Educate Australians on the progress of renewable energy internationally.
- › Diversify our areas of work, including educating Australians on transport emissions, energy efficiency and the costs of climate change.
- › Expand our flagship projects, such as the Cities Power Partnership.
- › Mythbust misinformation and hold our leaders to account.
- › Keep climate change at the top of the news headlines.

Thank you for
supporting the
Climate Council!

REFERENCES

Lowy Institute (2018) Climate Change and Energy.
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IMAGE CREDITS

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