CLIMATE COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER, 2020

JUST GET ON WITH IT:

A communications guide for effectively talking about climate change and economics

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Introduction

The overwhelming majority of Australians[1] agree that climate change is a problem. However, there are differing views when it comes to how fast we need to act, the costs and who should pay.[2]

Our challenge is to convince people that urgent action is not only required, but is also in their immediate economic interests.

To do that, we need to overcome the common objections and myths that dampen enthusiasm for change, and emphasise the benefits in terms of jobs, and a more resilient and sustainable Australia. In short, we need to flip the frame that 'climate action is harmful to economic prosperity' to *'climate action is crucial to economic prosperity'*.

At the same time, we must explain why the coal and gas industries are not a solution because fossil fuel projects are financially risky, dangerous, expensive and worsen climate change.

About this Guide

This guide is designed to provide practical advice about how to effectively talk about climate change during a global pandemic and recession.

It was created by the Climate Media Centre, a project of the Climate Council. It was written by Dinah Arndt, a climate communications specialist and former reporter, and Adrian Dodd, a strategic communications professional.

It's based on the findings of an extensive research project, which reviewed all available climate change research conducted in 2019 and 2020 (some publicly available, and some not) with an emphasis on Australian research. See Appendix A for more details.

This was followed by our own qualitative research with a "persuadable" audience. That is, those who accept climate change is a problem, but don't consider it urgent. The advice in this guide is designed to persuade these Australians - by explaining where such people are at, outlining what they are concerned about, and their priorities.

This guide also identifies the arguments being deployed by opponents to a renewables-led recovery, and outlines effective ways to overcome them.

Acknowledgements: Michael Murphy and Karl Smith at MMResearch, Tony Douglas and Essential, Dr Rebecca Huntley and FiftyFive5, and reviewers Alison Orme (The Sunrise Project), Ranya Alkadamani (Impact Group International), Amanda McKenzie (Climate Council), Jolee Wakefield (Climate Media Centre) and Christine Heard (Climate Media Centre).

CLIMATE COUNCIL

CLIMATE MEDIA CENTRE

Your Cheat Sheet

WE SAY:

Australia is facing twin crises. Communities are struggling to rebuild from climate-fuelled disasters like bushfires and droughts, and one million Australians are out of work.[3]

We need to create good jobs now that solve long-term problems.

By investing in renewable energy, restoring our landscapes, upgrading housing and electrifying transport systems we can create win/win solutions that put Australians back to work and fix long-term problems.

KEY POINTS:

Climate action creates good jobs, now. The number one concern for Australians right now is jobs. So prioritise talking about how climate action creates good jobs, as well as tackles climate change.

Climate action solves long-term problems. Emphasise how our solutions allow Australia to stand on its own two feet, and create economic benefits that are widely shared and will last for generations. Australians are proud of our country, but commonly feel that COVID-19 has exposed how we've become less self reliant and sustainable.

Just get on with it. When climate action is framed as inevitable, most Australians think now is the time to spend up big on things we'll come to rely on. For example, coal-fired power stations are ageing and need replacing. Whereas, renewables are the cheapest and cleanest option - and won't ever run out.

Climate impacts damage lives, and livelihoods. It's important to emphasise how environmental damage causes economic problems. Such harms can be to individuals, communities or to our whole society.

DON'T FORGET THE GOLDEN RULES:

- **Talk about problems that are local, immediate and relevant to people's lives** - such as how New South Wales residents who experienced the devastating 2019-2020 bushfire season are being told to expect fire seasons like that, or worse, to happen again.
- **Outline a positive vision of the future** - such as how renewable energy and storage can transform our electricity system and provide everyday people with cheap, clean and abundant power.
- **Highlight how widespread** concern for climate change is, as well as **demonstrate the action that is already underway** in communities and constituencies of all types.
- **Remember the importance of the messenger** as well as the message, and equip those who have high credibility with the tools they need to speak out.

THEY SAY:

Climate change may be a problem, but our response shouldn't cost Australian jobs.

Renewable energy is a nice idea, but it's too expensive, not ready to power the nation and only works when the sun shines and wind blows.

Our coal is cleaner than other coal, underpins the economy and is an important source of jobs. Gas is cleaner than coal, and is an important transition fuel. Gas can power our economy and repower our manufacturing industry.

Language to Avoid	Language to Embrace
Climate jobs or green jobs	Clean jobs solving long-term problems
Green stimulus	Public or short-term spending
Ecosystem services	Restoring our natural environment or landscapes
Taxpayer handouts	Public investments or contributions
Hurts the economy or business	Destroys lives and livelihoods
Workers	Working people

KEY POINTS:

This story is largely accepted by Australians who are concerned about climate change, but unsure if the costs of action are worth it, or if the action taken will be effective. These are known as blockaging arguments. To overcome these blockages, we must:

1. Meet people where they are at;
2. Update their knowledge; and
3. Invite them to change their views.

EXAMPLE:

- In the past, we needed a balance of fossil fuels and renewables to power the country. [Acknowledgement.]
- Over the past decade, renewable technology has rapidly improved and the cost of batteries has dropped 90%, so we can now use renewables 24/7. [Updating information.]
- The ACT and Tasmania are regularly powered by 100% renewable energy. [Specific example of where this is already happening.]

1. The Fundamentals

Climate change is a complex issue, and there are many vested interests that seek to confuse and distract the public, and delay action. The Climate Council has sought to guide people on how to effectively communicate climate impacts and solutions based on the most up-to-date research and our in-field experience.

To that end, we have published a series of communication guides that emphasise how we should:

- **Talk about problems that are local, immediate and relevant to people's lives** - such as how New South Wales residents who experienced the devastating 2019-20 bushfire seasons are being told to expect fire seasons like that, or worse, to happen again.[4]
- **Outline a positive vision of the future** - such as how renewable energy and storage can transform our electricity system and provide everyday people with cheap, clean and abundant power.[5]
- **Highlight how widespread concern for climate change is**, as well as demonstrate the action that is already underway in communities and constituencies of all types.
- **Remember the importance of the messenger** as well as the message, and equip those who have high credibility (see 'Credible Messengers' for more suggestions) with the tools they need to speak out.[6]

Previous guides have also outlined the importance of avoiding common communication pitfalls, such as buying into false debates, using language of belief (such as "belief" in climate change), repeating myths, and getting bogged down in detail.

All of this remains critically important.

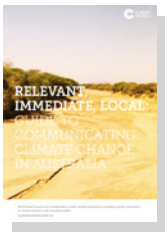
This guide extends on this previous work with specifics on how to best frame and message climate impacts and solutions in a way that makes sense to everyday people who are trapped in a health and economic crisis.

When we do explain how climate action benefits Australians, then most people just want governments to "get on with it".

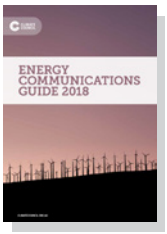
TOP TIPS

1. Talk about climate change in a way that is local, immediate and relevant to Australians.
2. Highlight how widespread climate concern is.
3. Outline a positive vision of the future.
4. The messenger matters, as well as the message.

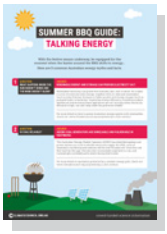
For more details, please refer to Climate Council reports:



Relevant, Immediate, Local: Guide to Communicating Climate Change in Australia.



Energy Communications Guide 2018.



Summer BBQ Guide: Talking Energy.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Australia's economy is in recession. People have been stood down, laid off and are worried about how they'll pay the bills. Those who have a job are worried about whether they'll keep it. Prior to the pandemic, Australia's workforce was already dominated by high levels of insecure work, underemployment as well as increasing cost of living and low wage growth.

Businesses also face unprecedented uncertainty. Across the economy, business investment has dropped significantly. As a result, numerous experts and institutions - from the Reserve Bank of Australia, to major banks and corporations, leading economists and investors, unions and state governments - all argue that governments must take the lead and public investment is the path out of this economic crisis.

The fossil fuel industry has substantial power, and has shaped the public discourse. They have positioned the coal and gas industries as critical to our economic future, and an important source of jobs and economic benefits.[7] Opponents to renewable energy have argued that renewables are too expensive, can't run 24/7 and can't power the whole country.[8]

WHO IS OUR AUDIENCE?

Broadly, Australians can be divided into three groups when it comes to their attitudes on climate change:

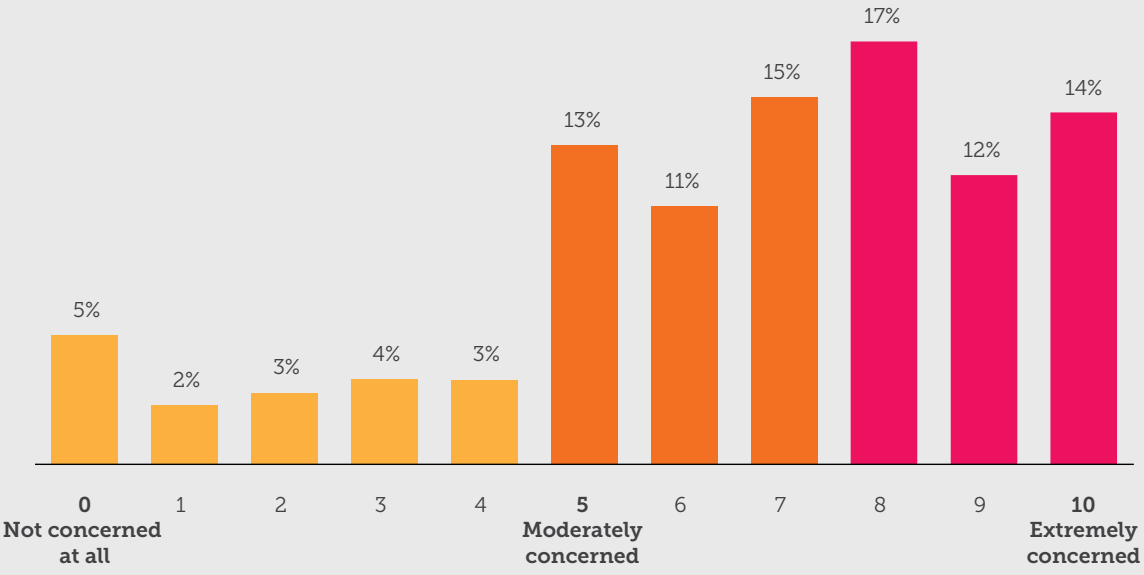
- 40% who are extremely concerned about climate change. They understand the costs of failing to act, and support urgent action.
- 40% who are moderately concerned about climate change. They are unsure if the costs of action are worth it, or if the action taken will be effective.
- 20% who have low levels of concern, or do not believe climate change is an issue.[9]

The following graph (courtesy of Sunrise's 2020 Audience Segmentation project with research by FiftyFive5) demonstrates a more detailed scale of concern based on a survey of 2510 Australians. Again, this is broadly grouped into those with low levels, medium levels or high levels of concern.

These audiences can, and have been, broken down further into more specific groups.

Our communications guide is focused on appealing to the moderate or "middle" group of Australians, because this is a broad group that we think are persuadable as well as politically influential.

CONCERN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AMONG AUSTRALIANS



WHAT'S OUR FRAME?

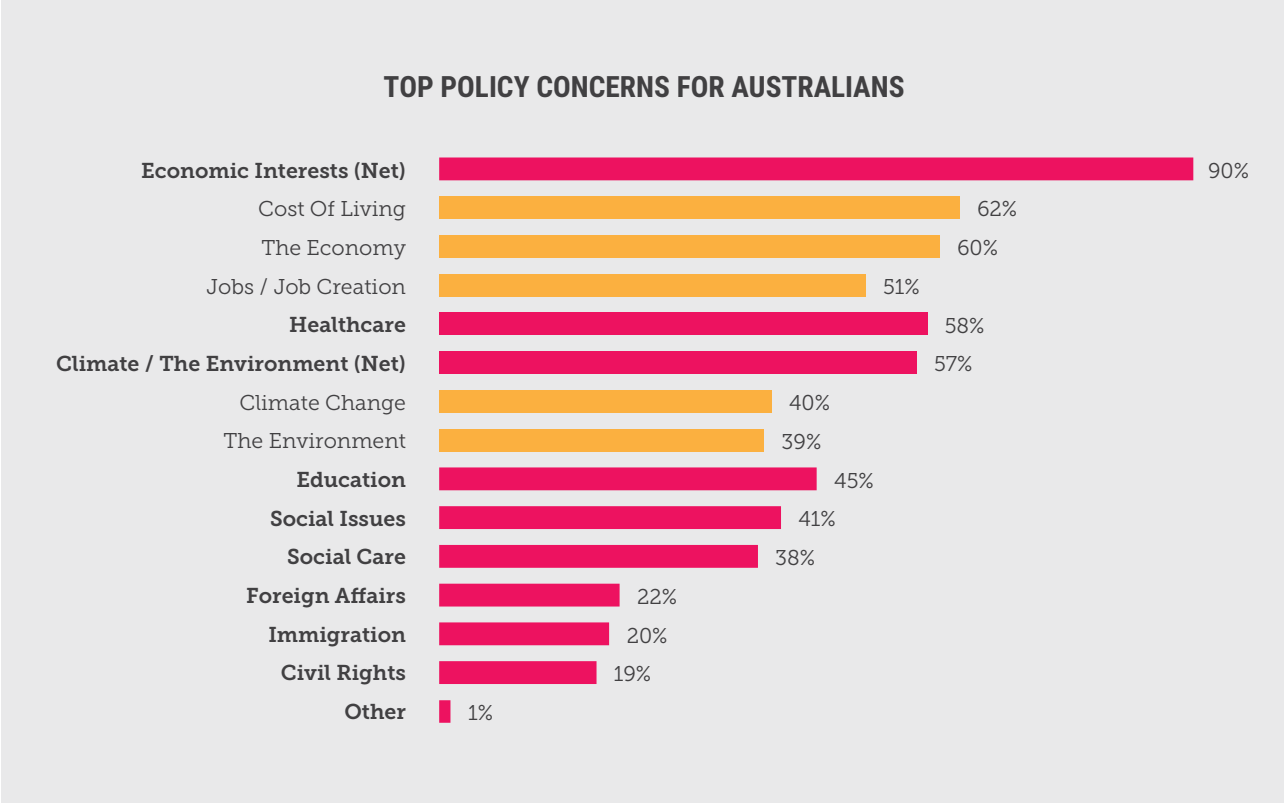
People aren't solely concerned about climate change. This concern exists alongside, and can be prioritised against, other concerns.

"Real" economic concerns - the costs of living, jobs and job creation - are a top priority for many Australians, and such concerns are heightened in current uncertain times.

The following graph (courtesy of Sunrise's 2020 Audience Segmentation project with research by FiftyFive5) ranks common issues based on the percentage of 2510 Australians who identified them as among their top five concerns:

It is clear economic concerns are the most common among Australians, with healthcare also ranking above climate/environment (combined or "net") concerns.

Positioning climate action as a job creator, with many other economic benefits, means people don't have to choose or prioritise between competing concerns. Instead, many of their concerns can be addressed simultaneously.



WHAT'S OUR GOAL?

People want governments to address climate change, but not at the expense of their job. Our opposition continually frames action on climate change as something that will cost people jobs, and increase their costs of living. But this is not about having less; it's about having more - more jobs, nicer neighbourhoods and a better quality of life.

Our core challenge is to upend the opposition's frame, and position climate action as something that will transform our economy and way of life for the better by providing jobs across Australia, reducing costs of living, and making our country more resilient and sustainable.

Whether it is investing in renewable energy and storage, restoring our environment, creating an electric car and charging industry, or making our homes and offices more energy efficient, climate solutions can put Australians back to work, and improve our lives.

It's our job to show people how.

KEY FINDINGS

In order to test this "middle" audience's attitudes to government investment in initiatives that would assist Australia's economy recovery and tackle climate change, the Climate Council commissioned 12 focus groups. We spoke with people from across the political spectrum and the country, of varying ages, income levels and education levels. We found that:

1. People's top concern is the "real economy", and most importantly jobs.

   Talking effectively about climate change requires us to frame this in terms of the job creation and economic benefits of climate action.

2. People want a more self-sufficient and sustainable Australia.

   They want governments to get on with renewable energy and other policy initiatives that would create jobs and solve long-term problems like climate change.

3. Negative arguments about renewable energy related to their costs, effectiveness and reliability, as well as the myth on how important coal and gas are to our economic wellbeing are highly effective.

   However, our research has identified an effective approach for overcoming these "blockages" that meets people where they are at and invites them to change their views.

2. Jobs now, and a better tomorrow

CLIMATE ACTION CREATES GOOD JOBS

The number one concern for people right now is jobs. A good job is secure, well paid and has a purpose.

In the research, people put the importance of a good job as their highest priority, and thought at a time such as this, it was important for the government to provide investment in direct job creation. We have seen the effectiveness of the "jobs frame" when deployed by fossil fuel advocates, and it's effective for us too.

We must position climate action as a job creator - both in the immediate term and the long term. Solar companies are great employers. Electric vehicle companies are rapidly growing. Green hydrogen could become a major export for Australia and set us up for the future.

The Climate Council/AlphaBeta's Clean Jobs Plan identified more than 76,000 jobs that could be created within the next three years, including:

- 15,000 jobs installing utility-scale renewable energy, including solar and wind farms, transmission infrastructure and adding utility-scale batteries;
- 12,000 jobs in targeted ecosystem restoration, including more than 5,000 jobs in Queensland;
- 12,000 jobs in public and active transport construction, including 7,000 – 8,000 jobs for working people in New South Wales; and
- 37,000 jobs in other projects across Australia including in organic waste, energy efficiency in buildings, urban green spaces, community-scale storage and more.

"No one thought 2020 would turn out the way it has. We now have a unique opportunity to seize this moment, to re-tool, re-skill, and rebuild our battered economy to set us up for future generations."

Beyond Zero Emissions chairman Eytan Lenko

SOLVING LONG-TERM PROBLEMS

People want us to use the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to do things better, whether it is how they live their own lives, or how we do things as a country or society.

In research, the number one priority is jobs, but there is also a desire to come out of this crisis as a better country. Therefore, we need to emphasise that climate action can provide new and secure jobs *now*, and also explain how these jobs can be created in areas that solve long-term problems like climate change or public housing shortages.

When describing these long-term problems, we should highlight how environmental problems cause economic problems. We should explain how creating jobs solves these long-term problems, as well as who benefits, and how they benefit.

Key Facts

- A national housing retrofit program would provide more comfortable homes for low-income people, and slash bills.[10]
- Upgrading aluminium smelters to flexibly ramp up or down with renewables would provide extra revenue to operators and improve long-term security for their workers.[11]

"We should be investing in healthy, comfortable, renovations and homes that reduce or cancel energy bills and reduce emissions."

Caroline Pidcock, one of Australia's leading architects and housing design experts

A SELF RELIANT AND SUSTAINABLE AUSTRALIA

Talking about the benefits of climate action means presenting a positive vision of the future.

In the research, when people talk about the type of country they want, these are the ways they described what they wanted: an Australia that can stand on its own two feet; and a country with a strong manufacturing base that makes the energy, food and products we need here. For many, the pandemic revealed that we are too reliant on other countries, and they lament the damage done to our natural environment.

We need to demonstrate to the public how transitioning rapidly to renewable energy, restoring the environment, improving energy efficiency and upgrading our transport services will all make Australia more self reliant and sustainable.

At the same time, we also need to explain how Australians are at the mercy of the fossil fuel industry which is made up of corporations that pay little tax, drive up our power prices, require further public handouts, and send the majority of profits offshore.

"From energy to transport, local governments have an abundance of opportunities to deliver projects to prop up local businesses and decarbonise communities, while creating local jobs.

"The ACT and Victorian reverse auction programs to source renewable energy are strong examples of this. These projects required Australian-made content, which helped spur the expansion of traineeships and apprenticeships in manufacturing businesses, and has seen the old Ford auto factory in Geelong recommissioned as a wind turbine assembly facility."

ACT former deputy chief minister Simon Corbell

IT'S INEVITABLE

When we talk about climate action, we need to avoid language and arguments that present action as a choice.

Instead, frame action on climate change as inevitable, making basic economic sense and being well underway.

Most people want action on climate change, but they have been influenced by the arguments that it's too expensive, not ready or not in our personal interest.

Australia's domestic power is still dominated by coal-fired power stations, but many of these are already being replaced. There is almost no new investment in thermal coal in Australia. There is no market for new gas.

We need to position those who argue against climate action as a small, self-interested and greedy minority, who are seeking to protect short-term profits over the interests of our health, employment and wellbeing.

Talking about replacing coal-fired power stations with renewable energy is most effective when we focus on the benefits for people in terms of power prices. Highlighting how expensive and inefficient coal-fired power stations are increases the level of support for a rapid transition to renewable energy.

TOP TIPS

1. Position climate action as a job creator.
2. Explain how climate action can create jobs now, and solve long-term problems like climate change.
3. Demonstrate how a renewables-led recovery will create a more self reliant and sustainable Australia.
4. Position climate action as inevitable, rather than a choice.

Key Facts

- About one third of Australia's coal-fired power stations closed between 2012 and 2017.[12]
- Three quarters of our coal-fired power stations are operating beyond their recommended life span of 40 to 50 years.[13]
- Globally, coal plant retirements are happening at a record pace, with 2018 the third highest year for retirements around the world and the second highest for the United States.[14]
- The global electric vehicle market is projected to grow 700% over the next decade.[15]

3. Overcoming the Blockages

Opponents of climate action have effectively deployed a number of blocking arguments to delay the roll out of renewable energy, and support fossil fuel development.

We've all heard these blocking arguments, whether it's "renewables are too expensive", "they don't provide baseload power", or they don't work "when the sun doesn't shine and the wind doesn't blow". They work on some Australians because they are unaware of the rapid changes occurring around the world and "ring true" against personal observation.

In fact, over the past five to 10 years renewable energy has become the cheapest form of new generation.[16] In tandem with storage, renewable energy now powers entire countries and, in Australia, entire states and territories at times.[17] On a per kilowatt hour basis, the cost of the core components of a battery have fallen 90% over the past decade.[18] The costs of wind and solar power have followed a similar path.[19] Today, renewables are delivering cheap, reliable energy for Australia and providing much-needed security to our electricity network.

To overcome these blockages, we must:

1. Meet people where they are at;
2. Update their knowledge; and
3. Invite them to change their views.

Our research indicates that this is an effective way to shift people's views from thinking renewable energy is a good thing to do in the future, and/or something that should be slowly and carefully introduced, to something we should "just get on with".

The same approach also works on the fossil fuel industry myth that Australia's entire economic wellbeing depends on digging up coal and gas. When you acknowledge the role that these industries have played in the past, by agreeing that fossil fuels were critical, and update people's information, it undermines levels of support for the industry and its political champions.

By and large, Australians are unaware that coal and gas corporations refuse to pay tax, send the vast majority of profits offshore, have lost significant market value, employ very few people and are increasingly automating jobs. When they find out they are angry and bewildered as to why governments would want to support them further.

HOW-TO EXAMPLES

Technology:

> *In the past, we needed a balance of fossil fuels and renewables to power the country. Over the past decade, renewable technology has rapidly improved and the cost of batteries has dropped 90%, so we can now use renewables 24/7. The ACT and Tasmania are regularly powered by 100% renewable energy.*

It is the combination of information (i.e. a reduction in cost of batteries, or the capacity of renewables to provide power 24/7) and examples of where this is happening that provide value to this statement and shift people's views on whether it's possible to move more quickly and rapidly to renewable energy.

How people react:

> *"...what are they waiting for?"*
>
> *"It's obviously possible!"*
>
> *"...it's been proven to work."*
>
> *"Yeah, get on with it."*

Cost:

> *Ten years ago, it was cheaper to keep using coal power than switch to renewable energy. Now, the best value comes from solar, because the cost of solar power has fallen 80% and wind power has fallen 40%. Coal and gas fired power stations are too expensive to build, and get more expensive every year.*

This becomes further evidence that Australia should have already transitioned to renewables. Some participants also interpreted this to mean that coal and gas industries are dying, and that the federal governments are clinging to them because of export earnings which would also dry up as other countries shift to renewables.

How people react:

> *"It's frustrating, why don't we just get on with it?"*
>
> *"Sounds like a good reason to go renewable."*
>
> *"Makes me think: why aren't you doing it? .... Why aren't we doing this right now?"*

Fossil fuel industry:

> *Ten years ago, fossil fuels were an important source of employment for Australians. Automation is shrinking that workforce, and today the coal and gas mining industry employs less than 1% of Australians, with the vast majority of revenue going offshore tax free.*

Amongst those who had previously been hesitant about Australia investing further in renewables, or divesting too quickly from fossil fuels, this triggered a reconsideration of their position. Learning that so much of the profit is not retained in Australia raises strong objections to the federal government's gas-led recovery. It also challenges a common misconception that fossil fuel mining employs a larger workforce than it actually does.

How people react:

> *"Makes me sick."*
>
> *"Wow! They make such a big song and dance about the mining industry, and the coal, people working in coal and, all the jobs that, I didn't realise it was such a small proportion, ah ok."*
>
> *"...so .... we're the biggest exporter but we're not making the money."*

Gas prices:

> *Gas used to be cheap in Australia. But now our gas export industry is shipping two times as much gas overseas each year as we use here. Competition with overseas customers for our gas has caused energy prices to triple across most of Australia.*

This "rings true" for people who have experienced price rises through their power bills.

How people reacted:

> *"...I know that, uh, our electricity has gone up a lot."*
>
> *" So realistically we should really be looking at phasing out gas. Phasing out gas and just focusing more on renewable energy and using electricity."*

TOP TIPS

1. When it comes to common objections: acknowledge where this audience is at, update their knowledge, and invite them to change their views.
2. Consider who is the best messenger for your message.

CREDIBLE MESSENGERS

People listen to those who are seen to have a stake in the debate: such as farmers and traditional owners, working Australians and businesses, local and state governments, big and small banks and investment firms, insurance agencies and superannuation funds, and key industries like agriculture, tourism and manufacturing.

They also listen to people like them: fellow working people, parents and community members.

The categories of most credible messenger for the tested "middle" audience appear to be independent media organisations, independent scientists, farmers and self-interested industry representatives when it comes to the financial benefits of climate solutions. For example, Aldi Australia, which has publicly committed to powering its budget supermarket chain by 100% renewable energy by 2022 through 10-year power purchase agreements,[20] and challenged its rivals to do the same.

- Business stories: Bankers, business people and working people, finance industry, and heads of industry groups.
- Worker stories: Fellow working Australians, independent media, small business people and scientists focusing on new technology and opportunities.
- Rural/regional stories: Farmers, and Local Mayors.

4. Specific challenges

Climate change is a big, complex issue, with many facets. We stand in the middle of a recession and pandemic, which is dominating the public agenda. We face widespread climate impacts around Australia that are wreaking environmental and economic damage. And, we are battling against a well-resourced coal and gas industry whose interests are regularly put before the public's.

However, we can also see positive movement in business and finance as well as state and local governments. Communicating effectively on climate in an economic frame means being able to highlight the great costs of failing to act, and the movement that's already underway.

EMISSIONS REDUCTION DURING LOCKDOWN

Australia is officially in its first recession in more than 30 years.

It is critical to avoid positioning the coronavirus or economic shutdowns as a positive for climate action. They are not. We must demonstrate how addressing climate change will improve our lives, not worsen them.

With business investment in decline,[21] this is a critical time for governments to step in. With access to cheap borrowing it is also a smart time to invest in big picture projects that will set us up for the future.

We must highlight how government-led climate action can create jobs, and solve long-term problems like reducing power bills, restoring damaged landscapes, and making housing more comfortable and affordable.

Key facts:

- The "unemployment rate" is currently 7.5% and is expected to peak at 9% in the December quarter according to the Federal Treasurer Josh Frydenberg, but as many as 16% are unemployed according to ABS July 2020 figures.[22]
- Underemployment is at record highs in Australia according to the Clean Jobs Plan.[23]
- Business investment has dropped by 6.5%, and is at a five-year low.[24]

"Energy efficiency is a jobs machine - and local governments can start it up."

Holly Taylor, Senior Manager Projects and Partnerships at the Energy Efficiency Council

THE COSTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate-fuelled disasters like droughts, coral bleaching and bushfires are costing people's lives and livelihoods. The first thing we should emphasise is how environmental damage causes economic problems. We must talk about the harms to individuals, communities or to our whole society. It's also important to highlight who is winning and losing as a result of climate impacts.

Extreme weather is hurting many people and communities - whether it's tourism operators on the Queensland coast who showcase the Great Barrier Reef, farmers experiencing the impacts of drought year after year or the 80% of Australians who were blanketed in smoke during the 2019/2020 Black Summer bushfires.

The second thing we should focus on is who currently pays, and who should pay. Everyday Australians are bearing the brunt of extreme weather, and governments are left to help them pick up the pieces. Australia's fossil fuel industry profits from climate pollution, which is fuelling extreme weather, and it is important to make the connection between the companies' offshored profits and their environmental damage.

"In 2016 alone, more than 2.5 million international visitors arrived in the state [of Queensland] bringing in more than $5.2 billion. The back-to-back mass coral bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef should serve as a serious warning to the federal and Queensland governments that tackling climate change through cutting pollution is essential to protect this billion- dollar asset."

Climate Councillor Professor Lesley Hughes

Key Facts

Agriculture and climate change

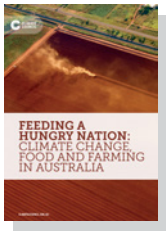
Climate change is making weather patterns more extreme and unpredictable, with serious consequences for Australia's agricultural production.

- Climate change is driving an increase in the intensity and frequency of hot days and heatwaves in Australia, changing rainfall patterns, increasing the severity of droughts, and driving up the likelihood of extreme fire danger weather.[25]
- Water scarcity, heat stress and increased climatic variability in our most productive agricultural regions, such as the Murray Darling Basin, are key risks for our food security, economy, and dependent industries and communities.
- On current trends, the accumulated loss of wealth due to reduced agricultural productivity and labour productivity as a result of climate change is projected to exceed $19 billion by 2030, $211 billion by 2050 and $4 trillion by 2100[26] - which is more than double Australia's current Gross Domestic Product.
- By 2050, climate change is projected to halve the irrigated agricultural output of the Murray-Darling Basin region,[27] which currently accounts for 50% of Australia's irrigated agricultural output by value (about $7.2 billion per year).

TOP TIPS

1. Avoid positioning the virus or economic shutdowns as a positive for climate action.
2. Talk about the harms that climate impacts cause.
3. Focus on who currently pays, and who should.

For more details, please refer to Climate Council reports:



Feeding a Hungry Nation

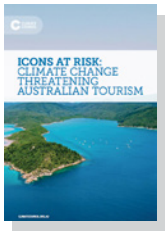
Compound Costs: How Climate Change is Damaging Australia's Economy.

Tourism and climate climate change

Climate change poses a significant threat to many of Australia's iconic natural areas that underpin the lives and livelihoods of our tourism operators and working people. These special places, which attract visitors from around the world, are already feeling the effects of climate change and these impacts will worsen.

- Tourism is a multi-billion dollar industry in Australia, providing more than half a million jobs and accounting for 5% of the workforce.[28]
- Climate change is a grave threat to Australia's top five natural tourist attractions (beaches, wildlife, the Great Barrier Reef, wilderness and national parks).
- Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Cairns, Darwin, Fremantle and Adelaide are projected to have a least a 100-fold increase in the frequency of coastal flooding events (with a 0.5m sea level rise).[29]
- The Great Barrier Reef, Australia's most valuable tourist icon (contributing $6 billion to our economy), is also the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

For more details, please refer to the Climate Council report:



Icons at Risk: Climate Change Threatening Australian Tourism.

COAL AND GAS WORKERS

The mining and burning of coal, oil and gas is the leading cause of climate change. Coal and gas exports comprise a large proportion of Australia's total exports, and we also use large amounts of fossil fuels to power our economy.

Firstly, when talking about the problems caused by the coal and gas industry we need to be careful to always distinguish between coal and gas *companies* and *working people*.

Coal and gas workers have played an important role in building our country, but now we need to focus on industries that are growing and set us on the right path so working people can transition into new jobs.

Secondly, we must undermine the myth that coal and gas are critical to Australia's economic wellbeing. People are horrified to learn that the vast majority of gas revenue goes offshore. It is also important to emphasise that these companies regularly do not pay tax and are increasingly automating their processes, and cutting jobs.

Finally, it's important to highlight the role of gas in pushing up power prices in Australia, increasing our costs of living and driving manufacturers out of business.

Key Facts

- Australia is the largest exporter of liquified natural gas yet the oil and gas industry employs just 0.2% of all Australian workers.[30]
- For every $1 million in gas sales the industry creates only 0.4 of a full-time job - well below the national industry average of 3.4 jobs.[31]
- Twice as much Australian gas is shipped overseas than used in Australia[32], and the competition for our gas between Australian and overseas customers caused energy prices to triple across most of the country.[33]
- Few oil and gas companies operating here pay any tax at all in Australia, despite many having multi-billion incomes.[34]

"We've basically provided power to Victoria and Australia in this way for the past 100 years, and I really think that there's an opportunity to provide it for the next 100 years with a different fuel source, and I find that an exciting opportunity.

"There seems to be a lot of talk at the moment about gas as a transition fuel which to me seems ludicrous. Why would you invest in another fossil fuel that you're going to have to close down again? Why not just invest in renewables? It's the ultimate goal."

Latrobe Valley coal worker Tony Wolfe

LINKING CLIMATE IMPACTS TO OUR HEALTH

Our health and wellbeing rely on a healthy environment.

When talking about climate impacts, we should explain how these harm us as individuals and endanger our communities. These impacts have costs, both on people's health and quality of life, as well as widespread social costs. Typically, these costs are borne by those who can least afford it.

In contrast, climate action can improve our health and wellbeing and protect us from further harm. Such initiatives improve the health of individuals, communities and of our country overall.

For example, Australians pay a deadly health bill of $2.4 billion for having coal-fired power stations. Every year, they contribute to the premature deaths of 800 people and cause 14,500 asthma attacks.[35] Switching to renewables means we can all breathe easier.

For key facts on climate impacts, see Appendix B.

"Including fossil fuels in Australia's economic recovery is like including support for the tobacco industry in an anti-smoking campaign."

Climate Councillor Dr Kate Charlesworth

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO ACT

The federal government is failing to act on climate change, but the world is acting - fast.

Around the world, capital is moving away from coal and gas. We must highlight an exodus of shareholders, investors and finance from fossil fuels due to their concerns about climate change.

It is also important to highlight the decline in share price and the write-down in the value of major projects. Demonstrating the movement of capital, finance and investment away from coal and gas assets helps to undermine the key strengths of arguments from fossil fuel advocates, and highlights the economic risks of investing in industries that worsen climate change.

In Australia, state governments, councils and businesses are leading the way on taking climate action. We need to focus more on who is taking positive action, in the economic interests of their constituents or shareholders, as this acts as a positive incentive to other people, organisations and governments.

Key facts

Gas

- The International Energy Agency's most recent annual report on the gas sector described the current global gas market as being in 'meltdown'; as an already dangerously over-supplied global market for gas grappled with the reality of COVID-19.[36]
- Australian gas is expensive by world standards. With the global market expected by some to be oversupplied for most of the next decade, Australian gas will be unable to compete with overseas suppliers.[37] The Australian gas industry has already begun writing down assets.

Coal

- Several of the world's largest financial institutions now have policies that prohibit new investments in coal.[38]
- Several of the biggest exporters of Australian coal are putting in place measures to limit their reliance on coal generally[39], and Australian coal specifically.[40]
- Coal is not economically viable. According to the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis "a trend is setting in and coal is being dumped all over the world".[41]

States and territories

- All states and territories have committed to renewable energy targets and/or net zero emissions targets.[42]
- South Australia has at least eight new renewable projects under construction and is on track for 73% renewable electricity in just two years.[43]
- Almost 10,000 jobs are being created in the renewable energy industry across Australia with 69 wind and solar plants under construction.[44]

"Last year, Commonwealth Bank was the first to commit to be out of thermal coal by 2030, along with all three of our general insurers. Now, anyone trying to operate a coal mine or power station in Australia by the end of this decade will need to do so without Westpac as well."

Market Forces Executive Director, Julien Vincent

TOP TIPS

1. Distinguish between coal and gas workers and corporations.
2. Emphasise that coal and gas profits go overseas and tax contribution is minimal.
3. Point out that the fossil fuel sector provides few jobs, and is shrinking.
4. Highlight the role of gas in pushing up our power prices.
5. Explain how our health and wellbeing rely on a healthy environment.
6. Highlight the exodus of finance from fossil fuels because of climate concerns and risks.
7. Focus on who is taking positive action and how that benefits others.

5. Appendix A

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

MMResearch was commissioned by the Climate Council to undertake a program of qualitative research.

Three target audiences were identified:

1. Teal audience, defined as: white-collar, tertiary educated and higher-income people who have usually voted for the Liberal Party in federal elections over the past 10 years, but report feeling uncomfortable about the party's policies related to climate change.

2. Blue-collar audience, defined as: people with trades or from the unskilled labour force with no tertiary education, who have usually voted for the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in federal elections over the past 10 years, but report feeling uncomfortable about ALP economic policies.

3. Regional/rural audience, defined as: mid- to low-income people from rural locations that have been affected by recent bushfires, droughts and/or floods, with a range of federal voting patterns over the past 10 years, including Liberal, National, ALP and independents, but excluding Greens voters.

Four groups were run (with up to 6 participants in each) per audience type across June and July 2020. For the Blue collar and Teal audiences, the groups were further split up via age (25-39 and 40-65) as well as via location (Melbourne and Sydney). For the rural/regional audience, they were further split into age groups, and Queensland residents versus those living in New South Wales or Victoria. There was a mix of men and women in each group.

A set of statements were used as stimulus material for the group discussions. These statements ranged along a continuum from general values to specific initiatives and data about energy economics. Researchers assessed how each of the target audiences responded to this stimulus material in terms of comprehension, credibility, impact on perceptions of the importance of climate action and additional information needs for effective communication.

This research was also informed by a range of research conducted by other groups including but not limited to: Australian Conservation Foundation, Essential Media, FiftyFive5, Greenpeace, Lowy Institute, Micromex, Solar Citizens, the Monash Climate Change Communication Hub, The Australia Institute, and the Nature paper "Meta-analyses of the determinants and outcomes of belief in climate change".

6. Appendix B

CLIMATE IMPACTS: THE FACTS

Despite having one of the world's best health systems, the health of Australians is highly vulnerable to the country's climate and weather extremes.

Heatwaves

- Heatwaves are a silent killer. Major heatwaves have caused an estimated 2900 deaths in Australia in the 1890-2013 period – more deaths than bushfires, tropical cyclones, earthquakes, floods and severe storms combined.[45]
- During severe heatwaves in southeastern Australia in 2009, Melbourne experienced three consecutive days at or above 43°C in late January. There were 980 heat-related deaths during this period, 374 more than would have occurred on average for that time of year.[46]
- Heatwaves in Australia during 2013-2014 cost approximately $8 billion through absenteeism and a reduction in work productivity.[47] This is the equivalent to 0.33 to 0.47% of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP).
- During heatwaves, critical infrastructure can also be severely affected. For example, during the January 2009 heatwave in Melbourne, financial losses were estimated to be $800 million, mainly caused by power outages and disruptions to the transport network.[48]

Bushfires

More than two million people live in high bushfire risk areas in Australia (IAG 2016). This means that a considerable proportion of the Australian population are at risk from the health impacts of bushfires, including effects on both physical and mental health, in addition to deaths.

- The Black Summer bushfires in 2019/20 took a huge toll on human life. Thirty-three people lost their lives directly from the fires[49] and it is estimated that up to 417 early deaths occurred as a result of particulates contained in bushfire smoke over the summer.[50] This figure could be higher, as we don't yet know the long-term contribution to morbidity.
- Estimates suggest the 2019/20 bushfires caused over $2 billion in insured losses alone. The economic impact on tourism, hospitality, agriculture and forestry has been estimated to be around $3.6 billion. There may have been a further $2 billion in health costs, arising, in part, from respiratory illnesses caused by the smoke. These figures are likely to underestimate the true cost of the bushfires.[51]

Drought

Droughts can have wide ranging implications for health, with impacts on nutrition, an increased risk of infectious diseases and air pollution from bushfires.[52] Declines in physical health are particularly prevalent amongst the elderly in drought affected rural communities in Australia.[53] Furthermore, drought can exacerbate mental health problems and increase suicide rates in drought-affected rural populations, especially amongst male farmers.[54]

The socio-economic impacts of droughts in Australia are severe, largely because agricultural, water storage and supply systems were originally designed by European settlers who did not understand the significant variability in Australia's climate.[55]

- Between 2002 and 2003 decreases in agricultural production due to drought resulted in a 1% reduction in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a 28.5% fall in the gross value added for the agricultural industry, compared to the preceding year.[56]
- From 2002-2008 the government provided $1 billion in drought assistance to farmers.[57]
- From 1991 to mid-2010 the government had paid a total of $4.4 billion in drought assistance.[58]
- For 2018/19, drought conditions are estimated to have resulted in a 6.1% fall in agricultural gross value added through the year in September quarter 2019.
- Food prices increased as a result of the prolonged drought. For example, fruit prices were up 6.8% in the December quarter 2019 CPI release.[59]

Extreme Rainfall

Periods of heavy rainfall can threaten human health and wellbeing. While intermediate levels of rainfall can cause damage to property, heavy rainfall can claim lives.

- In 2011 intense downpours of 40-50 mm in only 30 minutes falling in already saturated catchments in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley led to burst creeks and caused flash flooding of up to 11 metres through the Toowoomba city centre[60]; 23 people drowned in these floods.[61]
- December 2010 was Queensland's wettest December on record. Approximately 2.5 million people were affected and 29,000 homes and businesses experienced some form of flooding.
- The economic cost of this flooding was estimated to be in excess of $5 billion,[62] with 18,000 homes inundated, damage to 28% of the Queensland rail network and damage to 19,000 km of roads and 3 ports.[63]
- Around 300,000 homes and businesses lost power in Brisbane and Ipswich at some stage during these floods.[64]

Storms

Storms can cause damage to property, infrastructure and kill people.

- The total economic cost of natural disasters in Australia over the 10 years to 2016 averaged $18.2 billion per year, equivalent to 1.2% of average GDP.
- In real terms, the total economic cost of natural disasters is forecast to grow by 3.4% per year, double by 2038 and by 2050 reach $39 billion per year in real terms.[65]

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