

SUMMARY FOR POLICYMAKERS

SEIZE THE DECADE – A PLAN TO CUT CLIMATE POLLUTION BY 75% BY 2030

This is what our kids will talk about.

The choices we made today that defined how safe or scary the world became as they grew up. The decisions to grow clean industries, which shaped their job market. The steps we took to make life easier for them, or so much tougher.

What we do right now matters. If we keep cutting climate pollution – more deeply and permanently **this decade** – we can halt the rapid rise of dangerous global heating that drives worsening extreme weather and threatens our kids' future. If we don't cut pollution fast enough or deep enough then the risks are catastrophic: a hotter and more unstable climate, ecological breakdown and economic chaos.

Cutting climate pollution further now makes their lives safer, and brings brighter opportunities. We have the chance to set our kids and our communities up to thrive with plenty of good jobs in renewable energy and clean industry. There is a once-in-a-century shift underway to scale up new ways of powering ourselves, making things, moving around and building our communities. Australia has world-beating resources in renewable energy, together with deep industry and manufacturing know-how. This can be our moment to shine so our country keeps prospering for generations to come.

We've come so far already. Today, around 40% of the power in our main national grid comes from clean, renewable sources like wind and solar. More than three million Australian households already enjoy

lower power bills, having taken power into their own hands and put solar panels on their roof. More electric vehicles are being sold every day to keen buyers, and investors are putting their money where it matters to clean up our existing industries and create new ones. We can build on this momentum to accelerate Australia's move to renewable energy and clean industries in the next few years by doing more of what we already know works. So we can make a real difference to Aussies' lives, while continuing to remove the pollution that fuels dangerous climate change.

Seize the Decade is all about those solutions. The solutions that can collectively cut climate pollution by 75% by 2030, in line with what the science says is necessary. The solutions that we can keep rolling out or set up to end climate pollution. No empty promises, or excuses. No further delays, or wishful thinking that something else might turn up – just positive, practical actions we can get on with.

There's no time to waste, and our kids are depending on the choices we make now. Let's make sure that in the years to come, the stories they share are about how we got it right.



The full report can be accessed at:
www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/seize-the-decade



WHAT WE NEED TO DO NOW: AUSTRALIA'S FAIR SHARE IN CUTTING CLIMATE POLLUTION


Recognising the enormous risks of global warming beyond 1.5°C, Climate Council recommends that Australia's emissions reduction targets aim to limit warming as far as possible and with the highest probability of success. This means aligning as close as possible with a budget that provides a 67% chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C.

Based on analysis of emissions to date and our country's relative capacity to make deep reductions now, globally renowned scientists conclude that **Australia should aim to cut climate pollution by 75% by 2030 compared with 2005 levels, and reach net zero by 2035.**¹

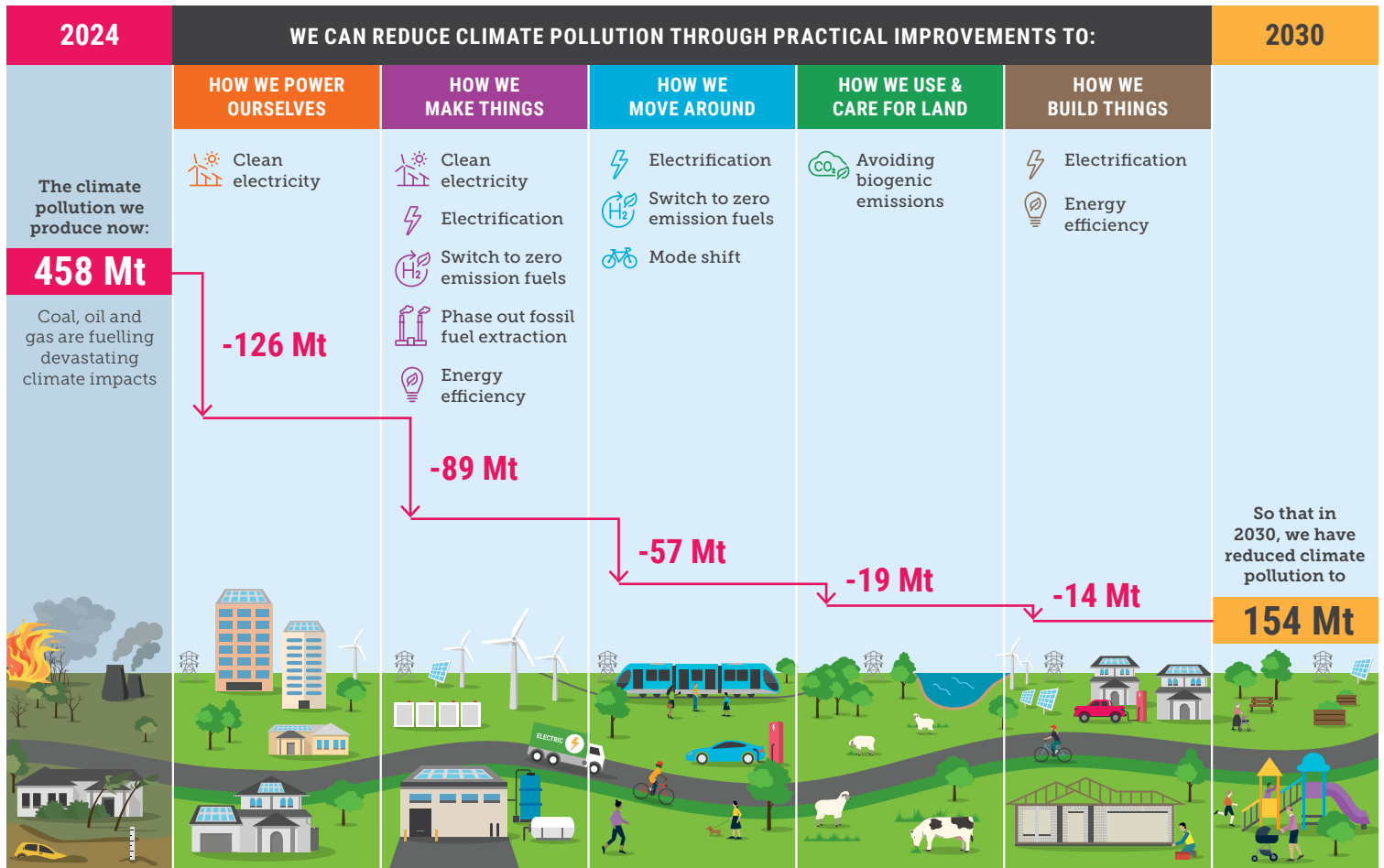
The *Seize the Decade* report sets out the pathway for hitting that first milestone so we're on the right track to reach net zero by 2035. The Climate Council

has focused on the concrete actions Australia can take over the next few years to build on existing momentum and slash climate pollution during this make-or-break decade.

For more detail on why Australia should work towards these goals in the years ahead, see the Climate Council's *Mission Zero* report.



Mission Zero report:
www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/missionzero



¹ There is a very low likelihood of limiting warming to 1.5°C by 2100 without a temporary overshoot. Consistent with IPCC (2021), here we assume that the global average temperature peaks above 1.5°C and is returned to 1.5°C or below by 2100. This means quickly getting beyond net zero and removing large amounts of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

OUR PLAN IS BASED ON A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIA'S SHIFT TO RENEWABLE ENERGY

The insights in *Seize the Decade* are based on a granular assessment of the existing and expected demand and supply of energy across the economy. This includes electricity, as well as demand for coal, oil and gas used in industrial production, transport and buildings.

These fossil fuels represent more than 75% of Australia's final energy demand. The analysis considers the interaction between the electrification of industry, transport and buildings, a necessary phase out of fossil fuels in electricity generation, and energy efficiency improvements. This means our plan provides a comprehensive pathway for Australia to fully embrace renewable energy.

This **Summary for Policymakers** provides a snapshot of findings across all key sectors. Further details and policy recommendations to deliver these outcomes are provided in the full *Seize the Decade* report: www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/seize-the-decade



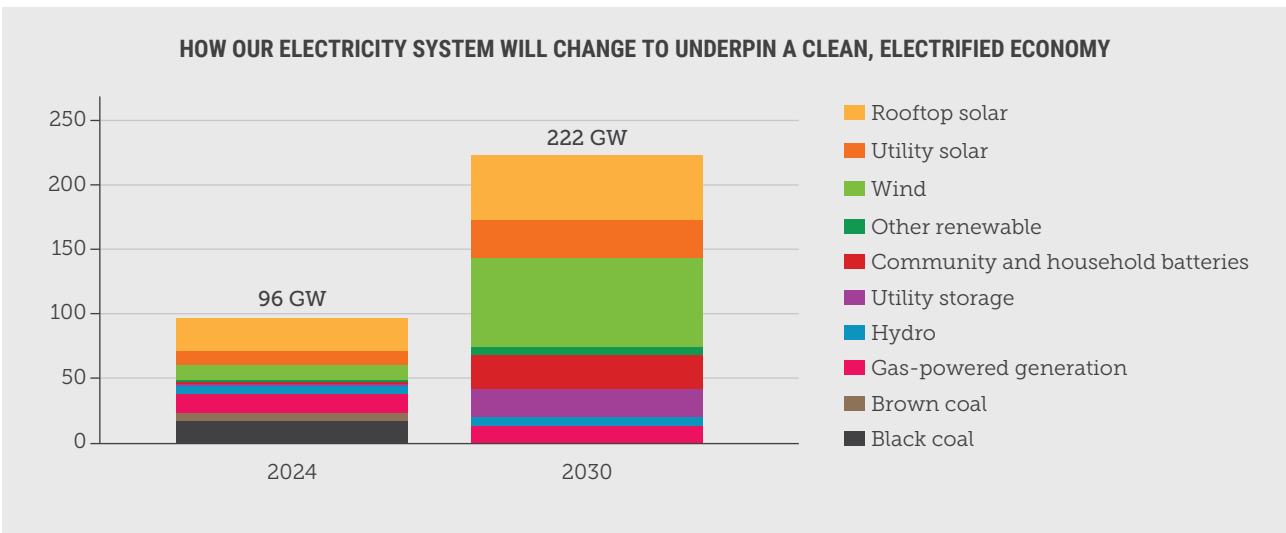
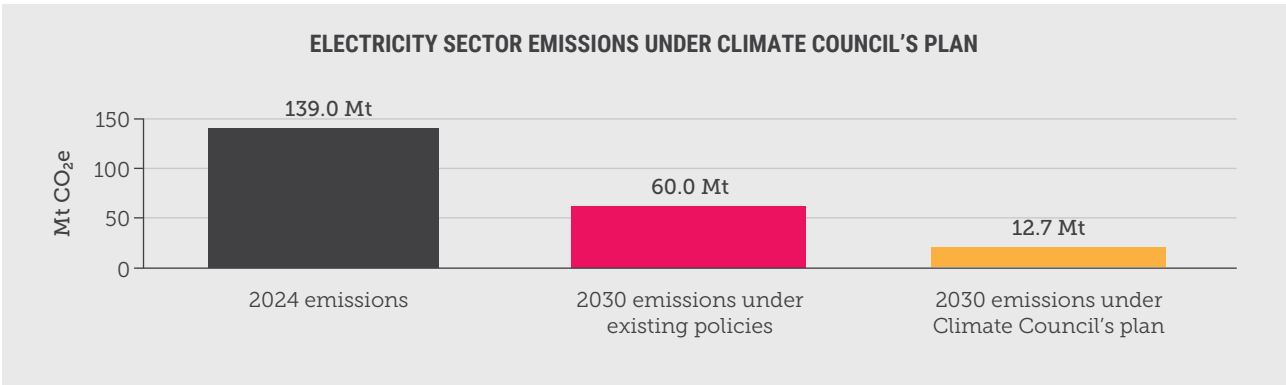


POWERING OURSELVES WITH RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY BACKED BY STORAGE

Many more Australian families can save money with rooftop solar, backed by batteries and large-scale renewable projects, so we power Australia with 94% renewable energy and slash climate pollution.

WHAT CAN WE DO?



Eliminate almost all climate pollution in electricity:






Source: 2024 capacity based on AEMO (2023a), APVI (2024) and OpenNEM (2024b); 2030 based on Climate Council and ISF analysis.

HOW WILL WE GET THERE?



Generate and store more power in Australian communities and homes

-  Save households money by putting rooftop solar systems on four million more homes (totalling 24 GW). This would more than double the number of homes with rooftop solar today, putting power directly into the hands of millions of Australians.
-  Shore up renewable energy supplies day and night by installing two million household batteries and nearly 5,000 community batteries (totalling 24 GW of storage).

Keep powering up clean, abundant and affordable electricity

-  Between existing rooftop solar and large-scale renewable projects already built, in the pipeline or to be underwritten by existing schemes, we are on track to build more than half the 113 GW of large-scale capacity needed.
-  By expanding large-scale renewable electricity capacity we can meet our own energy needs and lay the foundation for new clean export industries. There are great opportunities in commercial and industrial rooftop solar and onshore wind to deliver further renewable electricity.
-  Utility-scale storage needs are expected to be fully met by existing government commitments, including storage to be underwritten by the expanded Capacity Investment Scheme. Anticipated pumped hydro projects will also be sufficient to meet storage needs.²

With replacements in place, end coal power generation and start phasing out gas

-  Significantly reduce climate and air pollution with all coal-fired power stations able to close by 2030.
-  Stop building new gas generation capacity unless it can run on 100% renewable hydrogen, and start reducing gas capacity in preparation for its phase out. Australia already has enough gas generation capacity today to meet occasional peaks in demand expected.

² Consistent with AEMO's 2024 Draft ISP (AEMO 2023b), we anticipate that 4.3 GW of pumped hydro capacity will be available in 2030, consisting of Snowy 2.0 (2.04 GW, 2029), Kidston (0.25 GW, 2025) and Borumba (1.99 GW, 2030).

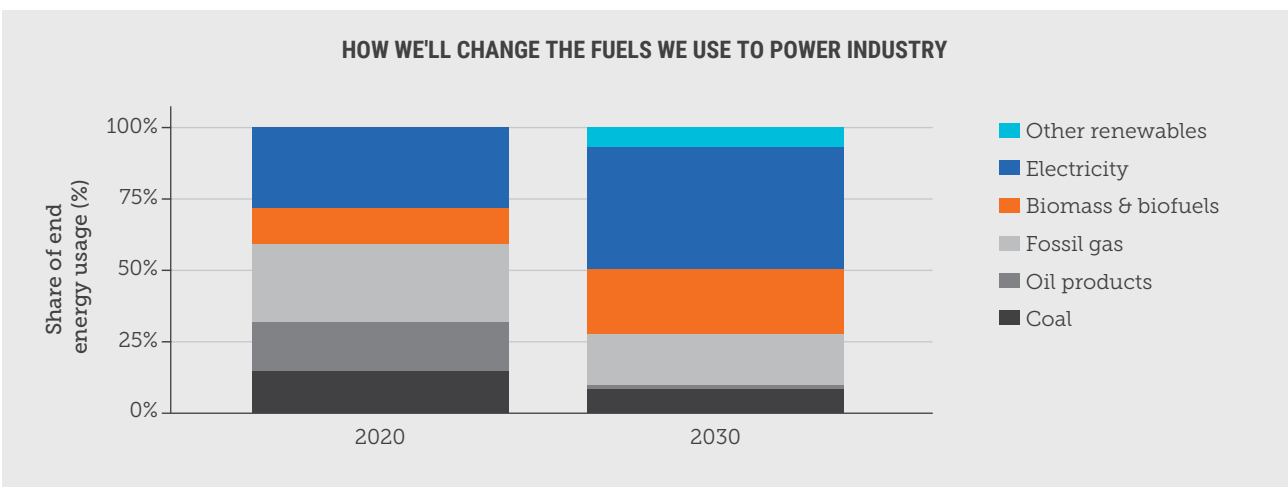
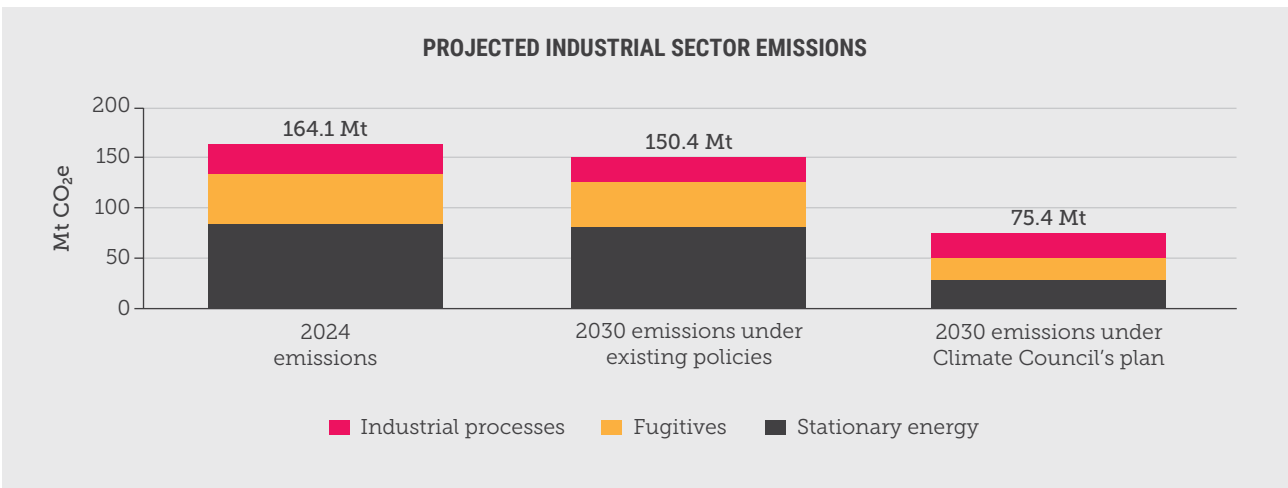


ELECTRIFYING INDUSTRY AND SWITCHING TO OTHER ZERO-EMISSION FUELS

Coal, oil and gas are used as a fuel, a heat source and a feedstock in manufacturing and industrial production. Mining fossil fuels also releases polluting gases – referred to as fugitive emissions. With smart investments to adapt existing industries and capitalising on new mining and manufacturing opportunities, Australia can build an industrial base fit for the 21st century.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

More than halve industrial climate pollution:



HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

Use readily-available alternatives so we can replace some fossil fuels



Reduce industrial use of coal (-41%), oil products such as diesel (-86%) and gas (-31%) using available technology. Cement and metals manufacturing can make use of biomass and biofuels, while electrifying heavy machinery in mining can reduce the use of diesel and petrol.



Replace these fuels with renewable energy sources, including electricity, geothermal, biomass and biofuels and, in early adopters, green hydrogen. This will need a focused scale-up of domestic production for these clean alternatives.

Invest in smarter ways to make things



Prioritise collection and recycling of scrap metals, with a goal of providing 35% of steel and 40% of aluminium production from recycled materials. Today, most of the metal collected for recycling in Australia is exported (Blue Environment 2022). Recycling more onshore can cut climate pollution and create jobs.



Improve energy efficiency by approximately 5% for iron, steel and chemical manufacturers, and 25% for cement manufacturing.

Deal with climate pollution from existing coal mines, and stop expanding or adding more



Stop approving new coal mines or expansions, because every one adds more climate pollution in Australia, as well as overseas when coal is burned. New coal mines and extensions proposed today could release 9 Mt CO₂e a year by 2030.



Deal with climate pollution at existing coal mines. For Australia's dirtiest six coal mines alone, this could cut 9 Mt CO₂e every year in fugitive emissions.



Lower household and industry demand for gas can also cut fugitive emissions by a further 4 Mt CO₂e.



Together, these reductions are equivalent to the annual emissions from all of Australia's trucks.



USING SHARED, ACTIVE AND ELECTRIC TRANSPORT TO GET AROUND AND MOVE FREIGHT

We get around and move freight in lots of ways, including by road, rail, ship and plane. Whenever we burn fossil fuels such as petrol and diesel to power cars, trucks, trains, planes or ships we're adding to climate pollution. Growing shared, active and electric transport options means better ways to get from A to B and healthier communities.

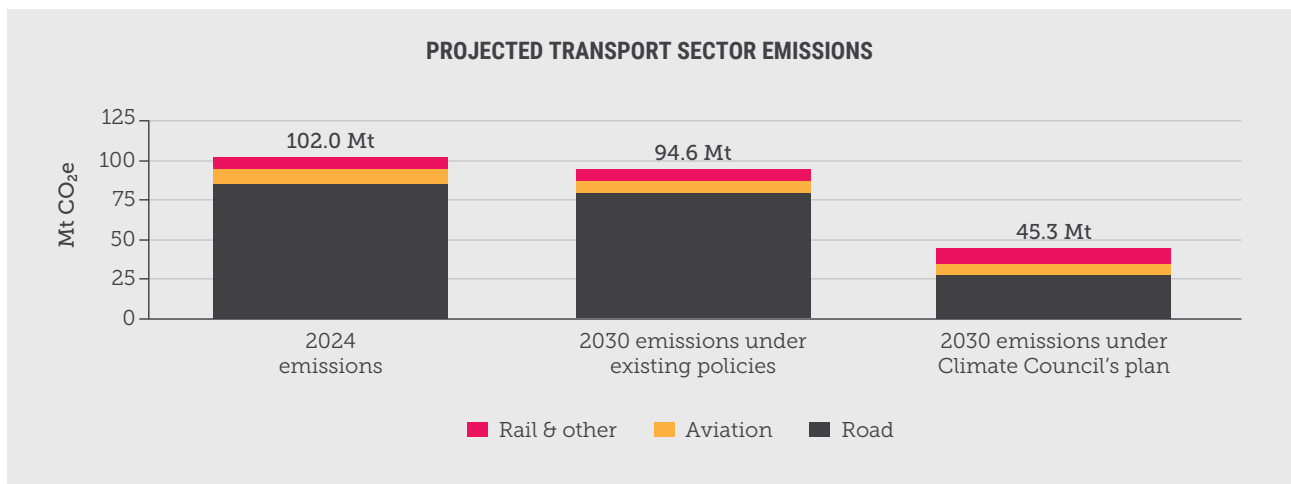
WHAT CAN WE DO?

Halve climate pollution in transport:

From 102 Mt CO₂e in 2024



To 45.3 Mt CO₂e in 2030



HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

More daily trips using shared, active and electrified options



Create healthier communities by shifting a total of 30% of projected private vehicle kilometres in 2030 to shared and active transport. This will mean shifting existing kilometres travelled by private car to shared and active transport at the rate of around 5% per year, and seeing all growth in passenger travel this decade taken up by these modes.



Entice more travellers toward long-distance passenger rail services and away from domestic air travel, where possible, to hold passenger kilometres travelled to adjusted 2020 levels.



Electrify our passenger fleet to see one-third of all passenger kilometres travelled by electric vehicles by 2030. An efficient way to achieve this would be to prioritise electrifying vehicles that travel the most kilometres first, like taxis, rideshare vehicles and government fleets.

Shift more freight onto rail and start electrifying heavy vehicles



Shift one-third of road freight to rail by 2030, by increasing the use of rail for packaged freight.



Electrify more heavy vehicles, so that 17% of all road freight can be transported by zero-emission vehicles by 2030. Electrification of road vehicles is the most efficient option to cut road freight pollution and the technologies are improving rapidly.



Prioritise air freight for genuinely time-sensitive transport needs to keep existing use constant as our economy continues to grow, with more use of rail for interstate transport of consumer goods and other freight.



PROTECTING AND RESTORING OUR LANDSCAPES

Land, agriculture and waste are mostly biogenic sources of greenhouse gases, meaning they are created through the decomposition of organic materials. This includes emissions released from livestock, cropping, logging and clearing of land and forests, and the breakdown of waste in landfill. This calls for different solutions than phasing out fossil fuels. Over this decade we can work towards creating a closed loop between sources and sinks of pollution within this sector.

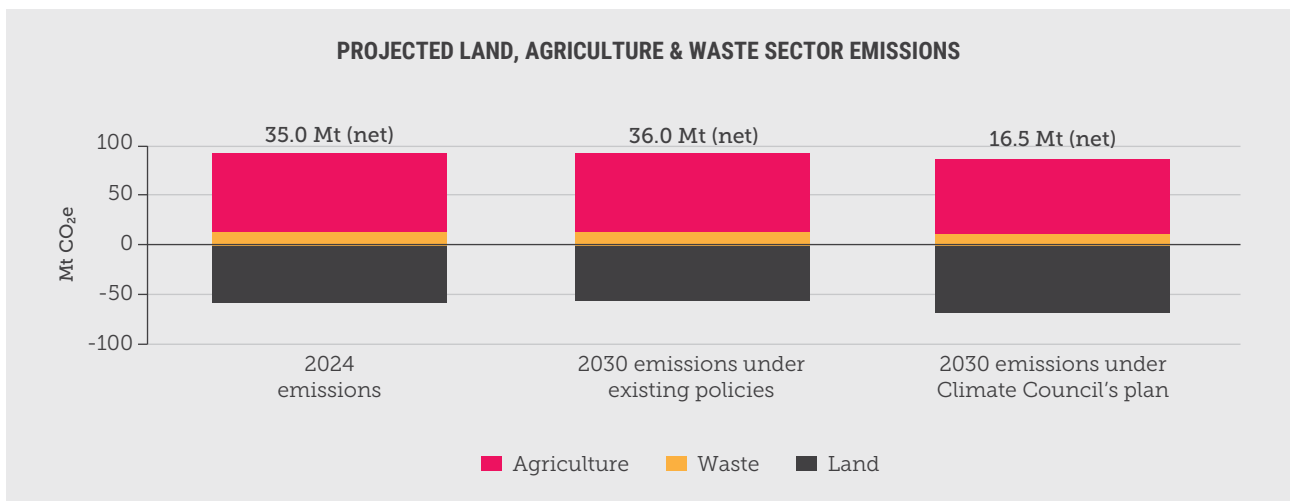
WHAT CAN WE DO?

Halve emissions and move towards a closed loop for those that remain:

From 35 Mt CO₂e in 2024






To 16.5 Mt CO₂e in 2030




HOW WILL WE GET THERE?


Protect forests and restore more land

-  End native forest logging to avoid releasing emissions from disrupted vegetation and soils, and capture more carbon dioxide by allowing forests to grow. Ending native forest logging is estimated to reduce net emissions by around 6-7 Mt CO₂e a year for the next 20 years.
-  Phase down land clearing through tightening restrictions on clearing of remnant vegetation and providing incentives to reduce secondary regrowth clearing so we restore more land. This could avoid an estimated 5 Mt CO₂e.
-  Work towards a closed loop for the agriculture and land sectors that reaches net negative emissions over time. This involves progressively phasing down the use of land-based offsets against fossil fuel pollution as we replace the use of coal, oil and gas with clean alternatives in other sectors.

Use all available and emerging solutions to cut agricultural emissions

-  Administering feed additives to dairy and feedlot cattle; managing manure emissions via covered anaerobic ponds; and replacing conventional nitrogen fertilisers with coated slow-release versions all reduce emissions (Davis et al. 2023). For grazing cattle, solutions include developing slow-release feed additives, selective breeding of lower methane cows and incorporating legumes into pastures. Together, actions like these could cut agricultural emissions by around 4-5 Mt CO₂e a year by 2030.

Better collection and treatment of food and garden organic waste

-  Roll out food organics and garden organics (FOGO) collection services for all urban households and businesses. As part of the Federal Government's National Waste Strategy, all jurisdictions have signed up to increase the recovery rate for all waste streams to 80% by 2030, with the rollout of FOGO services being a key action within this strategy. Achieving the 80% recovery target for organic waste streams would cut a further 2 Mt of CO₂e a year (DCCEEW 2023c). Processed organic waste can be reused to replace some use of synthetic fertilisers.



LIVING AND WORKING IN BUILDINGS THAT ARE ELECTRIFIED AND EFFICIENT

The built environment refers to energy used in our homes, workplaces, and other buildings besides electricity. Climate pollution in this sector comes from burning fossil fuels – primarily gas – for heating, hot water and cooking. When our homes and businesses are inefficient they waste energy and money. Improving our buildings and appliances is one of the simplest and fastest ways to cut climate pollution with technology and materials that are widely available and scaleable today.

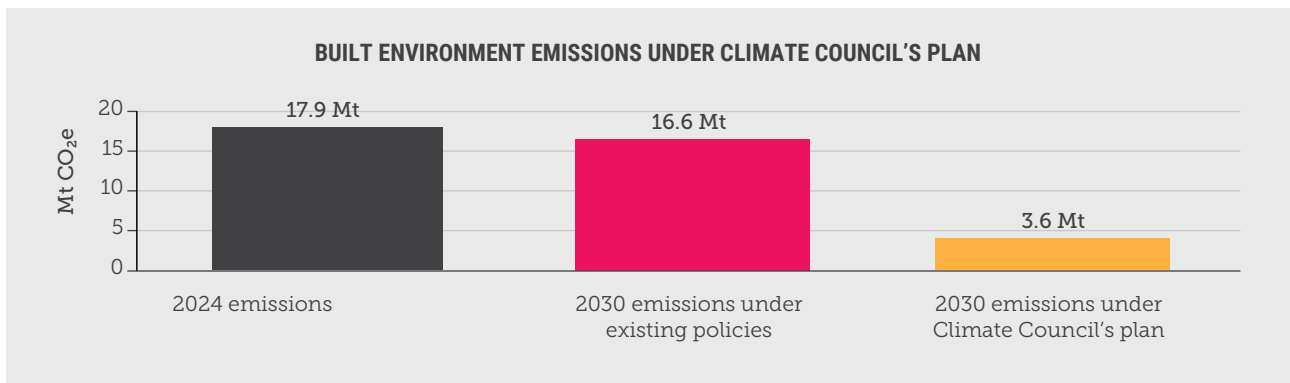
WHAT CAN WE DO?

Slash climate pollution in buildings:

From 17.9 Mt CO₂e in 2024



To 3.6 Mt CO₂e in 2030



HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

Smarter energy use, and speeding up electrification



Electrify most Australian homes and workplaces using efficient electric appliances in parallel with a roll-out of rooftop solar and household batteries to cut power bills and climate pollution.



Upgrade the thermal efficiency of residential buildings by approximately 8% for residential and 12% for commercial buildings using relatively low-cost upgrades like insulation, window glazing and gap sealing.



Ensure all new homes built are all-electric, and coordinate an orderly phase out of gas from existing buildings, in favour of electrification.



Electrification and energy efficiency upgrades can ease cost of living pressures, saving Australian households from \$1,119 to \$2,872 per year depending on where they live (Climate Council 2023b).





WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK. IT'S TIME TO ACCELERATE PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Around Australia, governments, businesses and communities have started delivering a wide range of investments and initiatives that cut climate pollution.

The Australian Government is bringing online huge amounts of large-scale renewable energy, storage and transmission, so that we're set up as ageing and unreliable coal-fired power stations keep closing. Tasmania and the ACT are already fully powered by renewable energy like wind, solar and hydro. Victoria is getting off gas and local governments around the country are making plans to join them. South Australia has put the pedal to the metal on integrating

electric vehicles into the energy system. Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory are racing to scale up renewable hydrogen to cleanly power the next era of Australian manufacturing.

We're transforming our economy and delivering benefits like cleaner and more affordable energy, new jobs, protecting the environment, and less climate pollution. We can build on this progress and do more during this make-or-break decade for climate action. The full *Seize the Decade* report provides a wide range of policy proposals designed to complement action that's already underway and accelerate it: www.climatecouncil.org.au/resources/seize-the-decade



DELIVERING NOW SHOWS WHAT'S POSSIBLE BY 2035

In late 2023, the federal government released projections showing Australia is broadly on track to meet our national target of cutting climate pollution by 43% below 2005 levels by 2030. We're well on the way to achieving this off the back of initiatives delivered and well advanced by the Albanese Government during its first term in office.

This is a strong turnaround from where we were. The last projections released under the former federal government in 2021 forecast climate pollution would be only 30% lower by 2030. This shows how focused effort and smart policy can drive real change. It should inspire us to keep going with what we know works – building out our clean economy – so we cut climate pollution by 75% this decade. That is what will keep more Australians safe over time. That is what will lower the costs of living for households and businesses. That is what will build the nation's prosperity for generations to come. That will be a proud legacy.

It is also what will get Australia well on track to reach net zero by 2035 – the next goal we must work towards. This won't be easy, but Climate Council's research shows it is possible if we build on our momentum to drive more change, in more ways, and in more places across our community and economy.

Under the international agreement on climate change that Australia signed onto, countries must provide regular updates about their plans and targets to keep cutting climate pollution towards net zero. The federal government will set our next 'Nationally Determined Contribution' under this agreement within the coming 12 months that spells out how much climate pollution Australia plans to cut by 2035. Our research shows we can reduce it by 75% by the end of this decade using proven and readily available technologies and methods. There are two more federal terms of government still to run before 2030, which gives our national leaders the opportunity to keep building on what's already been done.

Australia's next national emissions reduction target should be determined by both what is necessary, and what is possible. Anyone familiar with climate science will understand why it is necessary to do everything we can to protect Australians from worsening climate harms. Our research shows how much climate pollution can be cut by 2030. If we can cut pollution by 75% by 2030, then we can do even more by 2035. Setting any 2035 target that's lower than what Australia can achieve *this decade* would mean fewer, good jobs for Australian workers. It would mean less competitive Australian industries. It would mean higher costs of living for households and businesses. It would mean higher risks and worsening impacts like bushfires, heatwaves and flooding rains. It would mean worsening degradation of the natural environment and further biodiversity loss. It would mean more lives lost and debilitating physical and mental health outcomes.

By contrast, a necessary and achievable target backed by real action can create new jobs, grow clean industries, improve our quality of life, lower the costs of living, and keep our children safe. Australia's 2035 target must improve on what we know is already possible by 2030 – a 75% cut – and get us closer to ending climate pollution. After all, we have already made so much progress on climate action in two short years. Imagine what we can do in the decade ahead.

In adopting smart policies we can ensure the benefits of doing so will be felt by more Australians and visible in more communities. Not only in keeping more of us safe from worsening extreme weather, but also in plenty of good jobs being available, more liveable neighbourhoods, and lower costs of living and doing business. These are our choices, and their future.

Let's seize the decade.

The Climate Council is an independent, crowd-funded organisation providing quality information on climate change to the Australian public.

The Climate Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we live, meet and work. We wish to pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise the continuous connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country.

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