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TIMELINE: AUSTRALIAN CLIMATE AND CLEAN AIR POLICY INTERVENTIONS 2013-16

Developments under the Abbott-Turnbull government

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WORKING PAPER



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Introduction

Climate change remains a political issue both in Australia and internationally. This timeline is a record of Australian climate and clean air policy interventions from September 2013, when the Abbott Coalition government took office, to June 2016, as a new election looms. This publication builds on the [Commonwealth Parliamentary Library's similar timeline](#) that covered such events up to the end of 2013.¹

On the domestic front, the government's efforts to address climate change have remained true to election commitments. The Coalition government consistently and persistently sought to repeal any and all legislation enacted as part of the previous government's carbon price mechanism. However, a Senate composed of many small parties and independent senators with a mix of values and priorities frustrated some of the government's efforts. As a result, several climate change agencies established under the previous Labor government remain. Nonetheless, the Abbott Coalition government succeeded in establishing its Direct Action Policy, underpinned by a A\$2.55 billion Emissions Reduction Fund.

A new direction has not yet become evident under the Coalition's new leadership. However, a focus on innovation—suggested by the renaming of the Department of Industry and the creation of a A\$1 billion Clean Energy Innovation Fund—may be the new approach to Australian climate policy under Malcolm Turnbull.

Internationally, the 21st United Nations conference on climate change held in Paris in December 2015 produced tangible results. A total of 195 nations, including Australia, China and the US, agreed to pursue the goal of limiting global temperature rise this century to well below 2°C.² This is the context within which any newly elected Australian Government will need to operate.

The scope of this chronology expands slightly on that of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library's publication. Notably, it includes a focus on clean air policy initiatives and developments. The Hazelwood mine fires of 2009 were clear reminders that Australia's heavy use of fossil fuels has implications for climate change in the longer-term but also for air pollution in the nearer-term. For this reason, the timeline is inclusive of government-issued climate change and clean air decisions, policies and publications.³ Key international developments and publications have also been included where relevant to Australia.

¹ Talberg, A, Hui, S, Loynes, K (2013), [Australian climate change policy: a chronology](#), Parliamentary Library Research Paper Series 2013-14, 2 December 2013, accessed 9 September 2015.

² UNFCCC Newsroom, [Historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change: 195 Nations Set Path to Keep Temperature Rise Well Below 2 Degrees Celsius](#), 12 December 2015, accessed 31 March 2016.

³ Details of the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry are not included in the timeline because they pertain to Victorian government operations.

Table: Timeline of key Australian climate and clean air policy interventions, September 2013 - June 2016

Date	Details	Source
4 Sep 2013	Coalition's election policy on resources and energy includes a pledge to establish a National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) research program on the health effects of wind farms.	The Coalition, The Coalition's Policy for Resources and Energy , September 2013.
Abbott Government takes office - 18 September 2013		
18 Sep 2013	A new Department of the Environment is created. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change functions are moved to the new Department of the Environment. Government plans to abolish the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC), the Climate Change Authority (CCA) and the Climate Commission. 	Administrative Arrangements Order , Commonwealth of Australia, 18 September 2013. G Hunt, 6PR Perth interview with Paul Murray , Transcript, 20 September 2013.
19 Sep 2013	Climate Commission is dissolved saving A\$1.6 million annually.	G Hunt (Minister for the Environment), Streamlining Government Processes by Dissolving the Climate Commission , media release, 19 September 2013.
23 Sep 2013	Non-profit crowd-source funded Climate Council is launched replacing the Climate Commission.	Climate Council, Annual Report 2014 .
27 Sep 2013	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) releases the first instalment of its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5)—Climate Change 2013 the Physical Science Basis: The report notes that warming since the 1950s is unequivocal, largely determined by anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide (CO ₂), and in many projected scenarios is likely to exceed 2°C.	IPCC, IPCC starts meeting to finalise Working Group I report , media release, 23 September 2014.
6 Oct 2013	Memorandum of understanding is signed between Australian Motoring Enthusiast Party (AMEP) and Palmer United Party (PUP) in attempt to hold the balance of power in the Senate after 1 July 2014.	AMEP and PUP, Memorandum of understanding , 6 October 2013.
15 Oct - 4 Nov 2013	Legislation to repeal the carbon price mechanism (CPM) is made available for public consultation.	Department of the Environment, Repeal of the Carbon Tax Exposure Draft Legislation and Consultation Paper , October 2013.
11-23 Nov 2013	Nineteenth United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference held in Warsaw, Poland. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia does not send a Minister to the high-level climate change negotiations. Australia is criticised by non-governmental organisations for its position on climate action. 	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its nineteenth session, held in Warsaw from 11 to 23 November 2013 , FCCC/CP/2013/10, 31 January 2014. O Milman, Climate change talks: no minister to represent Australia , The Guardian, 7 November 2013. G Readfearn, How rich countries dodged the climate change blame game in Warsaw , The Guardian, 25 November 2013.
13 Nov 2013	CPM repeal bills are introduced into the House of Representatives.	Parliament of Australia, Clean Energy Legislation (Carbon Tax Repeal) Bill 2013 , Australian Parliament website.
14 Nov 2013	Provisions of the CPM repeal bills are referred to Senate Committee.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 3, 14 November 2013 , pp 126-7.

2 Dec 2013	<p>CPM repeal bills are introduced into the Senate as one package.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The package includes bills to abolish the CEFC and the CCA. A motion by Senator Wong is passed to have the bills considered separately. 	<p>Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 4, 2 December 2013, pp 171-2.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senate Committee inquiry into the CPM repeal bills recommends that the bills be passed. Dissenting reports from the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Greens recommend that the bills not be passed. Independent Senator Xenophon articulates support for the bills, with the exception of the CEFC abolition bill. 	<p>Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 4, 2 December 2013, p 198.</p>
10 Dec 2013	<p>The bill to abolish the CEFC is rejected by the Senate.</p>	<p>Parliament of Australia, 'Clean Energy Finance Corporation (Abolition) Bill 2013', Australian Parliament website.</p>
	<p>Environment Minister approves projects for dredging, construction and operation at Abbot Point for one of world's largest coal ports.</p>	<p>G Hunt (Minister for the Environment), Abbot Point and Curtis Island projects approved, media release, 10 December 2013.</p>
12 Dec 2013	<p>Government establishes Royal Commission into previous government's Home Insulation Program.</p>	<p>G Brandis (Attorney-General) and G Hunt, Government establishes Royal Commission into Home Insulation Program, joint media release, 12 December 2013.</p>
13 Dec 2013	<p>Emissions <i>decreased</i> by 0.1% from June 2012 to June 2013 (excluding land-use change and forestry emissions (LULUCF)); electricity emissions <i>decreased</i> by 6.3%.</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory June Quarter 2013, Canberra.</p>
17 Dec 2013	<p>Energy White Paper Issues Paper is released.</p>	<p>I Macfarlane (Minister for Industry), Public comment sought on Energy Policy Issues Paper, media release, 17 December 2013.</p>
19 Dec 2013	<p>Waratah Coal's extensive Galilee coal and rail projects are approved.</p> <p>Waratah Coal is incorporated into Mineralogy Pty Ltd, which is owned by federal MP, and Palmer United Party leader, Clive Palmer.</p>	<p>Approval decision, Waratah Coal Incorporated/Mining/Alpha in the Galilee Basin to Abbot Point/QLD/Establishment of Galilee Coal Mine and Associated Infrastructure (EPBC 2009/4737), 19 December 2013.</p>
20 Dec 2013	<p>Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF) Green Paper is released for comment.</p>	<p>G Hunt, Green paper: Taking strong action to cut emissions without a carbon tax, media release, 20 December 2013.</p>
	<p>Department of the Environment reports that Australia's abatement task to meet a 5% reduction on 2000 levels by 2020, has dropped to 431 MtCO₂e.</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Australia's Abatement Task and 2013 Emissions Projections, media release, 20 December 2013.</p>
10 Feb 2014	<p>Emissions <i>decreased</i> by 0.3% from September 2012 to September 2013 (excluding LULUCF); electricity emissions <i>decreased</i> by 5.5%.</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory September Quarter 2013, Canberra.</p>
14 Feb 2014	<p>The National Commission of Audit delivers to government its report Towards Responsible Government on the Commonwealth's finances. The report recommends abolishing the CEFC and CCA.</p>	<p>National Commission of Audit, Towards Responsible Government, Canberra, 14 February 2014.</p>



17 Feb 2014	Independent Expert Review into the Renewable Energy Target (RET) commissioned by Government. Mr Dick Warburton heads the review.	I Macfarlane and G Hunt, Review of the Renewable Energy Target , joint media release, 17 February 2014.
27 Feb 2014	The CCA publishes its Targets and Progress Review Final Report. It recommends a 2020 emissions reduction target of 19% and a 2030 target of 40% to 60% on 2000 levels.	CCA, Report by the Climate Change Authority - Statement by the Chair Mr Bernie Fraser , media release, 27 February 2014.
3 Mar 2014	The bill to abolish the CCA is rejected by the Senate.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 15, 3 March 2014 , pp 497-8.
4 Mar 2014	State of the Climate 2014 reports that the mean Australian temperature has increased 0.9°C and that heatwaves have become more common, more intense and longer.	CSIRO, State of the Climate 2014: A clear picture of Australia's climate , media release, 4 March 2014.
20 Mar 2014	The Senate rejects CPM repeal bills.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 22, 20 March 2014 , p 678.
	The CEFC abolition bill is introduced into the House a second time.	Australian Parliament, House of Representatives, Votes and Proceedings, no. 30, 20 March 2014 , p 400.
31 Mar 2014	IPCC releases the second instalment of AR5—Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: The report notes that climate change is already affecting biodiversity, human health and the environment globally and in Australia.	IPCC, IPCC starts meeting to finalise Working Group II report , media release, 25 March 2014.
7 Apr 2014	Government announces streamlining of Environment Department with 250 job cuts.	Department of the Environment, Department of the Environment - organisational change , 7 April 2014.
13 Apr 2014	IPCC releases the third instalment of AR5—Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change: The report notes that concerted global efforts towards decarbonisation are needed to limit warming to 2°C.	IPCC, IPCC starts meeting to finalise Working Group III report , media release, 7 April 2014.
15 Apr 2014	Emissions <i>decreased</i> by 0.8% from December 2012 to December 2013 (excluding LULUCF); electricity emissions <i>decreased</i> by 5%.	Department of the Environment, Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory December Quarter 2013 , Canberra.
24 Apr 2014	ERF White Paper is released.	G Hunt, Emissions Reduction Fund White Paper released , media release, 24 April 2014.
29 Apr 2014	State and Federal Environment Ministers agree to more stringent reporting standard for particle pollution (PM 2.5 and PM10).	G Hunt, Agreed Statement-Environment Ministers meeting , media release, 29 April 2014. Department of the Environment, Notice of Intention to vary Ambient Air Quality NEPM , 29 April 2014.
9 May 2014	ERF draft legislation is released and is open for public comment.	G Hunt, Emissions Reduction Fund draft legislation released , media release, 9 May 2014.
13 May 2014	2014-15 Budget: CCA receives no funding in 2014-15 and Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) funding is reduced by A\$1.3 billion over five years. An initiative to plant 20 million trees is allocated A\$50 million over four years. The ERF is allocated the first A\$1.15 billion of its expected A\$2.55 billion	Department of the Environment, Portfolio Budget Statements 2014-15, Budget related paper no. 1.7 , Canberra 2014. Australian Government, Budget 2014-15, Budget Measures: Budget Paper no. 2 , 13 May 2014.

Continued support of A\$9 million over three years for the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility

23 May 2014	Review into ozone and synthetic greenhouse gas legislation is announced.	G Hunt, Ozone review to address environment and safety concerns , media release, 23 May 2014.
18 Jun 2014	Bill to establish the ERF is introduced into the House as an amendment of the existing Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI).	Australian Parliament, House of Representatives, Votes and Proceedings, no. 48, 18 June 2014 , p 576.
	The CEFC abolition bill is rejected a second time, creating a trigger for a double dissolution.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 32, 18 June 2014 , pp 899-900.
19 Jun 2014	A bill to abolish the ARENA is introduced into the House.	Australian Parliament, House of Representatives, Votes and Proceedings, no. 49, 19 June 2014 , p 586.
	ERF bill is referred to Senate Committee.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 33, 19 June 2014 , p 914.
23 Jun 2014	The CPM repeal bills and the CCA abolition bill are introduced into the House a second time. A new CEFC repeal bill is introduced into the House.	Australian Parliament, House of Representatives, Votes and Proceedings, no. 50, 23 June 2014 , pp 599-601.
25 Jun 2014	Former US Vice President Al Gore and MP Clive Palmer issue joint statement. Clive Palmer announces that PUP, which holds the balance of power in the Senate, will support the repeal of the CPM but will not support changes to other elements such as the CEFC and the RET. The deal is contingent on the government establishing a dormant emissions trading scheme (ETS) to become active once China, the United States, the European Union, Japan and Korea all have operating ETSS.	C Palmer, Al Gore in discussions with Clive Palmer , media release, 25 June 2014. C Palmer, Palmer United Proposes Amendments to Carbon Tax Repeal to ensure power prices fall and the ETS is saved , media release, 26 June 2014. C Palmer, Saving Clean Energy Finance Corporation , media release, 4 July 2014.
26 Jun 2014	CPM repeal bills are referred to the Senate Committee again (without the CEFC and CCA repeal bills). CCA repeal bill is also referred to Senate Committee again.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 37, 26 June 2014 , p 1013.
7 Jul 2014	First sitting of the new Senate. With minor parties PUP, AMEP, the Family First party, the Liberal Democratic Party, the Democratic Labor Party and Independent Senator Xenophon there is no clear majority in the Senate.	Australian Parliament, 2014 Sitting Calendar , Australian Parliament website, accessed 30 March 2016.
	The Senate Committee inquiry into the ERF bill recommends that the bill be passed. A dissenting report from the ALP recommends that the bill not be passed. Additional comments from the Greens and Independent Senator Xenophon recommend that the scheme be strengthened.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 38, 7 July 2014 , p 1069.
8 Jul 2014	Second Senate Committee inquiries into CPM repeal bills and CCA abolition bill recommend that the bills be passed. Dissenting reports from the ALP and the Greens recommended that the bills not be passed.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 39, 8 July 2014 , pp 1084-5.
10 Jul 2014	The Senate rejects CPM repeal bills a second time.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 41, 10 July 2014 , p 1131.



14 Jul 2014	Bills are introduced into the House in a third attempt to repeal the CPM.	Australian Parliament, House of Representatives, Votes and Proceedings, no. 55, 14 July 2014 , pp 685-6.
17 Jul 2014	The Senate passes the CPM repeal bills (without the CEFC, CCA and ARENA abolition bills). Effect of the bills is backdated to 1 July 2014. The main bill reduces and reschedules funding to ARENA.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 45, 17 July 2014 , p 1236.
28 Jul 2014	The Federal Minister of the Environment approves Carmichael Coal and Rail Project. The Galilee Basin coal mine proposed by Adani would be the biggest in Australia.	G Hunt, Strictest conditions on Carmichael Coal Mine project , media release, 28 July 2014.
31 Jul 2014	Impact statement and draft variation to the ambient air quality National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM) on standards for airborne particles are released.	Standing Council on Environment and Water, Proposed variation to the Ambient Air Quality NEPM , media release, 31 July 2014.
1 Aug 2014	Low Carbon Australia, a government energy efficiency investment body established in 2010, is wound up. It had already been subsumed into the CEFC.	Department of the Environment, Annual Report 2014-15 , Canberra, 2015.
28 Aug 2014	Expert Review on RET (Warburton Review) recommends options to reduce the ambition of the RET including reducing the target, delaying the target date, or repealing scheme elements.	I Macfarlane and G Hunt, Independent panel review of the renewable energy target , joint media release, 28 August 2014.
29 Aug 2014	Royal Commission inquiry into the Home Insulation Program finds that workers were unnecessarily exposed to risk of injury and death.	Australian Parliament, House of Representatives, Votes and Proceedings, no. 49, 1 September 2014 , p 1366.
2 Sep 2014	Having passed the House, the ARENA abolition bill is introduced into the Senate but is not debated. Without the support of the Greens and Independents, the government does not have the numbers to pass the bill	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 50, 2 September 2014 , p 1396.
4 Sep 2014	The Energy Efficiency Opportunities Act 2006 is repealed.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 52, 4 September 2014 , p 1434.
19 Sep 2014	Emissions decreased by 1.1 % from March 2013 to March 2014 (excluding LULUCF); electricity emissions decreased by 3.9%.	Department of the Environment, Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory March Quarter 2014 , Canberra.
23 Sep 2014	Energy Green Paper is released.	I Macfarlane, Energy Green Paper setting policy direction for an energy superpower , media release, 23 September 2014.
2 Oct 2014	20 Million Trees initiative is launched.	G Hunt, 20 Million Trees launched with first grants round now open , media release, 2 October 2014.
22 Oct 2014	Government proposes a new large-scale RET of 26,000 GWh instead of current 41,000 GWh.	I Macfarlane, Q&A - Press Club Address , transcript, 22 October 2014.
31 Oct 2014	Legislation to establish the ERF passes the Senate.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 63, 31 October 2014 , p 1755.
15-16 Nov 2014	Australia hosts the G20 Summit in Brisbane. The G20 communiqué includes G20 Principles on Energy Collaboration , in which nations agree to "Rationalise and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies".	G20 Leaders' Communiqué , Brisbane Summit, 15-16 November 2014.

24 Nov 2014	By motion of Senators Leyonhjelm, Madigan, Day, Xenophon and Back, the Senate establishes the Select Committee on Wind Turbines to report on the regulatory governance and economic implications of wind turbines.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 67, 24 November 2014 , pp 1833-35.
1-14 Dec 2014	<p>Twentieth UNFCCC conference held in Lima, Peru</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia supports the Green Climate Fund A\$200 million over four years despite previously refusing to do so. 	<p>UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twentieth session, held in Lima from 1 to 14 December 2014, FCCC/CP/2014/10, 2 February 2015.</p> <p>J Bishop (Minister for Foreign Affairs), Australian national statement UNFCCC conference Lima, media release, 10 December 2014.</p> <p>CHOGM 2013 Communiqué, 17 November 2013, p 4.</p>
15 Dec 2014	<p>The Environment Minister requests that CCA undertake a Special Review on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Australia's future emissions reduction targets Whether Australia should have an ETS and conditions for introducing one, considering whether the policies of the US, China, Japan, Korea and the EU are equivalent to an ETS. 	CCA, Annual Report 2014-15 , June 2015.
22 Dec 2014	<p>The CCA's CFI review finds that while some real emissions reductions were achieved, the ERF makes some important improvements on the CFI.</p> <p>As required by legislation, the CCA undertakes a second RET Review and recommends against scaling back the 2020 large-scale target of 41,000 GWh.</p>	<p>CCA, Carbon Farming Initiative Review, December 2014.</p> <p>CCA, 2014 Renewable Energy Target Review, December 2014.</p>
23 Dec 2014	<p>Emissions <i>decreased</i> by 1.4 % from June 2013 to June 2014 (excluding LULUCF); electricity emissions <i>decreased</i> by 4%.</p> <p>The Government responds to Royal Commission's findings on Home Insulation Program.</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Quarterly update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory: June 2014, December 2014.</p> <p>G Hunt, Government response to the Home Insulation Program Royal Commission, media release, 23 December 2014.</p>
27 Jan 2015	<p>Projections for Australia's NRM Regions highlight that the Australian average surface air temperature has increased by 0.9°C since 1910 and sea level has risen about 20cm over the past century.</p>	CSIRO, New climate change projections for Australia , media release, 27 January 2015.
1 Feb 2015	<p>The Australian Academy of Sciences publishes The Science of Climate Change: Questions and Answers. The document addresses key questions relating to climate change.</p>	AAS, The Academy answers questions on climate change science , February 2015.
11 Feb 2015	<p>The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Statement: Evidence on Wind Farms and Human Health concludes that there is no consistent evidence that wind farms cause adverse health effects in humans.</p>	NHMRC, Wind farms and human health , 11 February 2015.
1 Mar 2015	<p>Emissions <i>decreased</i> by 0.6% from September 2013 to September 2014 (excluding LULUCF); electricity emissions <i>decreased</i> by 1.7%.</p>	Department of the Environment, Quarterly update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory: September 2014 , March 2015.



2 Mar 2015	Government proposes revised large-scale RET target of 31,000 GWh but this is rejected by the Opposition.	I Macfarlane and G Hunt, Government focussed on repairing the RET , joint media release, 16 March 2015 L Cox, Labor rejects fresh renewable energy target offer , Sydney Morning Herald, 2 March 2015.
23 Mar 2015	Australia's emissions projections 2014-15 report finds that the abatement task has decreased to 236 MtCO ₂ e.	G Hunt, Australia is on track to meet or beat our emissions targets , media release, 23 March 2015.
	Consultation Paper – Review of the National Carbon Offset Standard (NCOS) and the Carbon Neutral Program is released.	G Hunt, Consultation invited on review of the National Carbon Offset Standard , media release, 23 March 2015.
26 Mar 2015	ERF: Safeguard Mechanism consultation paper is released. Public consultation is open until 27 April 2015.	G Hunt, Safeguard paper released for consultation: government to achieve targets , media release, 26 March 2015.
28 Mar 2015	The Government forms UNFCCC Taskforce to determine Australia's post-2020 emissions reduction target. An issues paper is released to inform the process.	T Abbott (Prime Minister), J Bishop, and G Hunt, Post-2020 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Target , joint media release, 28 March 2015.
8 Apr 2015	The Government releases its Energy White Paper 2015 . Climate change is mentioned only once and only in an introductory paragraph.	I Macfarlane, Energy White Paper maps Australia's powerful future , media release, 8 April 2015.
15-16 Apr 2015	The Clean Energy Regulator (CER) holds the first ERF auction with 107 contracts awarded for A\$660 million covering 47 Mt of abatement at an average price of A\$13.95 per tonne.	CER, Auction – April 2015 , 9 November 2015.
8 May 2015	The Government and Opposition reach agreement on a revised large-scale RET target of 33,000 GWh.	I Macfarlane and G Hunt, Renewable Energy Target , transcript of joint doorstep, 8 May 2015.
12 May 2015	The Government allocates A\$6.1 million over two years to extend the CCA until 31 December 2016.	Australian Government, Budget 2015-16, Budget Measures: Budget Paper no. 2 , 12 May 2015.
27 May 2015	Legislation is introduced to reduce the large-scale RET from 41,000 GWh by 2020 to 33,000 GWh. The legislation also provides exemptions for emissions-intensive trade-exposed activities and removes the requirement for two-yearly reviews of the scheme.	Australian Parliament, House of Representatives, Votes and Proceedings, no. 117, 27 May 2015 , p 1317.
1 Jun 2015	The Government rejects the CCA's 2014 CFI review recommendation to introduce enhanced 'additionality' tests for individual projects, and notes the recommendation to monitor and periodically review the appropriateness of the ERF.	Department of the Environment, Australian Government response to the Climate Change Authority Carbon Farming Initiative Review , 2015.
23 Jun 2015	Legislation reducing the large-scale RET from 41,000 GWh to 33,000 GWh passes the Senate.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 100, 23 June 2015 , p 2786.
24 Jun 2015	A Government report on end-use energy intensity in Australia finds that although energy intensity has decreased in the Australian economy since the 1980s, it has been offset by increased energy consumption in the mining sector.	Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, End-use energy intensity in Australia , June 2015.

	The Treasurer and Finance Minister issue a draft directive for CEFC to stop investing in wind and rooftop solar.	CEFC, Statement from the CEFC , media release, 13 July 2015.
29 Jun 2015	Australian Climate Roundtable, an alliance of industry and environment groups, issues joint principles for climate policy. It calls for effective, broad and internationally linked action.	Australian Climate Roundtable: Joint Principles for Climate Policy , 29 June 2015.
2 Jul 2015	The CCA's Final report on Australia's future emissions reduction targets recommends a target of 30% below 2000 levels by 2025 and 40% to 60% below 2000 levels by 2030.	CCA, Final report on Australia's future emissions reduction targets , media release, 2 July 2015.
26 Jul 2015	ALP confirms its national election platform that includes a target of 50% renewables by 2030 and the introduction of an ETS.	ALP, A smart, modern, fair Australia , July 2015.
3 Aug 2015	Select Committee on Wind Turbines delivers final report calling for additional evidence-based health advice on the impacts of wind turbines. A dissenting report from the ALP provides arguments to undermine this recommendation.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 103, 10 August 2015 , p 2857.
4 Aug 2015	Federal Court rules to set aside the Government's approval of the Carmichael Mine after a challenge by Mackay Conservation Group. The Court finds that the Minister did not have regard for two vulnerable species, the Yakka Skink and Ornamental Snake.	Mackay Conservation Group v Commonwealth of Australia (unreported order, Federal Court of Australia, Katzmann J, 4 August 2015). NSW Environmental Defenders Office, Court sets aside approval of Adani's Carmichael coal mine , media release, 5 August 2015.
7 Aug 2015	The Government responds to CCA's 2014 RET Review and notes the key recommendations of the Review.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 103, 10 August 2015 , p 2856.
11 Aug 2015	Australia announces 2030 emissions reduction target of 26-28% below 2005 levels by 2030.	T Abbott, J Bishop and G Hunt, Australia's 2030 Emissions Reduction Target , joint media release, 11 August 2015.
14 Aug 2015	The CCA publicly comments that Government's announced 2030 target is substantially weaker than the CCA's recently recommended 2030 target.	CCA, Authority observations on Australia's post-2020 emissions reduction target: Statement by the Chair , 14 August 2015.
21 Aug 2015	Emissions <i>decreased</i> by 0.2 % from March 2014 to March 2015 (excluding LULUCF); electricity emissions <i>increased</i> by 0.7 %.	Department of the Environment, Quarterly update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory: March 2015 , March 2015.
	The Government releases the UNFCCC Taskforce Review report outlining the recently announced 2030 emissions reduction target and policy options to achieve the target.	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, UNFCCC Taskforce – Review Report , 21 August 2015.
31 Aug 2015	A A\$25 million Carbon Capture and Storage Research Development and Demonstration Fund is announced.	I Macfarlane, New support for carbon capture and storage R&D , media release, 31 August 2015.
2 Sep 2015	ERF Safeguard Mechanism draft legislation is released.	G Hunt, Emissions Reduction Fund safeguard mechanism consultation continues , media release, 2 September 2015.



4 Sep 2015	Key outcomes from the review of NCOS and Carbon Neutral Program are released.	G Hunt, Making it easier for businesses to become carbon neutral , media release, 4 September 2015.
8 Sep 2015	CCA Chair, Bernie Fraser, resigns.	G Hunt, Resignation of Mr Bernie Fraser , media release, 8 September 2015.
Minister for Communications Malcolm Turnbull becomes Prime Minister after internal party challenge – 15 September 2015.		
20 Sep 2015	The Department of Industry and Science is renamed the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.	M Turnbull, Changes to the Ministry , transcript, 20 September 2015.
21 Sep 2015	Responsibility for renewable energy technology development is transferred from the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science to the Department of the Environment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibility for the CEFC and ARENA moves to the Department of the Environment. Within the Department of the Environment a new Office of Climate Change and Renewables Innovation is created to house the CER, the CEFC, ARENA, the CCA, and the Department's renewable energy functions. 	Amendments to the Administrative Arrangement Order , Commonwealth of Australia, 21 September 2015. G Hunt, Greenhouse 2015 Conference – Atmosphere, Oceans and Air , transcript, 28 October 2015.
25 Sep 2015	The United Nations General Assembly commits to 17 new Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 13 commits to taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.	United Nations General Assembly, Resolution adopted by General Assembly on 25 September 2015 , Resolution A/RES/70/1, 21 October 2015.
2 Oct 2015	Australia attends the inaugural G20 Energy Ministerial meeting held in Istanbul, Turkey. <p>The meeting's Communiqué recommits support for the Principles on Energy Collaboration endorsed by leaders at the G20 meeting held in Brisbane in 2014.</p>	J Frydenberg (Minister for Resources, Energy and Northern Australia), G20 Ministers to discuss global energy challenges , media release, 1 October 2015. G20 Turkey 2015, Inclusive Energy Collaboration: Delivering on the G20 Energy Principles and High-Level Conference on Energy Access in Sub Saharan Africa, 1-2 October 2015 , media release, 2 October 2015.
7 Oct 2015	An ozone and synthetic greenhouse gas review options paper identifies strategies to deliver abatement of over 80 MtCO ₂ e by 2030.	G Hunt, Australia leads the way in reducing ozone and synthetic greenhouse gas emissions , 7 October 2015.
8 Oct 2015	The CCA announces the appointment of five new Board members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government's appointment of Chair, Wendy Craik AM and new members Stuart Allinson, Kate Carnell AM, Danny Price, and the Hon John Sharp is criticised for partisanship. 	CCA, Climate Change Authority welcomes new Chair and members , media release, 8 October 2015. P Hannam, Climate Change Authority gets five new board members in possible reprieve , Sydney Morning Herald, 8 October 2015.
9 Oct 2015	A National Wind Farm Commissioner is appointed and tasked with facilitating the resolution of complaints from concerned community residents about wind farms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Independent Scientific Committee on Wind Turbines is responsible for building on the work of NHMRC. 	G Hunt, Appointment of National Wind Farm Commissioner and Independent Scientific Committee on Wind Turbines , media release, 9 October 2015.

12 Oct 2015	Legislation for the ERF Safeguard mechanism is tabled in Parliament. It comes into force on 1 July 2016.	Australian Parliament, Journals of the Senate, no. 119, 12 October 2015 , p 3173.
15 Oct 2015	Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Infrastructure project is approved the previous approval was set aside by the Federal Court.	G Hunt, Carmichael Coal Mine and Rail Infrastructure project , media release, 15 October 2015.
31 Oct 2015	A Ministerial Forum is established to address vehicle emissions. An interdepartmental working group is responsible for reporting to the Ministerial Forum on possible measures and drafting an implementation plan.	P Fletcher (Minister for Major Projects, Territories and Local Government), G Hunt, and J Frydenberg, Turnbull Government to review approach to vehicle emissions , joint media release, 31 October 2015.
4-5 Nov 2015	The CER holds the second ERF auction with a total of 129 carbon abatement contracts awarded for A\$557 million covering 45 Mt of abatement at an average price of A\$12.25 per tonne.	CER, Auction – November 2015 , 13 November 2015.
6 Nov 2015	Australia is elected to lead the Green Climate Fund in 2016. Australia will co-Chair with South Africa.	J Bishop and S Ciobo (Minister for International Development and the Pacific), Australia to lead Green Climate Fund Board , joint media release, 6 November 2015.
24 Nov 2015	New versions of the NCOS and the Carbon Neutral Program are released.	G Hunt, Boosting incentives for voluntary action to reduce emissions , media release, 24 November 2015.
30 Nov - 13 Dec 2015	The twenty-first UNFCCC conference of the Parties is held in Paris, France.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-first session, held in Paris from 30 November to 13 December 2015 , FCCC/CP/2015/10, 29 January 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia agrees to adopt the Paris Agreement in which all nations submit, revise and review national emissions reduction pledges with a view to keeping the global temperature increase well below 2°C and aiming for 1.5°C. • Australia also commits \$1 billion over five years from the existing aid budget towards building climate resilience and reducing emissions in vulnerable nations. 	M Turnbull, 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference Paris , speech, 30 November 2015.
2 Dec 2015	A National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy outlines how the Government is managing the risks of a variable and changing climate in Australia, and highlights key principles that underpin Australia's pursuit of effective resilience and adaptation.	G Hunt, Australia releases National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy , media release, 2 December 2015.
3 Dec 2015	The CEFC investment mandate is updated to support investment in emerging and innovative clean technologies, including a focus on offshore wind.	CEFC, Statement from the CEFC on receipt of the updated Investment Mandate , media release, 3 December 2015
	The Electricity Generation Major Projects report confirms that renewable energy dominates new major electricity generation projects.	J Frydenberg and G Hunt, Renewables dominate new electricity generation , joint media release, 3 December 2015.
4 Dec 2015	The National Energy Productivity Plan 2015-2030 is released outlining aims to improve Australia's energy productivity by 40% by 2030.	J Frydenberg, National Energy Productivity Plan to benefit all , media release, 4 December 2015.



15 Dec 2015	The Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2015-16 includes funding of A\$1 billion from existing foreign aid budget to address climate change impacts in vulnerable nations, as pledged by the Prime Minister in December in Paris.	Australian Government, Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2015-16 , 15 December 2015.
22 Dec 2015	Emissions <i>increased</i> by 0.8 % from June 2014 to June 2015 (excluding LULUCF); electricity emissions <i>increased</i> by 3%.	Department of the Environment, Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory: June 2015 , December 2015.
	Australia's abatement task: tracking to 2020 factsheet reports that Australia's abatement task has become negative at -28Mt by 2020.	Department of the Environment, Australia's abatement task: tracking to 2020 , Canberra, 2015.
4 Feb 2016	CSIRO announces a redistribution of human resources significantly reducing expertise in the Oceans and Atmosphere division.	CSIRO, Correcting the Public Record on Changes at CSIRO , media release, 8 February 2016.
5 Feb 2016	Energy in Australia 2015 report shows strong growth in renewables sector and states that 17% of Australian households have installed rooftop solar.	Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, Release of Energy in Australia 2015 , media release, 5 February 2016.
11 Feb 2016	Vehicle emissions discussion paper is released.	P Fletcher, G Hunt and J Frydenberg, Vehicle Emissions Discussion Paper , joint media release, 11 February 2016.
24 Feb 2016	An Energy Resources Growth Centre is launched with an investment of A\$15.4 million over four years.	C Pyne (Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science) and J Frydenberg, Energy Resources Growth Centre launched , joint media release, 24 February 2016.
18 Mar 2016	Emissions <i>increased</i> by 0.2 % from September 2014 to September 2015 (excluding LULUCF); electricity emissions <i>increased</i> by 2.1%.	Department of the Environment, Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory September Quarter 2015 , Canberra.
22 Mar 2016	NHMRC provides A\$3.3 million in funding to research the relationship between wind farms and human health.	NHMRC, NHMRC awards funding into wind farms and human health , media release, 22 March 2016.
23 Mar 2016	Government establishes A\$1 billion Clean Energy Innovation Fund to start in July 2016. The fund will invest in pilot and demonstration clean energy projects seeking commercialisation.	M Turnbull (Prime Minister) and G Hunt, Turnbull Government taking strong new approach to clean and renewable energy innovation in Australia , joint media release, 23 March 2016.
19 April 2016	Cabinet Ministers question climate change science. Attorney-General George Brandis and Senator Fiona Nash both suggest that the science is not settled.	Parliamentary Debates, Senate , 19 April 2016, p. 3010. Sky News, Senator agrees climate science is 'not settled' , 21 April 2016.
23 Apr 2016	The Paris Agreement is signed in New York. Australia is among 175 countries to sign. Minister Hunt announces that Australia will aim to ratify the Agreement by the end of the year. The government announces an additional A\$11 million to improve the health and resilience of the Great Barrier Reef.	M Turnbull, J Bishop and G Hunt, Australia signs Agreement on climate change , joint media release, 23 April 2016.
27 Apr 2016	The Australian Labor Party announces its climate change election policy platform. The plan includes the establishment of two emissions trading schemes, a goal to implement 50% renewables by 2030, an Electricity Modernisation Plan to assist companies, workers and communities in the transition to a low-	M Butler, Labor's Climate Change Action Plan , 27 April 2016 Australian Labor Party, Labor's Climate Change Action Plan , n.d.

	carbon economy, and consultation to determine an emissions reduction target, using the CCA's recommended 45% reduction on 2005 levels as a baseline.	
	The CER holds the third ERF auction with a total of 73 carbon abatement contracts awarded for A\$116 million covering 50.5 Mt of abatement at an average price of A\$10.23 per tonne.	CER, Auction – April 2016 , 6 May 2016
3 May 2016	2016-17 Budget: No additional funding is provided to the ERF, ARENA or CSIRO.	Australian Government, Budget 2016-17, Budget Measures: Budget Paper no. 2 , 3 May 2016.
8 May 2016	Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull instigates a double dissolution, announcing a federal election will take place on 2 July 2016. The Turnbull Government assumes a caretaker role.	M Turnbull, Prime Minister's advice regarding a double dissolution election , press release 8 May 2016.
6 Jun 2016	Labor commits to stopping CSIRO job cuts and promises A\$250 million in CSIRO funding if successful at the next election.	M Butler, Labor backs Australian science against Turnbull's CSIRO job cuts , media release, 6 June 2016. F Blackwood, Election 2016: Labor pledges \$250m in CSIRO funding , but no promises on restoring jobs, ABC News, 13 June 2016.

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