



factsheet AUSTRALIA

ONE OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST POLLUTERS

MYTH

Australia is not a significant polluter so there is no need for us to act.

FACT

Australia is the world's 15th largest total emitter and has the highest amount of emissions per person among the major polluters (Figures 1 and 2).¹ Whilst Australia accounts for around 1.5 per cent of global emissions, our total pollution levels are comparable to those of Mexico, United Kingdom, South Korea, Italy, France and the Ukraine. This is despite the fact all of these nations have populations at least twice that of Australia.

Suggesting that an individual country should not act because its total emissions are small relative to the global total, is like saying that because an individual tax payer contributes such a small amount to the total tax collected, they should not be expected to pay tax. All countries need to do their fair share in global action to address climate change.

Between 1950 and today, the average Australian produced around 15 per cent more energy-related pollution than an average person in other advanced economies, and around 10 times more than the average person in China, India, Brazil and South Africa (Figure 3).

Australia also has a very pollution intensive economy. For example, we have one of the most emissions intensive power sectors in the world (Figure 4) and—unlike other advanced economies—we are actually **increasing** the level of pollution per unit of energy produced (Figure 5).

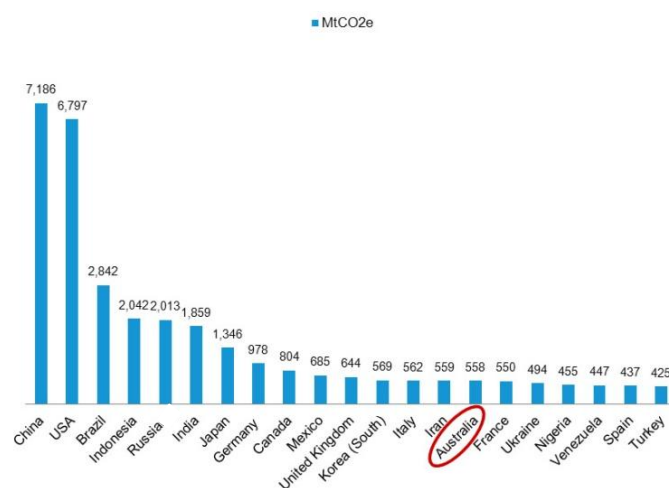
This highlights just how far behind other advanced nations Australia really is. Many are already out-pacing us in the race to cleaner energy and improved energy efficiency.

The challenge for Australia is to wean our economy off its pollution dependence and maximise the opportunities associated with new clean industries and investments.

To achieve this transformation, a pollution price and limit is critical. However, a price and limit alone will not get the job done. A pollution price needs to be backed up by a set of measures to drive energy efficiency, clean energy and agricultural solutions.

As a major emitter, and the world's largest exporter of coal, the world watches what Australia does. Australia taking responsibility for its carbon pollution and having a credible mechanism to meet its agreed targets will encourage other countries to take more decisive steps.

Figure 1: Top 20 polluters globally



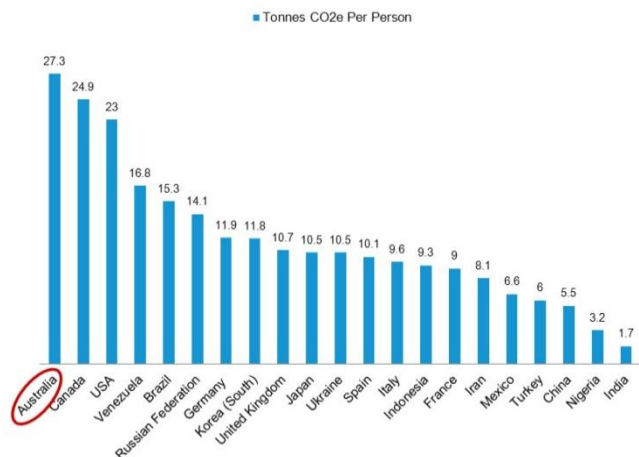
Note: Total GHG pollution in 2005 (includes land use change and covers CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, PFCs, HFCs, SF₆).

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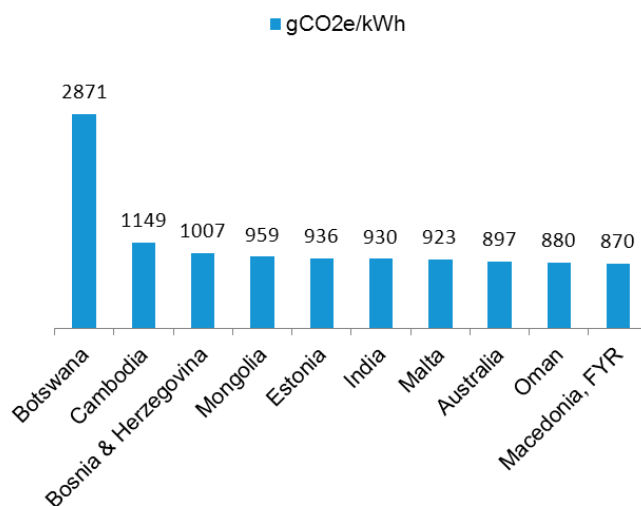
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Figure 2: Pollution per person among the top 20



Note: Total GHG pollution per person in 2005 among the top 20 global emitters (includes land use change and covers CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, PFCs, HFCs, SF₆).

Figure 4: The world's top ten polluting electricity sectors



Note: Greenhouse pollution intensity of electricity generation in 2007.

Figure 3: Cumulative energy related emissions between 1950 and 2005

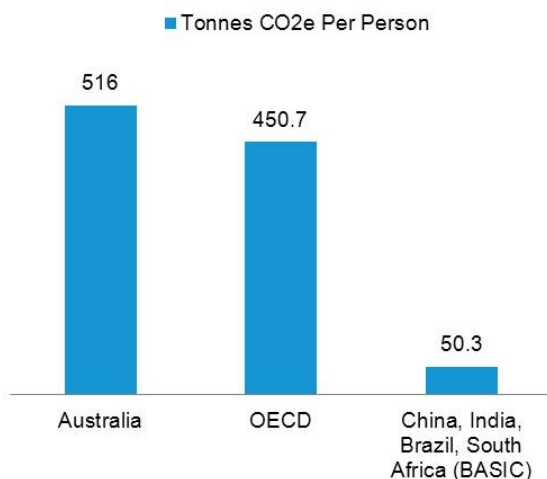
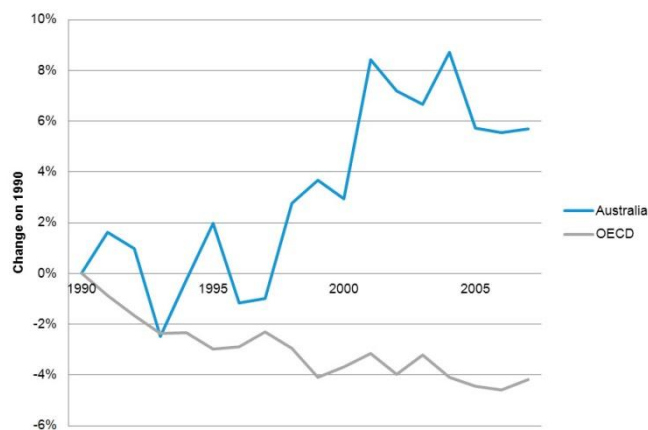


Figure 5: Pollution intensity of energy use



Note: Energy use per person, Change on 1990 levels - 1990 to 2007.

¹ All figures in this fact sheet are based on World Resources Institute, *Climate Analysis Indicators Tool (CAIT) Version 8.0*, Washington, DC, 2011.