

Your Question

With scientists forecasting substantial sea level rise this century, many people from low lying coastal regions of Southeast Asia and islands in the South Pacific will be seeking asylum in Australia as climate refugees. What should Australia's response be?

Federal Labor's policy

Climate change is real and it represents a major challenge for all nations, both developed and developing.

Many people in developing countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts because they lack the capacity to respond to climate and weather related disasters such as floods, droughts and rising sea levels.

The Rudd Labor Government is supporting our developing country partners in the Asia-Pacific region to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Through the aid program, the Rudd Labor Government is continuing to focus on those least able to adapt to climate change, including the poor in least developed countries and small island developing states.

In the 2013-14 budget, Federal Labor has committed around \$600 million in environmental related expenditure. This includes substantial investment in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation programs.

For example, the International Climate Change Adaptation Initiative is providing over \$300 million to assist in financing and coordinating adaptation programs, improve scientific information and understanding and assist with strategic planning and vulnerability assessments in developing countries.

Federal Labor has a clear policy on the acceptance and settlement of refugees. Asylum seekers who now arrive in Australia by boat without a visa will be sent to Papua New Guinea (PNG) or Nauru for processing and resettlement.

Australia is in the top three nations of the world for refugee resettlement, with Canada and the US, out of 22 UNHCR/Refugee Convention nations which operate a

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dedicated resettlement program.

Australia has increased its refugee intake to 20,000 places a year. This is the largest increase to Australia's humanitarian intake in 30 years. If our new arrangements with PNG and Nauru mean there are significantly less people arriving in Australia by boat, then the Rudd Labor Government will consider increasing our humanitarian intake to 27,000.

The Australian government has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 5 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020. However, under the emissions trading scheme, Australia does not need to reduce local emissions, but can purchase emission reduction certificates from overseas.

- What do you think Australia's emission reduction targets should be by 2020? 2030? 2040?
- Should these targets be conditional on the

Federal Labor is committed to taking strong action to reduce Australia's carbon pollution. Central to this is the emissions trading scheme which puts a legal limit on the pollution from Australia's 370 largest polluters and will cut pollution in the cheapest and most effective way. That limit will reduce year on year to ensure Australia meets our pollution reduction targets.

Australia has pledged to the community and to our international partners that we will reduce emissions by between 5 per cent and 25 per cent on 2000 levels by 2020. Australia has also committed to emissions reductions under the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol, this target will constitute a 'carbon budget' covering all emissions for the period from 2013 to 2020 inclusive. We have also committed to a reduction of 80 per cent below 2000 levels by 2050.

Federal Labor have established the Climate Change Authority (CCA) to provide expert, independent and evidence-based advice on the degree of international action and the scope for emissions reductions in Australia. The CCA will release their draft 'Caps and Targets' Review for consultation in October and will provide final advice to the Government in February 2014. The Federal Government will consider that advice and then make a final decision on Australia's international target. The Rudd Labor Government will set pollution caps for the emissions

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actions of other countries?

- How would these emission reductions be achieved? Could you please describe how the emission reduction schemes that your party proposes will work in practice?
- What is your position on whether Australia should be required to reduce its local emissions rather than purchasing certificates from overseas?
- How do you propose to reduce emissions produced in Australia?

Australia is regarded as particularly vulnerable to climate change. Given the lack

trading scheme in a way that ensures Australia meets its emissions reduction targets.

The environment doesn't care whether carbon pollution is cut in Australia or overseas. Because of this, Federal Labor's emissions trading scheme is designed to accept international abatement as this ensures that emissions are reduced where it is most cost effective to do so. While international abatement will play a role in reducing Australia's emissions, until 2020 liable entities must meet at least 50 per cent of their liability using domestic units. Modelling recently completed for the Climate Institute indicates that a substantial amount of the emissions reduction task to 2020 could be driven by the emissions trading scheme, with a much lower portion sourced internationally.

Despite supporting emissions trading in 2007, the Coalition say they will repeal the emissions trading scheme and replace it with a 'Direct Action Plan'. Under this Plan, the Coalition would use taxpayer funds to create an 'Emissions Reduction Fund', or Government grants, to pay polluters to reduce their carbon pollution.

The Rudd Labor Government believes that polluters, not taxpayers, should pay to reduce carbon pollution. By putting a price on pollution, the Federal Labor Government is creating incentives for Australian business develop new, innovative, low-emission technologies. In contrast, the Coalition's policy would have bureaucrats deciding how businesses should cut emissions and taxpayers paying for these cuts.

Effective mitigation of climate change is the best way to reduce the potential impacts of climate change on health. The Rudd Labor Government is committed to taking strong action to reduce Australia's carbon pollution. Since taking

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of action to date, it is inevitable that Australians will be subject to serious impacts, including adverse health impacts and increased mortality due to rising temperatures and heatwaves, changes in rainfall and water availability for drinking and agriculture. What are your policies to reduce the impact of climate change on Australians?

Heatwave induced mortality is expected to increase in inner urban areas like the Wills electorate due to the interaction between increasing temperatures caused by climate change and the urban heat island effect. While 173 people lost their lives in the Black Saturday Bushfires, 374 people died in Victoria due to the heatwave according to Victoria's chief health officer, Dr John Carnie. The 2013 State

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Government, Federal Labor has implemented an integrated set of policies that will drive deep reductions in our carbon pollution and enable us to achieve more ambitious reductions in the longer term to secure our clean energy future. Central to this is the emissions trading scheme which puts a legal limit on the pollution from Australia's 370 largest polluters and will cut pollution in the cheapest and most effective way. That limit will reduce year on year and ensure we meet our pollution reduction targets.

The world is acting on climate change, and under the Rudd Labor Government, Australia will continue to do its fair share. Since coming to power, Labor has played a constructive role in supporting international action on climate change. In 2007, the Rudd Labor Government ratified the Kyoto Protocol and since then, Federal Labor policies have helped to ensure that our obligations under the Protocol will be met. In addition, last year Federal Labor signed up to the second commitment period of the Protocol, which will ensure that Australia will reduce its carbon pollution over the period to 2020.

Health is predominately an issue dealt with by State and Territory Governments. However, Federal Labor is committed to working with all levels of government to ensure an effective response to climate change and support strong health outcomes.

The Rudd Labor Government is aware that, if poorly managed, a changing climate will damage the health of Australians and disrupt communities. Adapting to climate change will require that governments, businesses and planners are able to make informed decisions. That is why the Federal Labor Government is already investing in programs such as the Australian Climate Change Science Program to help decision-makers understand and manage likely climate change impacts,

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of Australian Cities report found that heat-related deaths are expected to quadruple in number by 2050. What is your response to this public health threat?

Transport is a large contributor to climate change. What are your policies to transform the transport sector to ensure it is sustainable?

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including its impact on health.

The Federal Labor Government is planning for the impacts of climate change, and recently released the Climate Adaptation Outlook: A Proposed National Adaptation Assessment Framework. This report proposes a framework to assess progress in adapting to the impacts of climate change, including in the health sector. It will help shape the response that is needed by business, government and communities. I would encourage you to outline your concerns to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (please email: adaptationoutlook@innovation.gov.au).

The Coalition doesn't have a policy on climate adaptation, because they don't believe in climate change. Tony Abbott thinks that climate change science is 'crap' and that carbon pollution isn't worth worrying about because it is just an 'invisible substance'. The Coalition will not take effective action to reduce carbon pollution and can't be trusted to respond to the challenges climate change creates for the health sector.

The Rudd Labor Government understands that we must respond to the impacts of climate change that we cannot avoid, and will continue to work with communities, business groups and all levels of government to ensure an effective response.

Federal Labor recognises that transport makes a major contribution to climate change, accounting for about 15 per cent of Australia's total emissions.

That is why the Rudd Labor Government has taken a range of steps to improve the sustainability of our transport sector. Strict emissions standards came into effect two years ago for all new cars, 4WDs and utility vehicles sold in Australia. This is

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leading to cleaner skies and reduction in the public health bill by more than \$1.5 billion over two decades.

The tougher standards target pollutants responsible for smog over our major cities and health problems such as respiratory and cardiovascular disease. Once fully implemented in 2018, the new laws will cut a new car's maximum allowable emissions of Hydrocarbons by up to 50 per cent Oxides of nitrogen by up to 70 per cent and Particulate matter by up to 90 per cent.

Federal Labor has also invested \$61 million in 'smart' infrastructure to reduce emissions and the need for costly new infrastructure. Electronic ramp signalling, variable speed limits, and signage advice on travel times has been shown to reduce the stop-start behaviour that occurs in crawling traffic, reducing accidents and emissions.

To help Australians make informed decisions and choose cars that use less fuel, Federal Labor has also introduced the Green Vehicle Guide (www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au) and fuel consumption labelling.

With 90 per cent of all trips still undertaken by car, there is no more important investment in the productivity, liveability and sustainability of our cities than urban public transport. One full bus can take 40 cars off the road, while a full passenger train has the carrying capacity of a ten lane highway.

That is why the Federal Labor Government has invested more in urban public transport than all previous federal governments combined since Federation. So far, we have committed \$13.6 billion to improve urban passenger rail infrastructure – this investment provides urban households with a genuine alternative to private car travel.

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In contrast, Tony Abbott continues to oppose investment in public transport, claiming that the 'priority for infrastructure spending should be major roads rather than urban rail'.

There is no healthier or more sustainable form of transport than walking or cycling. The Rudd Labor Government strongly encourages Australians to choose these options for transport and recreation.

The National Cycling Strategy 2011-2016 sets a target of doubling the number of people regularly riding bicycles. This is supported by Federal Labor's strategy to encourage people to take advantage of the benefits of walking and cycling as a form of transport. Further information on this strategy can be found at http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/infrastructure/mcu/urbanpolicy/active_travel/.

Approximately \$10 billion is paid out each year to subsidize the use of fossil fuels, including in aviation, which helps to keep the price of flying low. Green groups have proposed that instead of subsidizing activities that contribute to climate change, we should be funding technologies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions including energy efficiency and renewable energy. What

Our taxation arrangements get the balance right between keeping our industry internationally competitive and ensuring all Australians benefit from the growth of our mining and oil and gas industries.

At the 2009 G20 Summit in Pittsburgh, leaders agreed to remove inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption Australia has met its obligations under this commitment and we will continue to support the G20 efforts.

Federal Labor considers renewable energy a critical part of our efforts to tackle global warming and move to a more sustainable energy system. The emissions trading scheme, Renewable Energy Target, \$3 billion Australian Renewable Energy Agency and \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation are all designed to work

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are your policies on these subsidies to fossil fuels? If you propose to remove these subsidies, please describe how you would do so and over what time frame. What are your policies on redirecting these funds to technologies that do not contribute to climate change?

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together to drive significant renewable energy investment in Australia.

Since Federal Labor came to power, employment in the renewable energy industry has more than doubled to over 24,000, wind capacity has trebled to over 3,000 MW and over 1 million solar PV systems have been installed – up from less than 7,500 under the former Coalition Government. Renewable energy now powers the equivalent of over 4 million homes each year.

One of the main policies promoting clean energy investment is the Renewable Energy Target – this will guarantee that at least 20 per cent of Australia's electricity comes from renewable sources by 2020. The Renewable Energy Target has been so successful in driving the deployment of renewable energy and growth in the industry that we are now likely to exceed the 20 per cent target.

Federal Labor's plan also includes unprecedented levels of funding for research into innovative new renewable energy technologies and projects to deploy clean energy technologies through the economy.

The Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) is an independent agency with funding of around \$3 billion to invest in projects that improve the competitiveness of renewable technologies and increase the supply of renewable energy in Australia. ARENA is currently supporting a range of innovative renewable energy technology projects, including bioenergy, geothermal, hydro, ocean and solar power in Australia.

While increased research through ARENA will lead to technological advances, securing the financing needed to commercialise and deploy renewable technologies in the marketplace has been difficult in the past. Recognising that capital market barriers have hindered investment in clean energy projects, Federal

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Labor has established a \$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC). The CEFC invests in businesses needing funds to get innovative clean energy proposals and technologies off the ground, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and low emission technologies and projects.

The CEFC commenced in August 2012 and has made its first investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

In moving to emissions trading on 1 July 2014 Federal Labor reduced the assistance provided to the most emissions-intensive coal-fired generators under the Energy Security Fund. Federal Labor reformed concessions for company cars saving \$970 million over 4 years in 20102011 Budget and in the 20132014 Budget we reformed the accelerated depreciation for mining exploration saving \$1.1 billion over 4 years.

Moreover, the Clean Energy Future Plan reduced fuel excise rebates for a number of activities by imposing an effective carbon price through the fuel tax system. Revenue from the emissions trading scheme is used to fund investment in renewable and clean energy and assist households.

The burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) are major contributors to climate change leading to a substantial carbon bubble in conflict with emission reduction targets, according to the Carbon Tracker Initiative, Grantham

The Rudd Labor Government is committed to pursuing a comprehensive global climate agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Negotiations for this agreement are due to conclude 2015 with the agreement to come into effect from 2020. This agreement will apply to all countries, including all major emitters, as well as major importers and exporters of fossil fuels.

Countries are responsible for their domestic emissions, and how they meet their

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Institute, and Australia's Climate Institute. What are your policies regarding the following: coal exports; use of coal for power generation; use of natural gas for power generation? What would be your strategies for phasing these out?

Households and business can reduce their carbon emissions

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national targets which contribute to the global mitigation effort. Australia is therefore responsible for emissions from coal combusted in Australia, and for fugitive emissions arising from both domestically consumed and exported coal. A large proportion of Australia's coal exports go to countries that have introduced or plan to introduce a price on carbon, such as South Korea, China and the European Union.

Federal Labor believes that the best way to reduce emissions from fossil fuels is to work through the issues in a responsible manner with countries under the UNFCCC and other multilateral, plurilateral or bilateral partnerships. Federal Labor continues to believe that the introduction of unilateral trade restrictions is likely to undermine movement to a global solution. The Rudd Labor Government will continue to use international fora to push for a comprehensive response to climate change with broad coverage of emissions.

Federal Labor is committed to taking strong action to reduce Australia's carbon pollution. Since taking office, Federal Labor has implemented an integrated set of policies that will drive deep reductions in our carbon pollution and enable us to achieve more ambitious reductions in the longer term to secure our clean energy future.

The carbon price is already working to cut pollution in the economy. Already, in the National Electricity Market emissions are down by 7 per cent, brown coal generation is down 13 per cent and renewable energy is up by 25 per cent in the first year of the price.

Federal Labor is continuing to provide support for small scale renewable energy investment, through the Renewable Energy Target scheme. This scheme supports

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through increased energy efficiency, solar water heating and generating their own renewable electricity by installing solar panels. Do you support these measures and if so, what are your policies to ensure these measures become widespread? Do you personally use solar hot water and/or solar panels or buy Green Power?

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owners of small-scale solar photovoltaic (PV) systems to create certificates equivalent to the output of up to 15 years operation when their system is installed. This provides an upfront capital subsidy to householders, businesses and community groups, who may sell their certificates on the market or get a discount directly from their solar retailer.

The Renewable Energy Target has also supported the installation of more than 600,000 solar water heating units since the Rudd Labor Government came to power. In this time, employment in the renewable energy industry has more than doubled to over 24,000, wind capacity has trebled to over 3,000 MW and over 1 million solar PV systems have been installed – up from less than 7,500 under the former Coalition Government. Renewable energy now powers the equivalent of over 4 million homes each year.

The Rudd Labor Government is also acting to reduce emissions by supporting investment in energy efficiency measures. Energy efficiency remains a key part of the Labor Government's plan for a cleaner energy future and will play a pivotal role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, cutting energy costs and boosting productivity.

Federal Labor has introduced a suite of initiatives to help industry, business and households realise the benefits of energy efficiency. This includes the establishment of appliance and building standards, regulation for the disclosure of energy efficiency ratings, targeted information programs and the provision of grants.

Throughout Australia, the Equipment Energy Efficiency (E3) Program is improving the energy efficiency of appliances and equipment in the residential, commercial and industrial sectors. By using national Minimum Energy Performance Standards

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(MEPS) and Energy Rating Labels (ERLs), the E3 Program enables households and businesses to make better informed decisions about the ongoing energy costs relating to 23 everyday purchases such as computers, televisions, air conditioners and dishwashers. This is estimated to deliver cumulative energy savings equal to around \$22.4 billion by 2024. The Australian Government will continue to work with the states and territories to incrementally improve standards and expand the program to additional products into the future.

The Federal Labor Government is also providing over \$200 million in grant funding, enabled by revenue from the carbon price, to support practical, cost effective energy efficiency upgrades and information:

- The Community Energy Efficiency Program (CEEP) is assisting 170 grant recipients to upgrade local government and community facilities such as museums, recreation centres, town halls and libraries with better amenities like lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning;
- The Low Income Energy Efficiency Program (LIEEP) provides practical advice and energy efficiency upgrades that will benefit about 33,000 low income households across Australia; and
- The Energy Efficiency Information Grants (EEIG) deliver tailored advice for small to medium sized businesses and community groups on ways to cut their energy use. With over 2 million business and community sector organisations in Australia, the EEIG program represents a great opportunity to improve energy efficiency.

More information on the hundreds of grant recipients and further details about the

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Some councils, including Moreland City Council, have announced that they are carbon neutral. However, this has been achieved partly through the purchase of offsets from overseas projects. What is your position on councils, businesses etc. using offsets to claim carbon neutrality?

Food waste is a major source of carbon and methane emissions. What are your

programs is available at <http://ee.ret.gov.au/energy-efficiency/grants>.

Federal Labor supports councils, businesses and communities who choose to offset their greenhouse gas emissions. Holders of carbon units may voluntarily cancel them. These cancelled units will not be counted towards meeting Australia's national emissions targets and their cancellation will reduce the number of units available in the market. Holders of international units and Australian Carbon Credit Units (from the Carbon Farming Initiative) may voluntarily cancel their units at any time. Carbon neutrality and the use of international units is subject to strict rules under the National Carbon Offset Standard.

Any purchases of accredited "GreenPower" is now counted as voluntary action. GreenPower purchases will be measured and taken into account when setting limits on carbon pollution. The Rudd Labor Government will adjust these limits on carbon pollution to ensure that voluntary action is not counted towards meeting the national emissions reduction target.

Note that there are a number of other commercial and non-profit operators that offer to offset carbon pollution. Some offset units, for example many sourced through the UN's Clean Development Mechanism, represent credible emissions reductions. Other emissions offsets may be less credible and less likely to lead to additional reductions in emissions. These are not recognized under the National Carbon Offset Standard or in the emissions trading scheme.

Food waste policy is primarily a local government issue.

Federal Labor is ensuring that carbon pollution from waste emissions is covered by

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policies to reduce food waste and reduce emissions from food waste? Do you personally compost waste food?

Do you know that in Wills we have platypus in Merri Creek? Eastern Grey Kangaroos visit the Fawkner grasslands? We have rare plant species along our creek corridors? Funding for biodiversity has recently been slashed by the federal government. What is your policy on federal government biodiversity funding and

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the carbon price to provide incentives to reduce these emissions. Landfill facilities with direct emissions of 25,000 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂-e) a year or more are be liable under the carbon price.

The carbon price is already encouraging large landfills to introduce landfill capture technology. Landfill gas capture is commonplace at major landfill sites across Australia, and is becoming increasingly economic at smaller sites. In many cases, the captured landfill gas is used as a resource to generate electricity. Landfill gas capture can reduce emissions substantially, with average capture rates around 50 per cent and best practice around 75 per cent.

Waste that was deposited in landfills before 1 July 2012, known as legacy waste, does not incur a liability under the emissions trading scheme. However, incentives to reduce these emissions is maintained as landfills are able to generate credits by reducing these emissions through Federal Labor's Carbon Farming Initiative.

Federal Labor is committed to supporting action protect Australia unique and diverse wildlife.

Federal Labor supports environmental management of our natural resources primarily through the ongoing initiative of Caring for our Country (CFOC). CFOC supports communities, farmers and other land managers to protect Australia's natural environment and sustainability, including our productive lands. CFOC also supports many Indigenous projects which also contribute to the Rudd Labor Government's commitment to Closing the Gap.

The aim of CFOC is to achieve an environment that is healthier, better protected,

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species and eco-system conservation?

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well managed, resilient and provides essential ecosystem services in a changing climate. In the first phase of CFOC (2008-2013) the Rudd Labor Government invested more than \$2 billion to protect and build the resilience of our environment.

Federal Labor has committed over \$2 billion in additional funding to continue Caring for our Country for another five years, with \$600 million to support Sustainable Agriculture projects and \$1.5 billion to support Sustainable Environment projects

The Sustainable Agriculture stream is being delivered in the context of other major government policies and initiatives including the National Food Plan, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Biosecurity, the Carbon Farming Initiative, drought policy reform, Commonwealth policy on Fisheries By-catch and the National Volunteer Strategy.

The Sustainable Environment stream will support work that contributes to the Rudd Labor Government's broader objectives for improved environmental outcomes at land, seascape and ecosystem scales. The Sustainable Environment stream will highlight three strategic objectives to prioritise investment over the next five years: protection of our conservation estate; maintenance of ecosystem services, including ecological and cultural values, now and into the future; and enhanced capacity of Indigenous communities to conserve and protect natural resources.

Australia has highly diverse native ecosystems. Biodiversity plays a crucial role in maintaining the productive capacity of our landscape. Federal Labor's Biodiversity Fund continues to provide substantial support for projects that deliver biodiversity and related environmental benefits. It will result in nearly \$450 million of

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additional investment in biodiversity conservation in Australia.

The Biodiversity Fund has supported landholders to establish new vegetation and habitats in targeted areas of high conservation value and to maintain or enhance existing native vegetation for its carbon and biodiversity benefits. 312 grants worth \$270 million have been funded through the first round of the Biodiversity Fund to improve the condition, extent and connectivity of native vegetation across Australia. These measures will help protect Australia's ecosystems, building resilience to the impacts of climate change.