

Climate change: Australia sets new emissions target

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Mr Abbott wants both economic growth and emissions cuts

Australia plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions by between 26% and 28% below 2005 levels by 2030, PM Tony Abbott has said.

It is less than cuts pledged by countries such as Canada and the US.

Australia's previous target was to cut emissions by 5% by 2020, based on emissions in 2000.

The announcement comes ahead of a key international meeting in Paris in December to agree on a new global climate strategy.

Australia is still largely powered by carbon-polluting coal and is one of the world's biggest coal exporters.



Critics say the newly announced cuts Australia, which is dependent on coal-fired power stations, do not go far enough

Mr Abbott said Australia had to protect economic growth at the same time as it reduced emissions.

"It is very much that everything we do has this in mind: how do we promote jobs and growth... and climate change policy is no different," he said at a press conference in Canberra.

"We have to reduce our emissions... but in ways that are consistent with continued strong growth."

'Vastly inadequate'

Mr Abbott said Australia's target was within the middle of the spread of targets adopted by economies of comparable size.

He said the cost to the economy of achieving a 26% cut by

2030 would equate to between about 0.2% and 0.3% of Australia's gross domestic product (GDP).

Scientist Tim Flannery from independent not-for-profit research group the Climate Council, said even if Australia met this target, it would still be emitting more per person than the US and "significantly more" than the UK, on a per capital basis.

How does Australia compare to other countries?

The European Union set a target of reducing emissions by 40% by 2030 compared with 1990 levels

Canada's target is 30% below 2005 levels by 2030

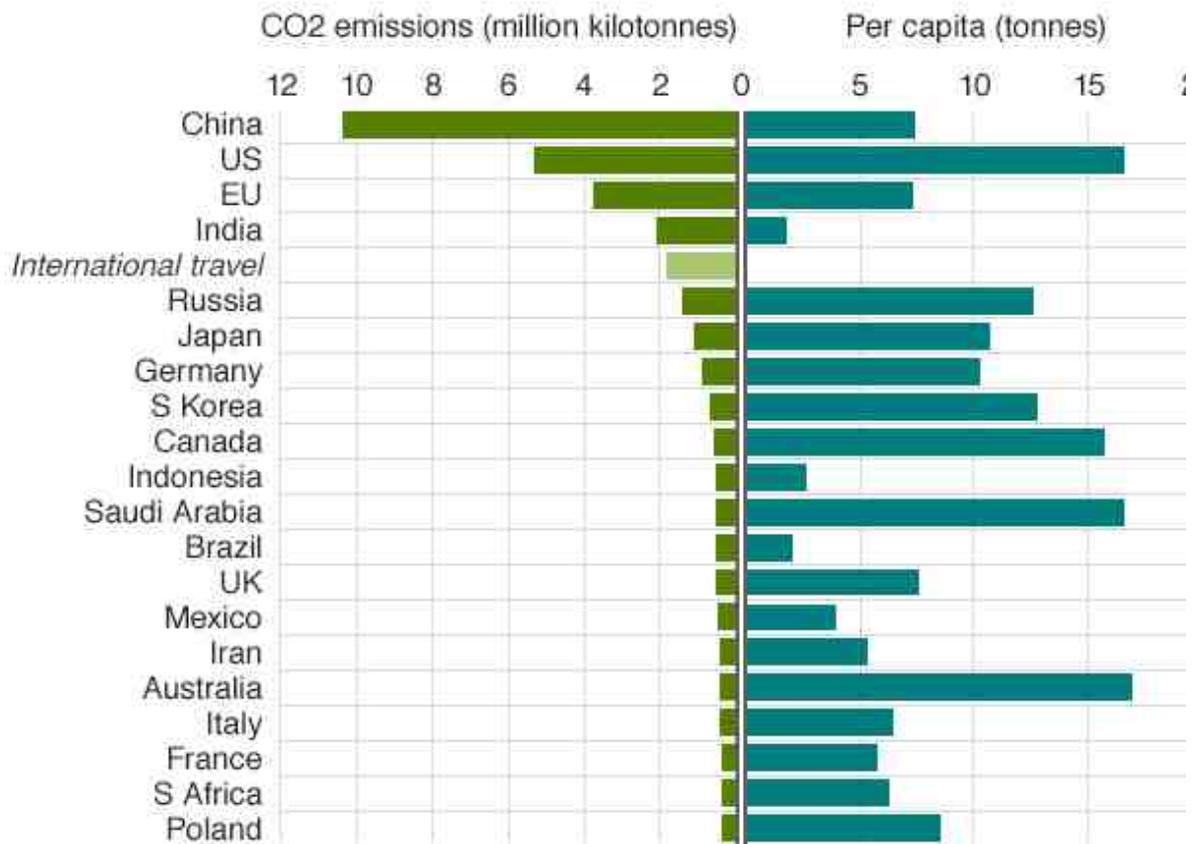
The US plans to cut emissions from the power sector by 32% by 2030, compared with 2005 levels

"These targets are vastly inadequate to protect Australians from the impacts of climate change and do not represent a fair contribution to the world effort to bring climate change under control," said Prof Flannery.

The Climate Council says that to stay below a 2°C rise in global temperature, Australia would need to cut emissions by 60% by 2030 on 2000 levels.

It says Australia is the 13th largest greenhouse gas emitter in the world and has one of the highest per capita emissions rates.

Estimated 2013 emissions



Source: EDGAR database, EU commission & Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency