

Topic : Australia and the Environment : Man and Nature

AXE 1: Man and Nature

KEY QUESTION: How do Australians interact with their environment, and what does this reveal about their relationship with nature in the context of climate change?

LESSON 5 CRISIS DOWN UNDER

What are the causes a of the climate crisis?

Document 1 : Time to act



'Protesters in Australia, 2019' Photograph: James Ross/AAP



1st February, 2020, 41 Artists took to the streets across 3 Australian cities (Sydney, Melbourn and Brisbane) for the nation's largest unsanctioned art campaign.



'Climate Denial' by Sydney artist Scott Marsh, who is part of the art collective which installs political art guerrilla-style in bus stops around Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne to draw attention to the bushfire crisis. Photograph: Adam Scarf

Look at the 3 documents and explain:

- who is involved.
- who they are addressing.
- what message they are trying to convey.
- what types of actions they take.

Then, listen to this document about Bush Bradalism
<https://vimeo.com/388792422?fl=pl&fe=cm>

1. Explain the project. (Who? What?Where? When?)
2. A shift in policy :
- 3- Which picture above does bush brandalism refer to. Justify.

TACKLING GAS EMISSIONS

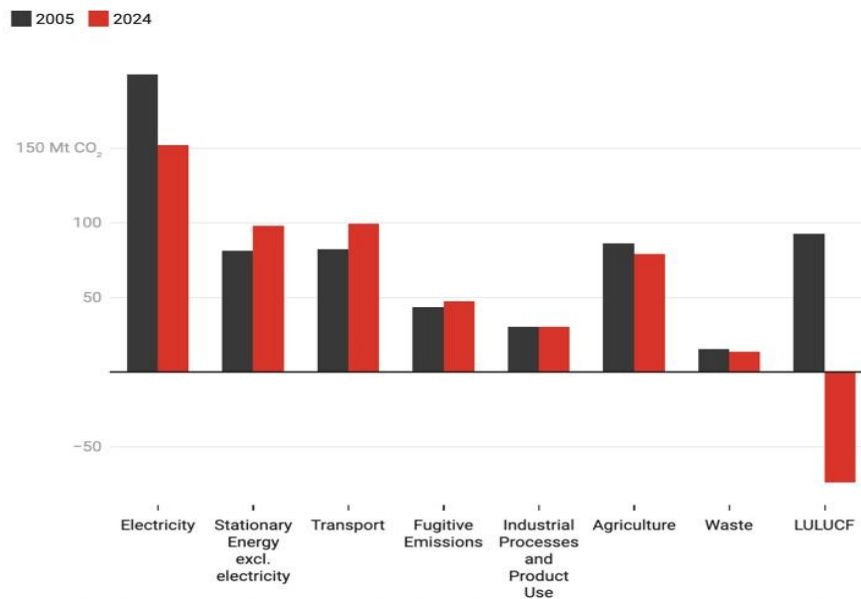
Where does Australia stand on carbon emissions?

Document A – Australia’s latest emissions data



*: including preliminary March 2025

A - “Emissions by quarter, September 2004 to December 2024*”, *The Conversation*, June 2nd 2025



B- “Actual emissions (Mt CO₂ equivalent) by sector, 2005 and 2024”, *The Conversation*, June 2nd 2025

- a. **Present** the two graphs and **say** what they reveal about Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions.

- b. **Explain** the paradox the two graphs underscore and how they are misleading.

Document B – The link between coal, fires and climate

1. **Read** the article and **explain** what coal is mainly used for in Australia. **Comment on** the consequences.
2. **Explain** why the government supports **Find out** about the decisions of Australia's customers of coal regarding this sector.
3. **Comment on** the gradual transition to renewable energy around the world.

The world has made the link between Australian coal, fires and climate

Tim Buckley, the director of Energy Finance Studies at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, says his frustration at the government's intransigent defence of increasingly technologically obsolete thermal coal (coal burnt for energy rather than steel manufacturing) at the cost of effective climate-change policy and international reputation is compounded¹ by his view that the industry has commenced its drawn-out death throes², sustained by political muscle rather than economic reality.

Coal power's defenders point to a recent uptick³ in imports to China and India and the long-term potential of customers such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Vietnam. Buckley concedes China and India will continue to buy Australian coal in the short term as they seek to maintain economic growth at up to 6 or 7 per cent annually.

But both have made clear their intention to first transition to domestic coal as fast as they can build the necessary infrastructure, while concurrently decarbonising their economies in line with the rest of the world. [...]

Both South Korea and Japan, he says, are already showing signs that they want to abandon the sector. Buckley argues that the thermal-coal industry's tipping point has already passed, missed by its champions in Morrison's government but already factored in by global money markets.

US coal stocks⁴ dropped an average 50 per cent in 2019 while Exxon remained flat in a US equity market that rose 28 per cent overall, meanwhile the share⁵ price of the world's largest investor in renewables, the US utility Nextera Energy, leapt by 42 per cent.

1. made worse 2. agony 3. increase 4. actions (en bourse) 5. action

A SHIFT IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY?

How did Scott Morrison's and Anthony Albanese's governments react to the climate change crisis?

Document A – Is Scott Morrison feeling the heat?

a. **Look at** the cartoon of the former Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison. **Present** it, **describe** it and **analyze** it.

b. What does the cartoon reveal about Scott Morrison's government and his stance on the use of fossil energies.

c. **Browse** the internet to complete your answer and **say** what he did that sparked controversy.



Paul DORIN, "Is Scott Morrison Feeling the Heat", *The Independent*,

September 25th 2019

Document B – Climate denial

a. **Look** at the poster and **describe** it.

b. **Watch** the video and **find out** about Australian politicians' attitudes toward climate change.

c. **Explain** Australia's tactics to do less to tackle greenhouse gas emissions.

d. **Say** how the news report contributes to denouncing Australian politicians' decisions.



Our government won't act on climate change, but we can.
#BushfireBrandalism



Scott Marsh, *Climate Denial*, 2020

Video: "Acknowledging the impact of climate change, *Sky News*, 2019

CULTURE SPOT

Scott Marsh is part of the "Bushfire Brandalism" collective, a group of Australian artists who have created posters and have installed them at local bus stops in order to draw attention to the bushfire crisis.

Document C – PM Scott Morrison admits failings in response to crisis as he proposes review

The Australian Prime Minister has admitted to not dealing with parts of the nation's ongoing wildfire crisis very well, as well as proposing a review into the country's response. Scott Morrison, who has had some tense exchanges with residents while visiting affected areas, said: "There are things I could have handled on the ground much better." He said: "These are sensitive environments, they are very emotional environments. Prime ministers are flesh and blood too in how they engage with people."

The Prime Minister has been received frostily by members of the public on some visits, including some who refused to shake his hand. (...)

Mr Morrison has been criticised for not doing more to combat climate change, even as Australia battles its worst wildfire season on record, which has now killed 28 people and destroyed thousands of homes.

He has also apologised for holidaying in Hawaii while blazes were raging through the country.

In the interview, he suggested the country should have a "national review" into the response to the wildfires. However, the PM rejected criticism that his government had not done enough before the bushfire season started.

Talking about the response co-ordinated and supported by the state, he said: "I think we have to acknowledge how exemplary it has been in response to what has been the scale of fire."

The PM has so far been defiant in rejecting any links between his government's conservative climate policies and the bushfires – for example, defending his country's reliance on its coal industry – but said his government will look into improving its performance on curbing emissions.

"We want to reduce emissions and do the best job we possibly can and get better and better and better at it," he said. "I want to do that with a balanced policy which recognises Australia's broader national economic interests and social interest."

Another firefighter became the latest casualty over the weekend when killed on duty in the state of Victoria, which has been one of the worst-hit regions by the blazes.

The wildfires are estimated to have killed one billions animals and torched more than 26 million acres, an area larger than Ireland, since they started in September.

Zoe Tidman, *The Independent*, January 2020.

1. Read the article and pick out elements showing that Scott Morrison admits his mistakes.
2. GRAMMAR: "he suggested the country should have a "national review"". Explain the use of **should** here.
3. Explain Scott Morrison's new measures.

4. Focus on this sentence: “The PM has so far been defiant in rejecting any links between his government's conservative climate policies and the bushfires – for example, defending his country's reliance on its coal industry – but said his government will look into improving its performance on curbing emissions.”

Comment on the limits of the Prime Minister's acknowledgement.

Document D- Australia passes landmark legislation to cut carbon emissions

Decision follows years of pushing back against similar efforts by previous governments

Australia passed a landmark climate bill on Thursday, bringing the resource-rich country back in line with the global push to cut carbon emissions after years of pushing back against such efforts.

The climate change bill mandates that the country reduce carbon emissions by 43 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030 and reach net zero emissions by 2050.

The policy was a crucial plank of Labor prime minister Anthony Albanese's election campaign this year and brings Australia broadly in line with countries such as Canada and Japan. The targets lags behind goals set by the US, UK and EU.

Australia is one of the world's largest miners and one of the biggest coal exporters. The country had been a climate policy laggard for years with former prime minister Scott Morrison once brandishing a lump of coal in parliament as a testament to his Liberal party's steadfast support for the industry.

Albanese's government pledged to hit the targets when it came into power and will have to report annually on its progress on reducing emissions.

Industry groups responded positively to the news, with the Business Council of Australia saying the country was “a step closer to ending the climate wars that have put a handbrake on progress and become a serious economic barrier”.

But analysts and environmental groups cautioned that the bill was only a first step to achieving net zero emissions.

“There's this air of unreality about them . . . because they're not addressing the big thing which is no new coal or gas projects and no new oil projects,” said Bruce Robertson, an analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

But he added that the measures showed the government was trying to provide clarity to investors interested in green energy and new technologies. (...)

Amanda McKenzie, chief executive of Australian environmental non-profit organisation Climate Council, said it was too early to declare the move an unequivocal success.

“On its own, the Climate Change Act won't reduce emissions . . . It needs to be backed up by credible climate action across every sector of the economy,” she said.

The prime minister's office said the country had “missed out on billions of dollars in public and private clean energy investment” and the new legislation would

“provide the energy policy and investment certainty needed to usher in economic growth and opportunity in a decarbonising global economy”.

FINANCIAL TIMES William Langley SEPTEMBER 8th

2022

Read this article and answer the following questions using your own words:

1. Why is the climate bill called a landmark decision?
2. Quote key words highlighting Australia’s former governments’ failings in responding to the climate crisis?
3. Which industry did former Prime Minister Scott Morrison support?
4. Is the climate landmark legislation sufficient to achieve net zero emissions according to environmental groups?

Drawing on all the documents (citizen mobilisations, emissions data, press articles and cartoons), explain how Australia’s handling of the climate crisis reveals both the country’s responsibility in global warming and the limits as well as the developments of its environmental policies since the 2000s.