

CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE ACTIONS, IN STEP WITH INDIA

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development, and EIA

Last year tested the strength of our communities and the resilience of our countries. It was a year dominated by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). And yet, for Australians, it also started with the most devastating bushfires in our history.

For all its challenges, 2020 demonstrated the importance of innovation, resources and leadership to protect and support our communities and countries.

Climate change is an increasingly pressing global issue, which will require our collective will to ensure a sustainable future for our countries and for the world. By working together, we can reduce emissions — which will remain critical to ensuring global average temperatures stay well below 2° Centigrade — and adapt and build resilience to the climate change already occurring.

The virtual [Climate Adaptation Summit](#) hosted by the Netherlands on January 25-26 provided a valuable opportunity to the international community for collective action to realise a more climate-resilient future. At the summit, Australia reaffirmed our commitment to ambitious and practical action to combat the impacts of climate change at home, in our region, and around the world.

Australia is one of the driest inhabited continents in the world. We also have the oldest living cultures and some of the richest biodiversity in the world. We are fortunate to be able to learn from the continuing connection of the First Australians, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, to their country. For over 65,000 years their traditional knowledge and practices have preserved and protected Australia's natural environment.

Data | [What made the Australian bushfires so severe in January 2020?](#)

The recent [bushfires](#) demonstrated the importance of bringing together traditional Indigenous knowledge about the land with modern science. Indigenous Rangers are on the frontline of this work, preserving and protecting Australia's natural and cultural heritage. For example, using traditional fire management practices, through cool and controlled burns.

Australia has committed over 1,500 crore to making our natural resources, environment and water infrastructure more resilient to drought and climate disasters. We are spending more than 200 crore on bushfire recovery efforts, supporting local communities to design their own economic, social and environmental recovery. This includes the important job of regenerating habitats, helping native animals recover and building knowledge for better land management. By July 2021, Australia will establish a new National Resilience, Relief and Recovery Agency to drive the reduction of natural disaster risk, enhance natural disaster resilience and ensure effective relief and recovery to all hazards. While our adaptation and resilience work starts at home, Australia is also committed to supporting neighbouring and global communities tackle climate change.

Australia has pledged at least 150 crore over the period 2020 to 2025 for global climate finance; 50 crore of this funding will directly help our Pacific neighbours deploy renewable energy, and improve their climate change and disaster resilience.

We are sharing our climate adaptation expertise, experiences and skills with the world through our development programme and the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific.

Australia's strong support for the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, spearheaded by India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is another example of how we are working together with partners — such as India — to help ensure our infrastructure is resilient and adapts to the effects of a changing climate.

As is our ongoing engagement with the International Solar Alliance — a global initiative designed to harness solar power to provide for the energy needs of members of the alliance.

Our work with India on Water Resources Management is another important initiative initiated by India and designed to further enhance each country's water management capabilities and share expertise and best practice.

To support our resilience and adaptation efforts, Australia is also investing in and developing the green technologies of tomorrow. Indeed, Australia is aiming to leverage 7,000 crore of new investment in low emissions technologies by 2030.

To get there, we recently released our Technology Investment Roadmap — a comprehensive plan to invest in the technologies we need to bring emissions down, here and around the world.

We are focussed on accelerating technologies like hydrogen, carbon capture use and storage, soil carbon, energy storage to backup renewables and decarbonise transport, and low or zero emissions steel and aluminium. Dr. Alan Finkel, Australia's Special Adviser for Low-Emissions Technologies, spoke at the World Economic Forum in Davos in January on the enormous potential of these technologies to support the global transition to net zero emissions.

Widespread global deployment of those technologies will reduce emissions or eliminate them in sectors responsible for 90% of the world's emissions — 4,500 crore tonnes. Our goal is to get the cost of deploying these new technologies to parity with existing, higher-emitting alternatives. This is a practical pathway to achieve net zero emissions that also presents economic opportunity.

But of course, we cannot do it alone, which is why we are working with the major economies in the region — such as India — to transfer technologies which will support lower global emissions.

The Australia-India Joint Energy Dialogue will strengthen cooperation between our two countries in pumped hydro storage, cost-effective battery technologies, hydrogen and coal gasification, adoption of clean energy technology, fly ash management technologies, and solar forecasting and scheduling. And there are many more opportunities for Australia and India on low-emissions technology which we will continue to explore together as partners.

Whether in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, or tackling the ongoing challenge posed by climate change, we need to embrace innovation and strengthen global partnerships. We need to consider those most in need, engage all stakeholders equally and respect indigenous culture and knowledge in taking climate action.

Our scientists tell us that, even with the most ambitious global emissions reductions, we will still need to adapt to changes in our climate over the coming decades. Practical actions that help us adapt to those changes and strengthen the resilience of our local environments are critical.

Together with India, we can make a difference.

Barry O'Farrell is the Australian High Commissioner to India

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