

## WHY ASK FOR NET ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050?

Our [Net Zero by 2050 - 100 Days of Action](#) campaign is asking the Federal Government for a *bipartisan and federally legislated target of Net Zero Emissions by 2050 (and preferably sooner), with a clearly documented process for achieving it presented by the Government at the UN Climate Change Conference (also known as COP26).*

We would like to take a few moments to explain some of the thinking behind this request. This will be familiar territory to many of you. It is aimed at those who aren't quite so familiar with it.

### What is the COP?

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is where the international community comes together to discuss key themes and make policy decisions around climate change. The [26th COP \(COP26\)](#) is set to take place in Glasgow on 1 - 12 November 2021 with world leaders meeting from 1-2 November.

### Why Net Zero Emissions?

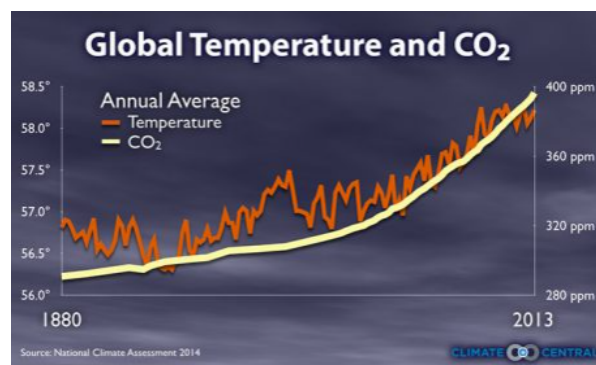
When humanity achieves net zero emission of greenhouse gases, it stops adding to the accumulated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and this stops the climate from heating any further, due to our activity.

### Why 2050?

The timing of reaching net zero emissions is crucial, because of the direct correlation between accumulated greenhouse gases and the temperature, as shown in the chart [1].

A key message from the 2018 report from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was that the consequences of 1°C of global warming are already evident. Severe climate change impacts could be avoided by limiting it to 1.5 degrees as opposed to 2 degrees. According to the IPCC 2018 recommendations, achieving net zero emissions between 2050 and 2100 will limit global warming to 2°C. Achieving net zero emissions by 2050 may limit it to 1.5°.

The Paris Agreement aims to keep global warming to 1.5°.



### Why bipartisan?

Climate change has become highly politicised in this country. Most of our emissions reduction between 2005 and 2020 took place while the now repealed Rudd-Gillard Government carbon price was in place. The orange shading in the next chart shows this very clearly [2].

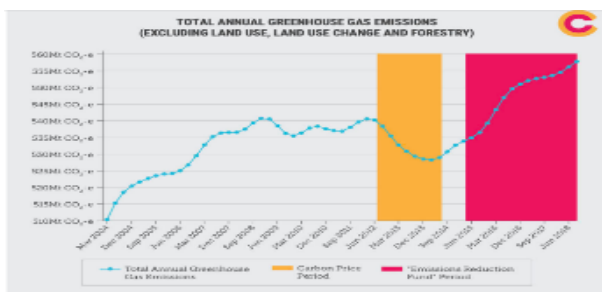


Figure 8: Total annual greenhouse gas emissions (excluding Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry). Source: Data from Australian Government (2020).

With shared core policies, both major political parties could become genuinely committed to NZE by 2050. Real progress could be made, and the possibility of policy reversals reduced when there is a change of government. For example, in the UK, the Conservative government is a world leader on climate action and is generally supported on this issue by the Labour party.

### Why Federally Legislated?

A federal target that is legally bound by legislation, will see accountable and appropriate climate action that overrides political expediency and endures any changes of government. Under the Paris Agreement, Australia must scale up emissions-reduction targets every five years. Unless our national commitment is backed by legislation, it will not be seen as credible in the eyes of the international community.