



Climate Messaging Guide:

CUTTING
THROUGH
THE CLIMATE
CLUTTER

INTRODUCTION

As climate campaigners we face a common challenge: how to utilise our unique influence and work together to promote strong climate action in Australia and around the world. This challenge is especially hard for those of us who work in our communities without the infrastructure and money of larger environmental organisations.

This phrasebook has been put together by a group of environmental, research and progressive organisations with an interest in sharing research-based messages on climate change with activists around Australia.

Guided by the findings of recent polling and focus group research and our evolving cultural, social, political and economic landscapes, we can see that Australians increasingly view climate change in connection to pollution, health, jobs and the economy—issues that are relevant to everyday life and values and issues that are also intricately connected to the health of our environment.



THE SOLUTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IS EMBEDDED WITHIN THE PROBLEM: POLLUTION

Australians are concerned that pollution is damaging our health, natural assets (like the Great Barrier Reef) and making climate change worse. Most people believe pollution is making climate change worse and 77 per cent of people believe we should give the planet the benefit of the doubt and act on the best scientific information we have.

The problem (our pollution dependent economy) and the solution (a clean energy economy) are linked. People understand the link between the benefits and opportunities from action to reduce pollution and the cost of inaction (poorer health, degraded environment, less economic competitiveness for Australia, etc.)

- Reducing pollution is a believable benefit of action on climate change.
- 86% of people agree it needs to be reduced.
- People are concerned about pollution (61 per cent are extremely concerned or very concerned about it).



KEY CLIMATE MESSAGE: CUT POLLUTION - MAKE CLEAN ENERGY CHEAPER

Pollution is in our air, rivers, oceans and the food chain. It's happening because our economy is too dependent on energy sources that cause pollution.

To stop the rise of pollution, we need a limit and price tag on pollution. That means rewarding Australian businesses that clean up their act, and charging the ones that do not. Right now we're letting our most innovative,

cleanest businesses go overseas, while supporting those who are polluting and threatening our childrens' health, the Great Barrier Reef, and our safety. We need to make the switch to a low pollution economy and take advantage of all the opportunities that follow.

The next Government shall commit to turning around our rising pollution levels within 3 years. Charging business who don't clean up their act

will create jobs in wind, solar, and tidal energy - so that clean industries get bigger, and clean energy gets cheaper.



THE PROBLEMS, SOLUTION, ACTION, VALUES FRAMEWORK.

PROBLEM:

“A pollution dependent economy—not safe for children’s health, Great Barrier Reef and other national assets”.

The terms “pollution” and “dependency” resonate as unequivocally bad, and people recognise these as problems and are concerned.

SOLUTION:

Cutting pollution and making clean energy cheaper.

BENEFITS:

“A clean energy economy—less pollution, more jobs, healthy children, helping to tackle the climate climate crisis.”

People can identify many positive benefits in the solution, as well as a call for action. A clean energy economy requires business and government to act and take responsibility.

ACTION:

The next Government must commit to limit and reduce our rising pollution levels within 3 years. To clean up our act we need to reward Australian businesses who take responsibility for their pollution and clean up their act, and charge those who don't.

Three year targets are more urgent and understandable than 2020 and 2050 targets. People understand that carrots and sticks are needed to change business behaviour, and are more receptive to the idea of charging for pollution if that stick is accompanied by a carrot as an incentive to those that clean up their act. Offering incentives can be separate from the issue of polluter subsidies. Rather, it includes things like investing in industries that in turn invest in solar, wind etc...

VALUES:

- Healthy safe kids.
- Clean environment.
- Less waste.
- Smarter, cleaner, stronger economy.

JOBS

WORKS BEST:

- Clean energy jobs.

EXAMPLE:

- The clean energy economy will create more jobs in clean energy industries for Australian working families, in fields from research and technicians to trades.
- Almost two thirds of the public think clean energy and cutting pollution would have an either good or neutral effect on jobs.

NOT AS EFFECTIVE:

- Green jobs. This term is situated in the old ‘environment versus the economy’ frame. It also conjures the idea of jobs in areas such as “reforestation.”



POLLUTION AND (CLIMATE CHANGE

WORKS BEST:

- Pollution and climate change.

EXAMPLE:

- Pollution is making climate change worse (83 per cent concerned that “pollution is making climate change worse.”)
- Australians believe that pollution is “probably not” or “not at an acceptable level today, ie. Not safe for our children” (92 per cent.)

NOT AS EFFECTIVE:

- Climate pollution, carbon pollution, climate change. Though not as effective and simple as just referring to pollution, there will be times these combinations are needed.
- The terms ‘carbon emissions’ and ‘CO₂ emissions’ do not work as well as ‘pollution;’ they are scientific terms which do not resonate well with people.

RESPONSIBILITY

WORKS BEST:

- Responsibility.

EXAMPLE:

- Make business responsible for their pollution (vs make business pay, charge business, etc.)

NOT AS EFFECTIVE:

- Pay, charge, cost, price.
- Make business pay.





ECONOMY

WORKS BEST:

- Pollution dependent economy.

EXAMPLE:

- Our economy is too dependent on energy sources that cause pollution.
- 78 per cent agree that “our economy is too dependent on burning coal rather than using clean energy sources.”

NOT AS EFFECTIVE:

- pollution-addicted economy, polluting economy.

(LEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

ECONOMY

WORKS BEST:

- Clean energy economy or low pollution economy.

EXAMPLE:

- Make clean energy cheaper quicker.
- 87 per cent support for a major party that would “make clean energy cheaper quicker through large-scale development of solar, geothermal, wind power, etc.”
- 83 per cent support “changing from a pollution dependent economy to one based on smarter, cleaner, cheaper energy.”

NOT AS EFFECTIVE:

- Pollution-addicted economy, polluting economy.



PRICE TAG ON POLLUTION

WORKS BEST:

- Limit or price tag on pollution or direct charge on pollution.

EXAMPLE:

- Putting a price tag on pollution—76 per cent support “putting a price tag on pollution so business has a better incentive to change to clean energy, and clean energy becomes the cheaper choice.”
- 70 per cent support “a direct charge on pollution while protecting people who can’t afford energy price increases.”

NOT AS EFFECTIVE:

- CPRS or ETS, carbon tax.
- The term ‘feed-in-tariff’ is not well understood.



REDUCING OR LIMITING POLLUTION

WORKS BEST:

- Australians want a leader who will act now to control rising pollution. 72 per cent support a plan to reverse our rising pollution in the next three years.
- Australians want a detailed plan on pollution and climate change.
- A popular claim made is that 'CO₂ / carbon is not a pollutant.' However, even naturally occurring elements that appear in excess and upset nature's balance can become pollutants and harm the environment and our health.

(CLEAN ENERGY

WORKS BEST:

- "We need a detailed plan to change Australia to using cleaner sources of energy" (85 per cent support.)
- 87 per cent support "make clean energy cheaper quicker" (through large scale development of solar, geothermal, wind power, etc.)
- 81 per cent would support a major political party "putting controls on pollution levels."



INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

WORKS BEST:

- Australia can be a leader on clean energy like solar, geothermal and tidal power.

EXAMPLE:

- 73 per cent agree that “Australia should be a regional leader in reducing pollution and changing to cleaner, smarter energy” and 72 per cent agree that “we should take our fair share of responsibility for reducing pollution since Australia is wealthy and one of the world’s largest polluters per head.”

HAZELWOOD POWER STATION

WORKS BEST:

- Replace Hazelwood with clean energy.
- Hazelwood is responsible for 15% of Victoria’s greenhouse pollution.
- Hazelwood is Australia’s dirtiest power station.

NOT AS EFFECTIVE:

- Shut Hazelwood.
- Replace Hazelwood with renewable energy.

EXAMPLE:

- “Replace Hazelwood with clean energy” addresses people’s concerns about the future for the region and our power supply, while ‘Shut Hazelwood’ doesn’t.



OTHER SUPPORTING MESSAGES

- Australians want smarter, cleaner, cheaper energy.
- Australia can set an example to the world/region in clean energy.
- We can create a cleaner, healthier, less polluted environment in Australia.
- We need a price tag on pollution so business has better incentive to change to clean energy and clean energy becomes cheaper.
- We can create a better future for the Earth and our children.
- We can create clean energy jobs.
- We can make clean energy cheaper quicker.
- Australian industries and government can make clean energy bigger and cheaper while creating jobs.
- Australians want a plan to reverse our rising pollution in the next three years.

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The research referenced in this guide was carried out by Auspoll and involved two separate rounds, both including a qualitative and quantitative phase. For the first qualitative component of the research Auspoll conducted four focus groups in Deakin (VIC) and Bennelong and Macarthur (NSW). These focus groups allowed a broad discussion of the issues and the core drivers behind public attitudes to climate change. These respondents were sourced from a professional market and social research panel and the sample was drawn to be representative of the Australian population in terms of age and gender.

The research on Hazelwood Power Station was conducted in focus groups in Melbourne's inner suburbs, Bendigo and Mitcham by EMC. These focus groups allowed a broad discussion of climate change and coal-fired power stations and the issues related to them.