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Australian climate change policy: a chronology

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Introduction

Climate change is a long-term, global problem. Long-term problems generally require stable but flexible policy implementation over time. However, Australia's commitment to climate action over the past three decades could be seen as inconsistent and lacking in direction. At times Australia has been an early adopter, establishing the world's first government agency dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions; signing on to global climate treaties the same day they are created; establishing the world's first emissions trading scheme (ETS) (albeit at a state level); and pioneering an innovative land-based carbon offset scheme. But at other times, and for many reasons, Australia has erratically altered course: disbanding the climate change government agency, creating a new one then disbanding that; refusing to ratify global treaties until the dying minute; and introducing legislation to repeal the national ETS.

Climate action in Australia has been a polarising and highly political issue. The climate policies of the two major Australian political parties (the Australian Labor Party and the Liberal Party of Australia) have varied considerably over the years. These policies have included some strong and tangible actions as well as what appear to be mere political statements. Since 2007 Australia's response to climate change has featured prominently in federal elections with close scrutiny given to party policies. Two federal political leaders have also lost their position in part because of their policies on climate change (Malcolm Turnbull as Leader of the Opposition in 2009 and Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2010).¹

The inconsistent nature of Australian climate policy cannot be fully explained by looking at which political party was in government at the time. Both Labor and Liberal Governments have advanced (and sometimes regressed) on climate change. For example, in 1990 Labor was in government. It resisted adopting an emissions reduction target canvassed by its own Minister for Environment, only doing so with a 'no regrets' proviso, which rendered the target ineffectual.² Yet a Labor Government is also responsible for Australia's current 2020 emissions reduction targets.³

Likewise, a Liberal Government insisted in 1997 that adopting targets would have a 'devastating impact' on jobs and industry.⁴ Yet today a Liberal Government proffers bipartisan support for Australia's 2020 targets.⁵

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1. D Glover, '[Turnbull the canary in the coalmine](#)', *The Australian*, 1 December 2009, p. 14, accessed 16 October 2013; S Lewis, '[Dead man talking](#)', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 June 2010, p. 7, accessed 16 October 2013.
 2. R Kelly (Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories), [Government sets targets for reductions in greenhouse gases](#), media release, 11 October 1990, accessed 6 August 2013.
 3. Australian Government, [Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme: Australia's low pollution future](#), White paper, 15 December 2008, accessed 30 July 2013.
 4. R Hill (Minister for the Environment), [Greenhouse gas figures reveal uniform target danger](#), media release, 26 September 1997, accessed 6 August 2013.

It was a Liberal Government that brought commendation to Australia in 1998 by creating the Australian Greenhouse Office, the world's first government agency dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.⁶ Just six years later the same government dismantled the agency and merged it into the Department of the Environment.⁷ In the same way, a Labor Government reinstated a stand-alone Department of Climate Change in 2007 and then disbanded it in 2013, merging it into a larger department.⁸

A Labor Government represented Australia at the Rio 'Earth Summit' in 1992, brokering and immediately signing Australia onto the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).⁹ A Liberal Government then continued the momentum, negotiating on Australia's behalf, in deliberations over the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC and signing the treaty shortly after.¹⁰ However, the same Liberal Government later refused to ratify the Protocol, claiming that doing so was counter to the nation's interest.¹¹ As late as October 2007, just months before the Kyoto Protocol commitment period was due to begin, then Liberal Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, is reported to have pressed Cabinet to ratify the Protocol, but without success.¹²

The newly installed Labor Government ratified the Protocol less than two months after Turnbull's failed petition.¹³ Nevertheless, the succeeding Labor Government, which helped negotiate in 2011 an agreement to continue the Kyoto Protocol beyond 2012, would not initially join a second deal. It was not until a year later it did so, and Australia agreed to join a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Even then, it is likely that the decision was made only as a condition of linking the Australian ETS to the EU's.¹⁴

A current issue of political contention (as of November 2013) is Australia's ETS, which the Coalition Government has pledged to repeal.¹⁵ Yet the Coalition has a strong track record of supporting an ETS. In 1999, it commissioned four discussion papers on emissions trading.¹⁶ In 2003, a Cabinet submission is said to have proposed an Australian ETS but was rejected by the then Prime Minister John Howard.¹⁷ Three years later Prime Minister Howard established a task group on emissions trading and in 2007 went to the election promising an ETS.¹⁸

One criticism the Coalition has of the ETS is that it requires the purchase of \$3.8 billion worth of emissions reductions from abroad.¹⁹ Yet, in 1996, the Liberal Government announced Australia's involvement in a UNFCCC trial project that centred on undertaking emissions reduction projects in other countries.²⁰

5. G Lloyd, '[Emissions targets to stay: Hunt](#)', *The Australian*, 30 September 2013, p. 5, accessed 16 October 2013.

6. R Hill (Minister for the Environment), '[Hill announces new Greenhouse chief](#)', media release, 4 March 1998, 20/98, accessed 6 August 2013.

7. Australian Government, '[Part 2: Expense Measures: Environment and Heritage](#)', *Budget measures: budget paper no. 2: 2005-06*, accessed 6 August 2013.

8. Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE), '[Corporate](#)', DIICCSRTE website, accessed 21 August 2013.

9. R Kelly (Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories), '[Australia signs UNCED climate change convention](#)', media release, 4 June 1992, accessed 6 August 2013.

10. R Hill (Minister for the Environment), '[Hill signs historic agreement to fight global warming](#)', media release, 29 April 1998, accessed 6 August 2013.

11. J Howard, '[Answer to Question without Notice: Environment: Kyoto Protocol](#)', [Questioner: K Thomson], House of Representatives, *Debates*, 5 June 2002, p. 3163, accessed 6 August 2013.

12. L Taylor, '[Cabinet blocks Turnbull on Kyoto](#)', *Australian Financial Review*, 27 October 2007, p. 3, accessed 6 August 2013.

13. K Rudd (Prime Minister), '[Ratifying the Kyoto Protocol](#)', media release, 3 December 2007, accessed 6 August 2013.

14. G Combet (Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency), '[Australia joins Kyoto Protocol Second Commitment as world on track to 2015 climate change agreement](#)', media release, 9 December 2012, accessed 26 August 2013.

15. G Hunt, '[A Coalition Government will repeal the carbon tax](#)', media release, 12 October 2011, accessed 26 August 2013.

16. Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO), '[National Emissions Trading: establishing the boundaries](#)', Discussion paper 1, March 1999, accessed 6 August 2013.

17. P Costello, '[Answer to Questions without Notice: carbon trading](#)', [Questioner: W Swan], House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 May 2007, p. 75.

18. J Howard (Prime Minister), '[Climate change fund](#)', media release, 21 October 2007, accessed 26 August 2013.

19. G Hunt, '[Daily Carbon Tax Question No.9 To Kevin Rudd: How Much Will Australia Spend On Overseas Carbon Permits On Top Of The Carbon Tax](#)', media release, 9 August 2013, accessed 26 August 2013.

20. R Hill (Minister for the Environment), '[New Australian move on greenhouse](#)', media release, 18 July 1996, accessed 6 August 2013.

The table below is a record of Australian climate change policies. Key international developments are also included to provide global context.

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
Jun 1972	<i>Stockholm declaration acknowledges the relationship between humans and their environment:</i> Through the Stockholm Declaration the world acknowledges that ‘In the industrialized countries, environmental problems are generally related to industrialization and technological development.’	United National Environment Programme, Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment , 16 June 1962.
Whitlam Government takes Office – December 1972		
Fraser Government takes Office – November 1975		
Mar 1976	<i>The Australian Academy of Science (AAS) reports that human activities are likely to contribute to warming:</i> However, the report concludes that ‘there is no evidence that the world is now on the brink of a major climatic change’.	AAS, Report of a committee on climatic change , report no. 1, AAS, Canberra, March 1976. [Link to internal APH network]
Feb 1979	<i>First international conference on climate change:</i> At the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) World Climate Conference in Geneva international experts discuss, for the first time, the link between human activities and climate.	UNFCCC, ‘Meeting The First World Climate Conference, 12–23 February 1979, Geneva, Switzerland’, UNFCCC archive.
Hawke-Keating Government takes office – March 1983		
Jun 1988	<i>First global emissions reduction targets (the ‘Toronto targets’):</i> At the Toronto conference on climate change a target of 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2005 on 1988 levels is proposed.	Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society, The changing atmosphere: implications for global security: conference statement , 27–30 June 1988.
Nov 1988	<i>First meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):</i> The IPCC is an international working group of experts tasked with reviewing and synthesising peer-reviewed research publications on climate change.	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Report of the first session of the WMO/UNEP IPCC , 9–11 November 1988.
1989	<i>First Australian greenhouse gas emissions reduction proposal submitted to Cabinet:</i> Senator Graham Richardson (Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories) submits to Cabinet a proposal for a 20% reduction in 1988 Australian greenhouse gas emissions levels by 2005.	V Burgmann and HA Baer, <i>Climate politics and the climate movement in Australia</i> , Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 2012, p. 61.
Jun-Aug 1990	<i>IPCC releases its First Assessment Report (FAR):</i> The IPCC FAR notes with certainty that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a natural greenhouse effect warms the Earth • human activities contribute to atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases. Several predictions are made about the effect of an enhanced greenhouse effect on the climate.	J Houghton, GJ Jenkins and JJ Ephraums (eds.), Climate change: the IPCC scientific assessment (First report) , IPCC, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
Oct 1990	<p>Australian Government adopts the ‘Toronto targets’ with provisos: Senator Richardson’s 20% target, which had originally been rejected, is accepted and announced on 11 October 1990 as an ‘Interim Planning Target’ with the proviso that the reduction would not be at the expense of the economy (the ‘no regrets’ strategy).</p> <p>The Council of Australia Governments (COAG) endorses the target.</p> <p>The Senate Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology is tasked with investigating the costs and benefits of meeting the target.</p>	<p>R Kelly (Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories) and J Kerin (Minister for Primary Industry and Energy), Government sets targets for reductions in greenhouse gases, joint statement, 11 October 1990.</p> <p>COAG, <i>InterGovernmental Agreement on the Environment</i>, February 1992.</p> <p>Senate Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, <i>Rescue the future: reducing the impact of the greenhouse effect</i>, The Senate, Canberra, January 1991.</p>
Dec 1990	<p>First global treaty on climate change established (UNFCCC): Prompted by the IPCC FAR, negotiations begin for a global treaty responding to climate change. This treaty later becomes known as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).</p>	<p>UNFCCC, ‘Issues in the negotiating process: a brief history of the climate change process’, UNFCCC website.</p>
Keating Government takes office – 20 December 1991		
9 May 1992	<p>The United Nations General Assembly adopts the UNFCCC: After 15 months of negotiations the treaty is open for signatures in June 1992.</p>	<p>UNFCCC, ‘Status of Ratification of the Convention’, UNFCCC website, 9 May 1992.</p>
4 Jun 1992	<p>Australia signs the UNFCCC at the UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: Ros Kelly, MP (Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories), signs the UNFCCC on behalf of Australia at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (or UNCED, informally known as the “Rio Earth Summit”). The UNFCCC aims to stabilise atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations in time to protect ecosystems, food security and economic development from the threat of climate change. By signing the treaty Australia indicates its acceptance of the principles of the Convention.</p>	<p>R Kelly (Minister for the Arts, Sport, the Environment and Territories), Australia signs UNCED climate change convention, media release, 4 June 1992.</p>
Dec 1992	<p>The National Greenhouse Response Strategy (NGRS) released: The NGRS is endorsed by the Commonwealth, state and territory Governments at a COAG meeting. The NGRS is a mechanism to audit and facilitate national approaches to limit greenhouse gas emissions so that Australia can meet its commitments to the UNFCCC. The strategy relies on action with no negative impacts on the national economy or on Australia’s trade competitiveness (‘no regrets’ strategy). The strategy</p>	<p>Australian Government, <i>National Greenhouse Response Strategy</i>, Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS), Canberra, December 1992.</p> <p>Council of Australian Governments (COAG), <i>Communique, ‘Environment – ESD and greenhouse’</i>, COAG Meeting, Perth, 7 December 1992,</p>

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
	includes the formation of the National Greenhouse Advisory Panel.	COAG website.
30 Dec 1992	Australia ratifies UNFCCC: Australia is the ninth country to ratify the UNFCCC.	UNFCCC, ' Status of ratification of the Convention ', United Nations (UN) website. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), ' Treaty making process ', DFAT website.
21 Mar 1994	UNFCCC comes into force: A minimum of 50 ratifications is reached in December 1993. This allows the UNFCCC to come into force ninety days later.	UNFCCC, ' Status of ratification of the Convention ', UN website. <i>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</i> , opened for signature 9 May 1992, ATS [1994] No. 2 (entered into force 21 March 1994).
19 Sep 1994	Australia meets its first commitment to the UNFCCC: In preparation for the first Conference of Parties (COP) in 1995, Australia lodges its first national communication to the UNFCCC. This document outlines how Australia is to meet its obligations to the UNFCCC and includes the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory , which tracks Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.	Department of the Environment, Sport and Territories, Climate change: Australia's national report under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change , AGPS, Canberra, September 1994. Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICCSRTE), National greenhouse gas inventory – Kyoto Protocol accounting framework , 2011, DIICCSRTE website. UNFCCC, Report on the in-depth review of the national communication of Australia , FCCC/IDR.1/AUS, 14 December 1995.
29 Mar 1995	Government introduces Greenhouse 21C plan: The 'Greenhouse 21C plan' supplements the NGRS with a number of additional measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions. One of these is the ' Greenhouse Challenge ' program, a voluntary scheme for major companies and industry sectors to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	Department of Primary Industries and Energy, ' Greenhouse Challenge ' webpage. J Faulkner (Minister for the Environment, Sport and Territories), Press conference for the release of Greenhouse 21C , speech, 29 March 1995.
Mar/Apr 1995	First UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP1) held in Berlin, Germany:	United Nations, FCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its first

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
	COP1 agrees to the Berlin Mandate , a process for strengthening developed nations' greenhouse gas emissions reduction commitments via the adoption of a protocol or other legal instrument.	session, held at Berlin from 28 March to 7 April 1995, Addendum, part 2: action taken by the Conference of the Parties at its first session, FCCC/CP/1995/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.1, p. 4, the Berlin Mandate , 6 June 1995. UNFCCC, Report on the Conference of the Parties on its first session, held at Berlin from 28 March to 7 April 1995 , FCCC/CP/1995/7, 24 May 1995.
Dec 1995	IPCC releases its second assessment report (SAR): The IPCC SAR states that "there is a discernible human influence on global climate".	IPCC, IPCC second assessment: climate change 1995 , [Geneva: WMO/UNEP, 1996].
Howard Government takes office – March 1996		
Jul 1996	Second UNFCCC COP held in Geneva, Switzerland: COP2 develops the Geneva Ministerial Declaration . The Declaration recognises the importance of the IPCC's SAR and urges member countries to develop legally-binding emissions targets.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its second session, held at Geneva from 8 to 19 July 1996 , FCCC/CP/1996/15, 29 October 1996.
18 Jul 1996	Australia announces involvement in Pilot Phase of UNFCCC's 'Activities Implemented Jointly': Senator Hill (Minister for the Environment) announces that Australia will be part of the UNFCCC's trial project known as ' Activities Implemented Jointly '. It involves countries undertaking emissions reduction projects in other countries. The Senator explains that, for Australia, 'in the long term we would be seeking credit from the international community for our efforts'.	R Hill (Minister for the Environment), New Australian move on greenhouse [emissions] , media release, 18 July 1996.
Late 1996	The National Greenhouse Advisory Panel releases the results of a major review of the NGRS: The report indicates that the "NGRS had little if any effect in achieving the necessary policy coordination and integration within and between jurisdictions; with few exceptions, greenhouse issues have not been considered".	National Greenhouse Advisory Panel (NGAP), <i>Report on the national greenhouse response strategy</i> , Environment Australia, Environment Protection Group, for the NGAP, AGPS, Canberra, 1996.
28 Feb 1997	Public submissions sought to guide Australia's response to climate change: Senator Robert Hill (Minister for the Environment) announces the release of a discussion paper by the Intergovernmental Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development entitled 'Future directions for Australia's National Greenhouse Strategy'. Submissions are sought to guide the principles and measures that would feature in the National Greenhouse Strategy 1998.	R Hill (Minister for the Environment), Greenhouse: developing a new strategy , media release, 28 February 1997. Intergovernmental Committee on Ecologically Sustainable Development, <i>Future directions for Australia's National Greenhouse Strategy</i> , Department of the

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
		Environment, Sport and Territories, Canberra, 1997.
26 Sep 1997	<p>Government says that adoption of emissions reduction targets would be devastating for Australia: Senator Hill claims that Australia will share the global burden of reducing greenhouse gas emissions but that ‘The adoption of a uniform reduction target at the upcoming Kyoto conference would have a devastating impact on Australian industry and its ability to create jobs’.</p>	R Hill (Minister for the Environment), Greenhouse gas figures reveal uniform target danger , media release, 26 September 1997.
15 Nov 1997	<p>Australia lodges its second national communication to the UNFCCC: Australia outlines how it intends to progress its international obligations. The strategies include establishing a statutory greenhouse body (the future Australian Greenhouse Office) and investment in renewable energy, energy reform, revegetation, and energy efficiency standards and labelling.</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Climate change. Australia’s second national report under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, November 1997.</p> <p>UNFCCC, Report on the in-depth review of the second national communication of Australia, FCCC/IDR.2/AUS, 18 October 1999.</p>
20 Nov 1997	<p>Prime Minister Howard introduces the ‘Prime Minister’s package’: Funding is provided for strategies outlined in Australia’s second national communication to the UNFCCC. A target of an additional 2% of electricity to be sourced from renewable sources by 2010 is made.</p>	J Howard, ‘ Safeguarding the future: Australia’s response to climate change ’, House of Representatives, ministerial statement, <i>Debates</i> , 20 November 1997.
Dec 1997	<p>Third UNFCCC COP held in Kyoto, Japan – Kyoto Protocol adopted: The Kyoto Protocol is adopted after two years of negotiations. Australia secures a controversial concession to include land-use change and forestry as part of the net emissions in the 1990 baseline (later known as the ‘Australia clause’). To come into effect the Protocol must be ratified by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 55 Parties to the Convention and • countries responsible for a combined total of 55% of carbon dioxide emissions (at 1990 levels) from developed countries. 	<p>UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its third session, held at Kyoto, from 1 to 11 December 1997, FCCC/CP/1997/7, 24 March 1998.</p> <p>R Hill (Minister for the Environment), Kyoto agreement a win for the environment, media release, 11 December 1997.</p>
Apr 1998	<p>The Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO) is established: Australia is the first country to establish a government agency dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The AGO is responsible for managing the ‘Prime Minister’s package’.</p>	<p>J Howard, ‘Safeguarding the future: Australia’s response to climate change’, ministerial statement, House of Representatives, <i>Debates</i>, 20 November 1997, p. 10921.</p> <p>R Hill (Minister for the Environment), Hill announces new Greenhouse chief [Gwen Andrews], media release, 4 March 1998.</p>
29 Apr	Australia signs the Kyoto Protocol:	R Hill (Minister for the Environment),

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
1998	Australia signs the Kyoto Protocol, along with 20 other countries. However, Australia does not ratify the Kyoto protocol and therefore the targets are not legally binding.	Hill signs historic agreement to fight global warming , media release, 29 April, 1998.
Nov 1998	Fourth UNFCCC COP held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Buenos Aires Plan of Action is developed to strengthen the financial and technological side of emissions trading to help bring the Kyoto Protocol into force.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fourth session, held at Buenos Aires from 2 to 14 November 1998 , FCCC/CP/1998/16, 20 January 1999.
Nov 1998	NGRS is replaced by the National Greenhouse Strategy (NGS): The AGO launches the NGS , which extends and supersedes the NGRS.	R Hill (Minister for the Environment), Launch of national greenhouse strategy , speech, 26 November 1998. The Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO), ' Greenhouse Policy ', AGO website.
Mar 1999	The AGO releases the first of four discussion papers on emissions trading: The first discussion paper , 'Establishing the Boundaries' of the National Emissions Trading series, details the principles and framework for how an emissions trading system (ETS) might operate.	AGO, National emissions trading: discussing the boundaries , Discussion paper 1, AGO, Canberra, 1999. [Link to internal APH network]
May 1999	'Measures for a Better Environment' package is announced: New funding is announced in the 2000-01 Budget for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and to encourage the uptake of renewable energy. More than half of this funding is dedicated to the Greenhouse Gas Abatement Programme to 'support activities that are likely to result in substantial reductions in greenhouse emissions or substantial enhancement of carbon sinks, and are consistent with ecologically sustainable development'.	Australian Government, <i>The Commonwealth's environmental expenditure</i> , Budget 2000-2001, ' Chapter 2: strategic directions and budget overview ', Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2000, p. 12.
Jun 1999	The AGO releases second discussion paper on emissions trading: This discussion paper discusses the allocation of permits, permit duration and how to progress towards emissions trading in Australia.	AGO, National emissions trading: issuing the permits , Discussion paper 2, AGO, Canberra, June 1999. [Link to internal APH network]
Oct 1999	The AGO releases third discussion paper on emissions trading: This discussion paper explores the framework for a national ETS and how carbon sinks might be included.	AGO, National Emissions Trading: crediting the carbon , Discussion Paper 3, AGO, Canberra, October 1999. [Link to internal APH network]
Oct-Nov 1999	Fifth UNFCCC COP held in Bonn, Germany: COP5 is a technical meeting. Annex I (industrialised) countries are asked to adopt the UNFCCC guidelines for reporting emissions.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fifth session, Held at Bonn from 25 October to 5 November 1999 , FCCC/CP/1999/6, 21 December 1999.
Dec 1999	The AGO releases the fourth and final discussion paper on emissions trading:	AGO, National emissions trading: designing the market , Discussion

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
	This discussion paper covers the design of carbon permits, how emissions would be monitored and reported, and how the market could operate.	paper 4, AGO, Canberra, December 1999. [Link to internal APH network]
7 Nov 2000	<i>'The heat is on: Australia's Greenhouse Future' Senate Committee report released:</i> The report criticises the Government for a lack of commitment to climate change policy. More than 100 recommendations are made.	Senate Standing Committees on Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, The heat is on: Australia's greenhouse future , 7 November 2000.
Nov 2000	<i>Part one of the Sixth UNFCCC COP held in The Hague, Netherlands:</i> Heated debate over the role of developed countries is heard. Discussions falter and the conference is suspended without agreement.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on the first part of its sixth session, held at The Hague from 13 to 25 November 2000 , FCCC/CP/2000/5, 4 April 2001.
Jan-Mar 2001	<i>IPCC releases its third assessment report (TAR):</i> The IPCC TAR details the growing scientific evidence that global temperatures have increased over the 20th century. Temperatures are predicted to increase by 1.4–5.8°C over the next century.	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), IPCC Third Assessment Report - climate change 2001 , GRID-Arendal, 2003.
1 Apr 2001	<i>Mandatory Renewable Energy Target scheme (MRET) starts:</i> The MRET commences under the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000 . It mandates, as initially proposed in the Prime Minister's Package, that by 2010 electricity retailers and other large electricity buyers source an additional 2% (above 2001 levels of about 8%) of their electricity from renewable or specified waste-product energy sources. Annual targets are defined.	R Hill (Minister for the Environment and Heritage), \$2 billion investment boom set to cut Australia's greenhouse emissions , media release, 4 April 2001.
June 2001	<i>Government rejects Senate Committee recommendations:</i> The Government response to The Heat is On: Australia's Greenhouse Future rejects the report's criticisms of existing Government climate change policy and programs.	Australian Government, Government response to the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee report: The heat is on: Australia's greenhouse future , June 2001.
July 2001	<i>Part two of COP 6 held in Bonn, Germany:</i> Talks resume after breaking down in 2000. The Bonn Agreements are made, which include implementing the Buenos Aires Plan of Action developed at COP4.	UNFCCC, Draft report of the Conference of the Parties on the second part of its sixth session, held at Bonn from 16 to [sic] July 2001 , FCCC/CP/2001/L.1, 26 July 2001.
Oct/ Nov 2001	<i>Seventh UNFCCC COP held in Marrakesh, Morocco:</i> Marrakesh Accords are developed, detailing how to meet the Kyoto Protocol targets. The Marrakesh Ministerial Declaration is also announced, to be used at the upcoming Earth Summit in Johannesburg.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its seventh session, held at Marrakesh from 29 October to 10 November 2001. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2001/13, 21 January 2002.
May 2002	<i>European Union (EU) and Japan ratify the Kyoto Protocol:</i>	Kelvin Thomson (Shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage),

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
	55 Parties of the Convention have now signed the Protocol. This is one of the conditions to bring the Protocol into force. Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi urges Prime Minister Howard to sign the Protocol .	Japan ratifies Kyoto Protocol while Howard hedges , media release, 5 June 2002.
5 Jun 2002	Australia refuses to ratify the Kyoto Protocol: The Howard Government outlines to the Australian Parliament that ratifying the Kyoto Protocol is not in the nation's interest.	J Howard, ' Answer to Question without notice: Environment: Kyoto Protocol ', [Questioner: K Thomson], House of Representatives, <i>Debates</i> , 5 June 2002, p. 3163.
Jun 2002	'Independent review of the AGO' released: The report suggests the AGO's status as an Executive Agency be revoked. It also recommends a review of the NGS.	WL Smith, Independent review of the Australian Greenhouse Office , June, 2002.
Aug 2002	New climate change strategy announced: David Kemp and Alexander Downer announce the ' Global greenhouse challenge: the way ahead for Australia '. The Challenge is a four-pronged policy response designed to meet Australia's Kyoto target and anticipate adaptation needs. However, the Government still claims the target "does not... provide an effective framework".	D Kemp (Minister for the Environment and Heritage) and A Downer (Minister for Foreign Affairs), Global greenhouse challenge: the way ahead for Australia , media release, 15 August 2002.
Aug/ Sep 2002	The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (Earth Summit 2002/Rio +10): The Johannesburg Declaration is made, urging sustainable development globally. However, this document has only one reference to climate change.	United Nations, Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development , 26 August–4 September, 2002.
Oct/ Nov 2002	Eighth UNFCCC COP held in New Delhi, India: COP8 produces the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development , which reinforces the need for sustainable development.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its eighth session, held at New Delhi from 23 October to 1 November 2002. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2002/7, 28 March 2003.
1 Jan 2003	Greenhouse Gas Reduction Scheme implemented by the NSW Government: The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Scheme (GGAS) is the world's first mandatory emission trading scheme . The GGAS employs a baseline and credit system (rather than a cap-and-trade system).	Greenhouse Gas Reduction Scheme (GGAS), Introduction to the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Scheme (GGAS) , GGAS website (now closed), 30 June 2011.
Jul 2003	New strategy for emissions trading proposed: Reports surface that an ETS plan is presented to Cabinet by federal Treasury, Industry and Environment departments, backed by at least six government portfolios. Following a meeting with industry, the ETS plan is set aside by Prime Minister, John Howard.	L Minchin, ' Howard blows hot and cold on emissions ', <i>The Age</i> , 15 November 2006, p. 4. M Bachelard, ' PM cans carbon trading scheme ', <i>Weekend Australian</i> , 30 August 2008, p. 4.
Dec 2003	Ninth UNFCCC COP held in Milan, Italy: COP9 establishes a fund to help developing countries adapt to climate change.	FCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its ninth session, held at Milan from 1 to 12 December 2003. Part one: proceedings ,

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
		FCCC/CP/2003/6, 30 March 2004.
Jun 2004	<p>Securing Australia's Energy Future White paper released:</p> <p>The paper proposes renewable energy initiatives, including an overhaul of the fuel excise program and funding for research and development. It reaffirms that ratifying the Kyoto Protocol is not in the national interest, but that Australia is on track to meet its target anyway.</p>	Australian Government, Securing Australia's Energy Future , Canberra, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2004.
Oct 2004	<p>Announcement that the AGO will become part of the Department of Environment and Heritage:</p> <p>This change is promoted as a cost-saving measure.</p>	Australian Government, Part 2: Expense measures: Environment and Heritage , <i>Budget measures: budget paper no. 2: 2005-06</i> .
Nov 2004	<p>Russia ratifies the Kyoto Protocol:</p> <p>Developed countries with a combined total of 55% of global carbon dioxide emissions (at 1990 levels) have now approved the Protocol. All conditions for the Kyoto Protocol to come into force have been met. Australia still refuses to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, stating that it is flawed.</p>	UN Secretary-General, <i>UN Secretary-General receives Russia's Kyoto Protocol ratification</i> , media release, 18 November 2004. Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change , opened for signature 11 December 1997, [2008] ATS 2, (entered into force for Australia 11 March 2008).
Dec 2004	<p>Tenth UNFCCC COP held in Buenos Aires, Argentina:</p> <p>The Buenos Aires Plan of Action is adopted and discussions of post-Kyoto (post-2012) targets begin.</p>	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its tenth session, held at Buenos Aires from 6 to 18 December 2004. Part one: Proceedings , FCCC/CP/2004/10, 18 April 2005.
16 Feb 2005	<p>Kyoto Protocol comes into force:</p> <p>Ninety days after both conditions are met the Kyoto Protocol's 2012 targets become enforceable.</p>	UNFCCC, Status of Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol , UNFCCC website.
9 Aug 2005	<p>The International Energy Agency (IEA) urges Australia to consider an ETS:</p> <p>The IEA releases Energy policies of IEA countries - Australia 2005 review, which notes that Australia's emission intensity is one of the highest in the world. It urges Australia to consider an ETS.</p>	International Energy Agency (IEA), Energy policies of IEA countries - Australia 2005 review , 2005, IEA website.
Nov/ Dec 2005	<p>Eleventh UNFCCC COP held in Montreal, Canada:</p> <p>More than 10,000 delegates discuss climate action after the Kyoto Protocol ends in 2012.</p>	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its eleventh session, held at Montreal from 28 November to 10 December 2005. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2005/5, 30 March 2006.
Nov 2006	<p>Twelfth UNFCCC COP held in Nairobi, Kenya:</p> <p>Compliance rules for the Kyoto Protocol are determined. An Adaptation Fund is created to help developing</p>	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twelfth session, held at Nairobi from 6 to 17

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	countries adapt to climate change.	November 2006. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2006/5, 25 January 2007.
10 Dec 2006	Prime Ministerial Task Group on Emissions Trading is established: Prime Minister John Howard announces the creation of a task group to provide advice on designing an ETS for Australia.	J Howard (Prime Minister), Prime Ministerial Task Group On Emissions Trading , media release, 10 December 2006.
Feb-May 2007	IPCC releases its fourth assessment report (AR4): The IPCC AR4 affirms with 90% certainty that increases in global temperatures since the mid-20 th century are driven by anthropogenic greenhouse gasses.	RK Pachauri and A Reisinger (eds.), Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change , Geneva, 2007.
31 May 2007	'Shergold Report' released: The Prime Ministerial Task Group on Emissions Trading releases the ' Shergold Report ' which recommends Australia develop an emissions trading scheme.	Prime Ministerial Task Group on Emissions Trading, Report of the Task Group on Emissions Trading , Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), Canberra, 31 May 2007.
28 Sep 2007	National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Bill 2007 receives royal assent: The National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Bill 2007 requires industry to report its greenhouse gas emissions, abatement actions, energy consumption and production.	Parliament of Australia, ' National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Bill 2007 homepage', Australian Parliament website.
21 Oct 2007	Prime Minister John Howard promises an ETS if re-elected: The Government promises to establish a national ETS, starting no later than 2012. The Climate Change Fund is announced as an election promise. Through this fund revenue from emissions trading is to be reinvested into climate change initiatives.	J Howard (Prime Minister), Transcript of the Prime Minister the Hon John Howard MP address to the Liberal Party Federal Council, the Westin Hotel, Sydney , transcript, 21 October 2007.
27 Oct 2007	Cabinet rejects proposal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol: Reports emerge that Malcolm Turnbull, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, urges Cabinet to ratify the Kyoto Protocol but is unsuccessful.	L Taylor, ' Cabinet blocks Turnbull on Kyoto ', <i>Australian Financial Review</i> , 27 October 2007, p. 3.
13 Nov 2007	National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility announced: A new facility will be created to research the impacts and mitigation of climate change on Australian industry and communities.	M Turnbull (Minister for the Environment and Water Resources), New world-first research facility to equip Australia for a changing climate , media release, 13 November 2007.
Rudd Government takes Office - November 2007		
Dec 2007	Thirteenth UNFCCC COP held in Bali, Indonesia – Bali Action Plan adopted: The Bali Action Plan is adopted. This is a workplan to	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its thirteenth session, held in Bali from 3 to 15

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	guide the implementing of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol over the 2008–2012 period. It emphasises the importance of a shared vision, climate change mitigation, adaption, technology development and transfer and financial assistance to poorer nations.	December 2007. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2007/6, 14 March 2008
3 Dec 2007	<i>The Department of Climate Change and Water is established:</i> The Department of Climate Change is established within the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio.	DIICCSRTE, ' Corporate ', DIICCSRTE website.
12 Dec 2007	<i>Australia ratifies the Kyoto Protocol:</i> Prime Minister Kevin Rudd ratifies the Kyoto Protocol, as promised during the 2007 election campaign.	K Rudd (Prime Minister), Ratifying the Kyoto Protocol , media release, 3 December 2007.
Feb 2008	<i>Garnaut Review interim report released:</i> Ross Garnaut, Professor of Economics at the Australian National University was commissioned by Australia's Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments to undertake an independent review of the impacts of climate change on the Australian economy. The interim report for the Garnaut Climate Change Review submits that Australia is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It also proposes that Australia should establish effective climate policies, the centrepiece of which should be an ETS.	Garnaut Review, Garnaut climate change review: interim report to the Commonwealth, state and territory governments of Australia , February 2008.
11 Mar 2008	<i>Australia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol comes into effect:</i> The Government issues the Initial Report under the Kyoto Protocol detailing how Australia aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	P Wong (Minister for Climate Change and Water), Australia is now a part of the Kyoto Protocol , media release, 11 March 2008.
16 Jul 2008	<i>Green paper on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) released:</i> The green paper outlines how the Government will implement its proposed ETS.	Australian Government, Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme , Green paper, July 2008.
31 Jul 2008	<i>'Strategic Review of Australian Government Climate Change Programs' released:</i> The Wilkins Review analyses current climate change programs to determine whether they are complementary to the CPRS.	R Wilkins, Strategic review of Australian government climate change programs , commissioned by the Australian Government, 31 July 2008.
30 Sep 2008	<i>Final 2008 Garnaut climate change report released:</i> The Garnaut Review provides a detailed analysis of the impacts of climate change on Australia and the costs of adaptation and mitigation.	Garnaut Review, The Garnaut climate change review , commissioned by the Australian Government, 30 September 2008.
30 Oct 2008	<i>Australia's Low Pollution Future: The Economics of Climate Change Mitigation released:</i> Treasury modelling establishes that there are benefits to Australia acting early if other countries also adopt carbon pricing but that delaying action may lead to higher long-term costs.	Australian Government, Australia's low pollution future: the economics of climate change mitigation , 30 October 2008.
Dec 2008	<i>Fourteenth UNFCCC COP held in Poznan, Poland</i> An Adaptation Fund is launched to help developing countries meet the Bali Action Plan. Negotiations on a	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fourteenth session, held in Poznan from 1 to 12

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	post-Kyoto plan continue.	December 2008. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2008/7, 14 March 2008.
15 Dec 2008	<p>'Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme: Australia's Low Pollution Future' released:</p> <p>The White paper outlines the final design of an Australian ETS. It also outlines new 2020 emissions reduction targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5% below 2000 levels without any conditions, but • 15% below 2000 levels if there is a 'global agreement where all major economies commit to substantially restrain emissions and all developed countries take on comparable reductions to that of Australia.' 	Australian Government, Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme: Australia's low pollution future , White paper, 15 December 2008.
May 2009	<p>2009–10 Budget includes major changes to climate change policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new target to reduce emissions by 25% by 2020 on 2000 levels if 'the world agrees to an ambitious global deal to stabilise levels of CO₂ equivalent at 450 parts per million or lower by mid-century'. • The CPRS will be delayed by one year to 2011–12 when it will begin with a 12-month \$10 fixed price. • The establishment of an Australian Carbon Trust to help household improve energy efficiency • The launch of a Clean Energy Initiative to support the development of low carbon energy. 	<p>K Rudd (Prime Minister), A new target for reducing Australia's carbon pollution and New measures for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, media releases, 4 May 2009.</p> <p>M Ferguson (Minister for Resources and Energy), \$4.5 billion Clean Energy Initiative, media release, 12 May 2009.</p>
12 May 2009	<p>Government responds to the Wilkins Review:</p> <p>The Government agrees to close 13 programs that were deemed not complementary to an ETS.</p>	L Tanner (Minister for Finance and Deregulation), Streamlining the Australian government's climate change programs and making energy efficient choices even easier , media release, 12 May 2009.
14 May 2009	<p>First Australian ETS legislation introduced into Parliament:</p> <p>The <i>Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009</i> is introduced into the House of Representatives.</p>	Parliament of Australia
9 Aug 2009	<p>Australian 2020 emissions projections released:</p> <p>The Department of Climate Change publishes Tracking to Kyoto and 2020. It shows that Australia is on its way to meeting its Kyoto Protocol target.</p>	P Wong (Minister for Climate Change and Water), New report shows carbon pollution continues to rise without action , media release, 9 August 2009.
13 Aug 2009	<p>CPRS legislation rejected by the Senate</p>	Parliament of Australia, 'Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 homepage' , Australian Parliament website.
7 Sept	<p>Renewable energy target increased to 20%:</p>	Parliament of Australia, 'Renewable

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
2009	The Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill 2009 received royal assent. It amends existing legislation, replacing the MRET with the Renewable Energy Target (RET). The RET has a more ambitious renewable energy target of 20% (45,000 GWh) by 2020. The Solar Credits scheme is also introduced it provides multiple credits for the installation of household rooftop solar.	Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill 2009 , Australian Parliament website.
22 Oct 2009	Australian ETS legislation introduced a second time: The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 is re-introduced into the House of Representatives.	Parliament of Australia, ' Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 homepage ', [No. 2], Australian Parliament website.
1 Dec 2009	Change of Opposition leadership voids ETS deal: Malcolm Turnbull is defeated by Tony Abbott in a Liberal Party of Australia leadership spill. Media reports suggest that Turnbull had reached a deal with the government on CPRS amendments to secure Senate support from the Liberal Party. The change of leadership rescinds any such negotiations and agreements.	S Stone, Sharman Stone welcomes new leader , media release, 1 December 2009. M Cormann, [Resignation from the Shadow Ministry over ETS] media release, 1 December 2009. L Knight, The ETS deal's done , <i>The Land</i> , 26 November 2009, p. 5.
2 Dec 2009	CPRS legislation again rejected by the Senate: This creates a trigger for a double dissolution election. The trigger is not used.	Parliament of Australia, ' Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009 homepage ', [No. 2], Australian Parliament website.
Dec 2009	Fifteenth UNFCCC COP held in Copenhagen, Denmark: Despite continued discussion no agreement on binding post-Kyoto commitments can be reached. The resulting Copenhagen Accord , which calls for countries to populate a list of national 2020 emissions reduction targets, is noted by the COP but is not officially accepted or legally-binding.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fifteenth session, held in Copenhagen from 7 to 19 December 2009. Part one: Proceedings , FCCC/CP/2009/11, 30 March 2010.
2 Feb 2010	Australian ETS legislation introduced a third time: According to the Second Reading speech , this version of the CPRS bill includes amendments agreed to by the Coalition.	Australian Parliament, ' Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2010 ', Australian Parliament website.
2 Feb 2010	Coalition opposition party releases its climate policy: The Direct Action Policy aims to meet the 5% emissions reduction target by offering incentives for households and industry to do so. The centrepiece of the policy is an Emissions Reduction Fund designed to reward businesses that emit below a baseline and penalise those that exceed it.	T Abbott, Direct action on the environment and climate change , media release, 2 February 2010.
Feb 2010	'Adapting to Climate Change in Australia – An Australian Government Position Paper' released: This Position paper sets out the Government's role in and strategies for adapting to climate change.	Australian Government, Adapting to climate change in Australia: an Australian Government Position Paper , DCC, 19 February 2010.

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
8 Mar 2010	Department of Climate Change becomes Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency: Through a machinery of government change on 8 March 2010 the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency is established as a separate portfolio agency. Programs from the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts are transferred across.	DIICCSRTE, ' Corporate ', DIICCSRTE webpage.
27 Apr 2010	CPRS delayed until the end of 2012: Prime Minister Kevin Rudd announces that the CPRS will be delayed until the end of the Kyoto commitment period at the end of 2012.	K Rudd (Prime Minister), Transcript of doorstep interview: Nepean Hospital, Penrith: health and hospital reform; Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme; Home Insulation Program , media release, 27 April 2010.
Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard becomes Prime Minister after internal party challenge – 24 June 2010		
1 Sep 2010	The Australian Labor Party agrees to a politically inclusive committee on climate change: In order to form a minority government after the 2010 election, Prime Minister Julia Gillard signs agreements with the Australian Greens and three independent Members. The Labor-Greens agreement stipulates that the Government must establish a committee of 'parliamentarians who are committed to tackling climate change and who acknowledge that reducing carbon pollution by 2020 will require a carbon price'.	' The Australian Greens & The Australian Labor Party ('The Parties') – Agreement ', 1 September 2010.
27 Sep 2010	Multi-Party Climate Change Committee (MPCCC) created: As required by the Labor-Greens agreement, the MPCCC is formed.	J Gillard (Prime Minister), Prime Minister establishes Climate Change Committee [and] Terms of Reference , media release, 27 September 2010.
28 Sep 2010	Third CPRS legislation lapses: The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2010 lapses, seven months after it was introduced, due to the start of a new parliament.	Parliament of Australia, ' Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2010 ', Australian Parliament website.
Nov/ Dec 2010	Sixteenth UNFCCC COP held in Cancun, Mexico : The COP produces the Cancun Agreements , which reinforces the main points of the Copenhagen Accord. The six building blocks of the agreements are mitigation, transparency, finance, technology, forestry and adaptation. A decision is made to establish a Green Climate Fund to finance climate action in developing countries.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixteenth session, held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2010/7, 15 March 2011.
1 Jan 2011	The RET scheme is split into two parts: The Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Act 2010 comes into force. It separates the RET scheme into the Large-scale Renewable Energy Target and the Small-scale Renewable Energy Scheme.	Parliament of Australia, ' Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill 2010 homepage ', Australian Parliament website.
10 Feb 2011	Government launches Climate Commission: This independent commission is designed to provide expert advice and information on climate change to the	G Combet (Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency), Launch of the Climate Commission ,

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
	Australian public.	media release, 10 February 2011.
31 May 2011	Update of Garnaut Review released: The government-commissioned ' The Garnaut Review 2011: Australia in the global response to climate change ' is released.	Department of Climate Change, Final report: our fair share of climate action much more expensive without carbon pricing , media release, 31 May 2011.
24 Mar 2011	Legislation is introduced for a carbon offset to create incentives for carbon avoidance projects in land sector: The Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Bill 2011 creates the Carbon Farming Initiative which is the first scheme of its kind globally.	A Talberg, J Gardiner-Garden, J Tomaras, Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Bill 2011 , Bills digest, 5, 2011–12, 1 July 2011, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2011.
9 Jun 2011	Productivity Commission report concludes that Australia's implicit cost of abatement is not high: The report related the difficulties in the exercise of measuring and comparing implicit country abatement costs in relation to electricity generation. However, the findings suggest that market-based approaches are the most cost-effective.	Productivity Commission (PC), Carbon emission reduction policies in key economies , May 2011, PC website.
10 Jul 2011	Framework for a new ETS released: Government releases ' Securing a clean energy future: the Australian Government's climate change plan '. It outlines the Government's plan to cut 159 million tonnes a year of greenhouse gases by 2020. The plan includes putting a price on carbon, investing in renewable energy, improving energy efficiency and creating opportunities in the land sector.	J Gillard (Prime Minister), Securing a clean energy future for Australia , media release, 10 July 2011.
15 Sep 2011	The Carbon Farming Initiative legislation receives Royal Assent	Parliament of Australia, ' Carbon Credits (Carbon Farming Initiative) Bill 2011 homepage ', Australian Parliament website.
8 Nov 2011	ETS legislation is passed by Parliament: The Clean Energy Act 2011 is a package of 18 Bills that provides the framework for an ETS starting with a three-year fixed-price phase.	Parliament of Australia, ' Clean Energy Bill 2011 homepage ', Australian Parliament website.
Dec 2011	Discussion paper on implementing carbon price floor released: This discussion paper seeks feedback for options to keep the carbon price above a set minimum. This is to provide investment certainty.	Australian Government, Price floor for Australia's carbon pricing mechanism: Implementing a surrender charge for international units , December 2011.
Nov/Dec 2011	Seventeenth UNFCCC COP held in Durban, South Africa: The Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action is formed. It is a UNFCCC working group to negotiate a universal binding climate agreement for post-2020. A second phase to the Kyoto Protocol is agreed upon.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its seventeenth session, held in Durban from 28 November to 11 December 2011. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2011/9, 15 March 2012.
20-22 Jun	United Nations Conference on Sustainable	United Nations (UN), Report of the

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
2012	Development (Rio+20): The third international Conference on Sustainable Development develops the non-binding document ' The Future We Want '. This document, agreed to by all 192 member states (including Australia), stresses the urgent need to take action on climate change.	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development , Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 20–22 June 2012, UN, 2012.
25 Jun 2012	\$10 billion Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) legislated: Legislation is passed for the CEFC , a \$10 billion fund dedicated to investing in clean energy.	Parliament of Australia, ' Clean Energy Finance Corporation Bill 2012 homepage ', Australian Parliament website.
1 Jul 2012	Price on carbon comes into effect: An unlimited number of carbon units become available for purchase at a fixed price of \$23.	J Gillard (Prime Minister), Australia's clean energy future , media release, 1 July 2012.
1 Jul 2012	Climate Change Authority (CCA) formed: The Government establishes an independent advisory body on climate change. Its duties include advising on pollution caps within an ETS.	J Gillard (Prime Minister), Australia's clean energy future , media release, 1 July 2012.
28 Aug 2012	Australia and the EU agree to link ETSs: Australia will link its ETS with the EU's ETS, sharing a portion of permits. Initially the link is unilateral allowing the purchase of EU permits within Australia but not the inverse. The link is intended to become bilateral by mid-2018. This deal removes Australia's carbon price floor. The deal also foreshadows Australia joining a second period under the Kyoto Protocol.	G Combet (Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency), Australia and European Commission agree on pathway towards fully linking emissions trading systems , media release, 28 August 2012.
26 Nov – 8 Dec 2012	Eighteenth UNFCCC COP held in Doha, Qatar – Bali Action Plan completed and Australia signs on for a second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol: The Doha Amendment is passed, launching the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. Australia agrees to join a second period of the Kyoto Protocol.	UNFCCC, Report of the Conference of the Parties on its eighteenth session, held in Doha from 26 November to 8 December 2012. Part one: proceedings , FCCC/CP/2012/8, 28 February 2013. G Combet (Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency), Australia joins Kyoto Protocol Second Commitment as world on track to 2015 climate change agreement , joint media release, 9 December 2012.
19 Dec 2012	'Renewable energy target review' released: The CCA reviews the RET target recommending that the overall target remain unchanged and that reviews be undertaken only every four years.	Climate Change Authority, Release of the final report on the Renewable Energy Target Press Conference 19 December 2012 , 19 December 2013.
14 March 2013	'Barriers to Effective Climate Change Adaptation' report released: The Productivity Commission (PC) report identifies policy and regulatory barriers to Australia's ability to respond or adapt to climate change. The report provides recommendations for building adaptive capacity.	PC, Barriers to effective climate change adaptation , Inquiry report, no. 59, 19 September 2012.

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Mar 2013	Government responds to PC report on adaptation: The Government agrees to the majority of recommendations in the report.	Australian Government, Australian Government response to the Productivity Commission report: Barriers to effective climate change adaptation , March 2013.
21 Mar 2013	Government responds to CCA's RET review: The Government agreed to all but three of the 34 recommendations made in the CCA's report.	DIICCSRTE, ' Australian Government response to the Climate Change Authority's Renewable Energy Target Review Final Report ', Climate Change Authority website.
25 Mar 2013	Department of Climate Change is disbanded: The Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency is abolished. Most of its functions are moved to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education, with responsibility for energy efficiency transferred to the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism.	DIICCSRTE, ' Corporate ', DIICCSRTE webpage.
Rudd Government takes Office – June 2013		
16 Jul 2013	Government announces intention to move to a full ETS in 2014: The Government cites the high cost of living as a reason to bring forward by one year the transition from a fixed price to an ETS.	K Rudd (Prime Minister), Transcript of joint press conference: Townsville, Qld: climate change policy; visit to North Queensland; asylum seeker policy; election campaign , media release, 16 July 2013.
Jul 2013	'How Australia's carbon price is working: One year on' released: Report notes an increase in renewable energy generation and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions since the start of the carbon price mechanism.	Australian Government, How Australia's carbon price is working: One year on , July 2013.
Abbott Government takes office – September 2013		
18 Sep 2013	Dismantling of four climate change programs begins and climate change functions moved into Department of Environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government begins drafting legislation to repeal the <i>Clean Energy Act 2011</i> The government abolishes the Climate Commission Treasurer orders the CEFC to cease investments Environment Minister announces plans to abolish the CCA A new Department of the Environment deals with matters that include renewable energy target policy, regulation and co-ordination; greenhouse emissions and energy consumption reporting; climate change adaptation strategy and co- 	<p>S Maher and D Crowe, 'Abbott takes charge, axes mandarins', <i>The Australian</i>, 19 September 2013, p. 1.</p> <p>'Hunt gives orders to close the Climate Change Authority', <i>Australian Financial Review</i>, (online edition), 19 September 2013, subscriber access only.</p> <p>T Arup, 'Abbott shuts down Climate Commission', <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> (online edition), 19 September 2013.</p> <p>Administrative Arrangements Order, Commonwealth of Australia, 18</p>

Milestones	Details	Source Documents
	ordination; co-ordination of climate change science activities; renewable energy; greenhouse gas abatement programmes; and community and household climate action.	September 2013.
Oct 2013	Climate Council replaces Climate Commission: Funded by \$900,000 in private donations, the Climate Council is launched to continue the work of the disbanded Climate Commission.	B Schneiders, ' Climate Council campaign pulls in nearly \$1m ', <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> , 1 October 2013, p. 11.
16 Oct 2013	Government begins consultation on its Direct Action Plan: Stakeholders are asked to comment on an Emissions Reduction Fund, the centrepiece of the Government's Direct Action Plan, designed to replace the ETS.	Department of the Environment, ' Emissions Reduction Fund ', Department of the Environment website.
13 Nov 2013	Government introduces legislation to repeal ETS, CCA and CEFC: The Clean Energy Legislation (Carbon Tax Repeal) Bill 2013 is one of a package of 11 Bills repealing the ETS and some related bodies and instruments.	K Loynes, Carbon Price Repeal Bills: quick guide , Quick Guide, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 20 November 2013.

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