

How Australia is robbing the Pacific of its climate change efforts

Australia's use of controversial Kyoto carbon credits to cut its Paris Agreement target in half completely undermines Pacific climate action

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Key Points

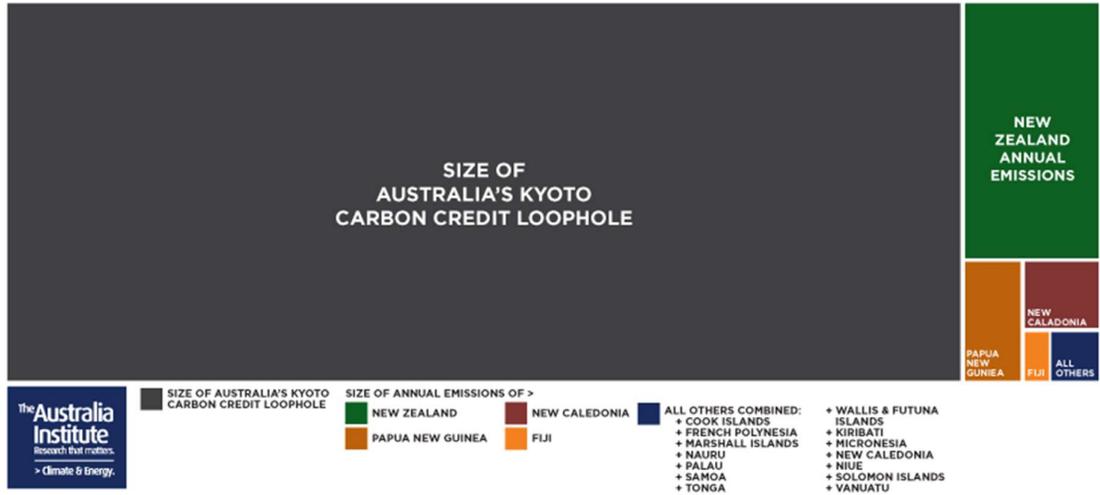
- Australia will use 367 Mt of carbon credits from the Kyoto Protocol to avoid most of its emission reductions pledged under its Paris Agreement target.¹
- Annual fossil fuel emissions from the Pacific Island Forum members excluding Australia (New Zealand and 16 small island states) is about 45Mt of CO₂.²
- Australia's Kyoto carbon credit loophole is **seven times** larger than the annual fossil fuel emissions of its Pacific neighbours.
- As the Secretary General calls on countries to increase their Paris Agreement targets, which Fiji, Marshall Islands and others have committed to do, it is completely undermined by Australia.
- Other developed countries such as New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Germany have ruled out using Kyoto carbon credits which they state is not in the spirit of the Paris Agreement.³
- Australia will continue to face criticism for its use of Kyoto carbon credits at the United Nations Secretary General's Climate Action Summit on 23 September 2019, which global leaders are expected to attend, and at the next UN climate negotiations in Chile in December 2019, where countries will consider additional rules around meeting Paris Agreement targets.

¹ Department of Environment and Energy (2018) *Australia's emissions projections 2018*
<https://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/publications/emissions-projections-2018>

² Global Carbon Atlas (2018) *CO2 Emissions Territorial Oceania*
<http://www.globalcarbonatlas.org/en/CO2-emissions>

³ Merzian (2019) *Taking Way Too Much Credit* <http://www.tai.org.au/content/taking-way-too-much-credit>

SIZE OF AUSTRALIA'S KYOTO CARBON CREDIT LOOPHOLE v ANNUAL EMISSIONS OF PACIFIC ISLAND FORUM COUNTRIES



Background

The 50th Pacific Island Forum leaders meeting will take place in Funafuti, Tuvalu. The small island state of Tuvalu has been outspoken on the climate impacts faced by the Pacific and the urgent need for ambitious climate action. The theme of the leaders meeting will be *Securing Our Future in the Pacific*, and the Tuvaluan Prime Minister has been explicit in linking the security of the Pacific to the climate crisis.⁴

The Australian Prime Minister has advocated for a 'sensible, achievable' approach to climate change.⁵ This includes Australia using controversial carbon credits accrued from the Kyoto Protocol to extinguish the majority of its effort required to meet its Paris Agreement target. Australia is unique in the Pacific, and among most developed countries, for taking this approach.

To understand how this compares to the efforts of other Pacific countries, the Australia Institute has put the carbon credits side-by-side with annual fossil fuel emissions of all other Pacific Island Forum country members.⁶

⁴ Lyons (2019) *Pacific Islands Forum: Tuvalu children welcome leaders with a climate plea*
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/aug/11/pacific-islands-forum-tuvalu-children-welcome-leaders-with-a-climate-plea>

⁵ Sydney Morning Herald (2019) *Pacific shames PM on climate policy*
<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/climate-change/pacific-shames-pm-on-climate-policy-20190122-p50svd.html>

⁶ Note Wallis & Futuna is a Pacific Island Forum observer member.