

How have politics (including policy development), power and governing, as we have studied these concepts, been involved in relation to the development of climate policy in Australia.

Translating community consensus into policy is difficult, particularly where various actors with opposing views are concerned, and those without systemic power are limited in what they can achieve. In Australia every individual state and territory has committed to a target of net zero emissions by 2050, yet the Federal Government has resisted calls to make this commitment. The current Federal Government climate policy does not reflect the consensus view among state governments, or what appears to be the consensus view in the community. In order to ensure ongoing support from the public and a more sustainable future, the Federal Government must decrease Australia's reliance on fossil fuel industries and increase investment in renewable energy sources.

As a federation, Australian states and territories retain powers to implement their own climate change policies and as a result individual state policies are not always aligned with other states or the Federal Government. As of 9 July 2020, every Australian state and territory had committed to a net zero emissions target by 2050. However, in December 2020, the Morrison federal government recommunicated their commitment to "reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26 to 28% below 2005 levels by 2030" (Australian Government, Department of Industry, Science and Resources 2021, para 4). This is the same policy that was first released by the Federal Government in 2015 when Australia, with 194 other countries, joined the United Nations Paris Agreement on climate change. The aim of the Paris agreement is to limit global emissions to zero by the second half of this century, and countries such as the United States, United Kingdom and Europe have a zero target by 2050, with China closely following with a zero target by 2060. There is also public pressure for the Federal Government to make a policy commitment that is more closely aligned with these countries and the Australian states. According to a 2020 Lowy Institute Poll, 56% of Australians view global warming as "a serious and pressing problem" where "we should begin taking steps now even if this involves significant costs." Despite this public pressure the Coalition government has continued to resist the development of a 2050 target. This would appear to reflect the statement that "where there is argument, or disagreement about how things should be done, then there is politics" (Hirst. P 1990, p131).

Whilst the Federal Government's emission target does not align with state and territory governments in Australia, it has developed a policy in "a manner that guarantees them continuing popular support" (Considine. M 1994, p6) from a large section of the Australian public and other actors invested in climate change policy. According to the December 2020 Officer of the Chief Economist 'Resources and Energy Quarterly Report', Australia's mining sector contributes 10% of our GDP, more than half of our total exports and directly employs a quarter of a million people. Supporting the mining industry gives the Federal government political power from an economic perspective, as they generate a large proportion of our total commonwealth revenue. Currently, total commonwealth revenue in Australia is at \$500 billion, and \$3 billion of this is generated from the Iron Ore industry tax alone. The Liberal Party values lower taxes, and if they were to compromise the revenue contribution from the mining industry, they would need to increase tax or reduce spending in other areas of the budget to balance the loss of revenue. By favouring the mining industry over emission reduction policies, the Morrison government is reflecting "power [that] flows through relationships, or networks...." (Gauntlett. D 2008, p128). For example, the seat of Herbert in Queensland transitioned from Labor to Liberal in the 2019 federal election, with an 8% swing (the greatest percentage swing of this election). Herbert is home to the world's largest zinc refinery and is currently expanding a port to increase mining exports. The coalition's lack of a zero emissions target would appeal to many of Herbert's residents, as it provides them with a sense of security for the future of a key source of their income.

In order to reflect the consensus view of state governments and the majority of the public, the Federal Government must "amend, reorganize and reposition" (Considine. M 1994, p7) the development of climate change policy. Current policies focus on retaining the vote of current Coalition supporters, are characterised by tactics and seek to support the existing economy. Andrew Forrest, billionaire and founder of iron-ore export company Fortescue Metals Group, has already begun to pave the way for sustainable mining practices. Forrest has proposed the idea of "green steel," which allows Australia to continue to mine iron ore, and make steel using green, zero emissions technology. Leading enterprises "Thyssenkrupp" in Germany and "Nippon Steel" in Japan have already harnessed the relevant technology to create green steel. Australia is in a unique position to create green steel, as we produce 40% of the world's iron ore, and our key trading partners have already committed to 2050 net zero emissions target. Fortescue

currently produces 2 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas per year, which is more than the entire emissions of Bhutan. Federal Government support for sustainable mining practices would help to reduce Australia's emissions, honouring the Paris agreement and the Australian consensus.

Legitimate power is exercised, for example, through government policy, not simply acquired through democratic elections. A lack of coordination between state and federal government's climate policy does not reflect well on the foundations of Australia's representative democracy system. Policy making should not be restricted to the elite and their choices, but rather result from the negotiation, resistance and compromise of all actors who have an invested interest.

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