

Australian climate minister to target World Bank's response to crisis in Cop27 speech

Australia is back as a 'constructive collaborator' in negotiations, Chris Bowen will tell summit, as he calls for more commitment from institutions



Co27 delegates in Sharm el-Sheikh where Chris Bowen will deliver Australia's national statement on Tuesday. Photograph: Mohammed Abed/AFP/Getty Images

Adam Morton in *Sharm el-Sheikh*

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The Australian climate change minister, **Chris Bowen**, will use his major address at the Cop27 UN summit in Egypt to call out the World Bank for failing to address the climate crisis, and join calls for the international financial system to be reshaped.

Giving a national statement at the conference in Sharm el-Sheik on Tuesday, Bowen will declare that Australia is back as a “constructive, positive, and willing

climate collaborator” since the Anthony Albanese-led Labor party ousted Scott Morrison’s rightwing coalition, which was widely criticised as a roadblock at climate negotiations.

According to an advance copy of the speech released by his office, Bowen would not outline new climate funding or policies.

He listed changes made by the Albanese government since its election in May – legislating an increased 2030 emissions target (a 43% cut compared with 2005 levels), joining a **global pledge to cut methane emissions**, announcing **a bid with Pacific countries to co-host the 2026 UN climate conference** – and said the government had “an ambitious agenda to implement”, but acknowledged greater action was needed. “We know there’s more to be done,” he said.

The minister joined a growing chorus of international voices calling for changes to the international financial system to better equip it to deal with the climate crisis, warning the existing architecture was “built for a different time” and needed to be adapted into an “inclusive climate agenda”.

“The urgency with which we must act requires frank conversations about where we are now, where we are going, and how we are going to get there,” Bowen said.

“Some of our international financial institutions are stepping up to this, our most important global task. Others are not. Just as we commit to this agenda as individual nations, our multilateral development banks – including the **World Bank** – must be wholeheartedly committed to this, from their purpose to their actions.”

Bowen said there was a “moral imperative and driving need” for institutions to work with countries to cut emissions and “respond to a changing climate and its economic impact on nations”. That meant increasing the proportion of funding spent on climate and ensuring developing countries were not saddled with unsustainable debt, he said.

Trillions of dollars in private and public capital will be needed to help developing countries to embrace clean energy and respond to and prepare for climate-fuelled catastrophic weather events.

Leading figures from **across the developing world** and the UK, US and German governments have called for sweeping changes to the World Bank, arguing it has failed to deliver climate finance to the worst-affected countries.

One of the sharpest critics has been the prime minister of Barbados, Mia Mottley. She made the issue **the centrepiece of her keynote address** at Cop27 last week, arguing that “institutions crafted in the mid-20th century” – before climate justice was an issue – “cannot be effective in the third decade of the 21st century”.

Pressure on the World Bank has grown since its chief, David Malpass, told a New York Times event in September that **he did not “even know” whether he accepted** climate science.

The former US vice-president Al Gore, who has previously called for Malpass to resign, told the Guardian on Monday that fundamental reform of the bank could be **completed within a year**, allowing it to refocus its spending on the climate crisis and end its contribution to “fossil fuel colonialism”.

Bowen’s speech was preceded by a new report that found Australia’s performance on climate change had improved under the Albanese government but that **it was still a “low performing country”**, in part due to its continued support for fossil fuel exports.

The climate change performance index, published by Germanwatch, the NewClimate Institute and the Climate Action Network with input from 450 climate and energy experts and campaigners worldwide, ranked Australia 55th on a list of 63 countries and country groups. It was 59th last year.

The authors of the index criticised Australia for having no policies to phase out coal and gas mining and proposals that could increase fossil fuel production by more than 5% by 2030. “The increase is not compatible with the global 1.5C target,” they said.

Bowen said the government was proud of its achievements in climate and energy in the less than six months since it was elected, and that its increased ambition had been “warmly welcomed by countless nations and private sector investors at Cop27”.

Climate-focused reform of World Bank could be done in a year, says Al Gore

Former US vice-president says bank should refocus its spending and end its role in ‘fossil fuel colonialism’



Al Gore: ‘We have an emergency on our hands.’ Photograph: Mohammed Salem/Reuters

Fiona Harvey and Patrick Greenfield in Sharm el-Sheikh

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Fundamental reform of the **World Bank** could be completed within a year, to refocus its spending on the climate crisis and end its contribution to “fossil fuel colonialism”, according to the former US vice-president Al Gore.

“I don’t know why it need take longer than a year,” said Gore, a longtime campaigner on the climate crisis since leaving politics, in an interview with the Guardian at the **Cop27 UN climate summit**. “We have an emergency on our hands.”

He said the bank was guilty of assisting “fossil fuel colonialism” through **Africa’s dash for gas**, and called for urgent fundamental reform that would provide **trillions of dollars to tackle the climate crisis**. “[The World Bank] needs to be replenished with a large increase and special drawing rights [a means of creating new money],” he said. “They need trillions not billions. They need to refocus their mission on renewable energy.”

Gore, who has previously called for the World Bank's president, David Malpass, **to be removed from his post**, has made overhaul of the bank a leading priority for his climate campaigning.

His calls for change join those of **many developed and developing countries at Cop27**, including principal figures such as Mia Mottley, the prime minister of Barbados, who **made it the centrepiece of her keynote address** to Cop27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

The issue has become one of the hottest topics at **Cop27**, even though it is not – and cannot be – on the formal agenda for the talks. The UN is a separate institution from the World Bank and its subsidiaries, which were set up under the Bretton Woods framework developed by the allies of the second world war in 1944.

Mottley said: “Institutions crafted in the mid-20th century cannot be effective in the third decade of the 21st century. They do not describe 21st-century issues. Climate justice was not an issue then [when the bank was set up].”

In Gore's view, Malpass “has been a climate denier for quite a long time. He ran for Congress as a climate denier. He's made multiple statements over the years making it clear that he just has serious doubts that the climate crisis is real.”

Gore added: “There has been no vision in the World Bank system. And when you have a climate denier in charge of it, what they see is not the energy transition, they see their friends in the fossil fuel companies and the banks, that are also connected with the fossil fuel companies.”

Malpass, who says he is not a climate denier, has **sought to clarify his views** and sent a memo to World Bank employees insisting the bank was focused on the climate crisis. Speaking at Stanford University on 28 September, he said: “Manmade greenhouse gas emissions are causing climate change, which in turn is having tragic impacts on development in multiple ways.”

When **questioned on his climate views** by a Guardian reporter at Cop27, Malpass said: “You know that I'm not [a climate denier] so don't misreport it.” A spokesperson said the bank had provided \$32bn (£27.2bn) of climate finance in 2022.

Nevertheless, Gore sees the issue as going far beyond the president. “It’s about much more than him as an individual. It’s about the World Bank as an institution and the World Bank system as a policy tool,” he said.

The bank has continued to invest in fossil fuel projects after the Paris agreement, and its financing of projects to tackle the climate crisis has been criticised as too little and poorly targeted.

One of the main issues for developing countries wishing to push ahead with renewable energy is that they face a high cost of capital, because private sector financiers perceive them as carrying a higher risk.

Gore gave an example: “If you want to build a big new solar farm in Nigeria, it can be extremely profitable,” he said. “But if you try to finance it with private equity, you will pay interest rates that are seven times higher than for OECD countries. And so they don’t do it.”

By contrast, fossil fuel financing is cheap and readily available. Gore sees it as the role of a reformed World Bank to take on some of the risk of projects from the private sector, making it cheaper and easier for companies to invest in renewable energy and other emissions-cutting projects, and in ways to help countries adapt to the effects of climate breakdown.

Africa, where Cop27 is taking place, is one of the casualties of this high cost of capital, Gore said. “There are more fossil fuel pipelines under construction in **Africa** now than in North America – this is a dash for gas. It’s fossil fuel colonialism,” he said.

He accused the World Bank of contributing to the problem. “The World Bank has tacitly supported this fossil fuel colonialism, and has utterly failed to take those top layers of risk off the stack to enable developing countries to finance the energy transition,” he said. “And if the World Bank, and the other multilateral development banks, won’t do it, it won’t be done.”

He said Africa’s plight was a problem for the world. “If the world as a whole continues to wall them [African countries] off from any meaningful access to private capital, for these profitable projects – they would certainly be profitable

in a country where they could be financed – then we are hurting ourselves and not just the developing countries.”

He added: “They are pushed instead to go with this dash for gas, and they’re going to get stuck with stranded assets and climate chaos. And I’m kind of upset about it.”

Methane emissions from 15 meat and dairy companies rival those of the EU

Combined emissions from 15 companies surpass Russia’s and equate to more than 80% of EU’s methane footprint, study finds



Cows stand on a meadow in Wehrheim near Frankfurt, Germany, last week. Photograph:

Michael Probst/AP

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Matt Krupnick

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The combined methane emissions of 15 of the world’s largest meat and dairy companies are higher than those of several of the world’s largest countries, including Russia, Canada and Australia, according to a new study.

The **analysis** from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and Changing Markets Foundation found that emissions by the companies – five meat and 10

dairy corporations – equate to more than 80% of the European Union’s entire methane footprint and account for 11.1% of the world’s livestock-related methane emissions.

“That just blew my mind,” said Shefali Sharma, director of the IATP’s European office. “We can’t continue to have this handful of companies controlling this many animals.”



Methane reduction is vital to achieving a 1.5C future

Methane, expelled by cows and their manure, is far more potent than carbon dioxide, trapping heat 80 times more effectively and emissions are **accelerating rapidly**, according to the UN.

Researchers admit in the report that a lack of transparency from the companies makes it difficult to accurately measure greenhouse gas emissions. Results were estimated based on publicly available data on meat and milk production and regional livestock practices.

The report comes as the Cop27 climate conference unfolds in Egypt, where politicians and corporate leaders are discussing the role of agriculture and face accusations they are **failing to consider meaningful solutions**.

If the 15 companies were treated as a country, the report noted, it would be the 10th-largest greenhouse gas-emitting jurisdiction in the world. Their combined emissions outpace those of oil companies such as ExxonMobil, BP and Shell, researchers found.

How can we cut soaring demand for meat? Try a hybrid burger

Joseph Poore

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Researchers singled out individual livestock companies such as JBS, the world's largest meat company, and the French dairy giant Danone.

JBS's methane emissions "far outpace all other companies", according to the report, exceeding the combined livestock emissions of France, Germany, Canada and New Zealand.

The world's second-largest meat company, Tyson, produces approximately as much livestock methane as Russia, researchers said, and Dairy Farmers of America produces as much as the United Kingdom.

JBS did not respond to requests for comment.

Tyson and Dairy Farmers of America declined interview requests. A Dairy Farmers of America spokesperson said in an email that the report's comparison of the company with UK emissions "is not an apples to apples comparison and is clearly an attempt to make sensationalistic headlines". Dairy Farmers of America "is committed to being a part of climate solutions", the organization added.

The report recommended reforms to help curb emissions and climate breakdown, including governments requiring companies to report greenhouse gas emissions and fostering a "just transition" away from factory farming by reducing the number of animals per farm. Companies should also set goals to reduce emissions and be more transparent about methane production, the report concluded.

The US has resisted regulating farm methane emissions, choosing instead to offer **voluntary incentives** to farmers and companies for reducing greenhouse

gasses. But change is unlikely unless the Environmental Protection Agency is allowed to regulate those emissions, said Cathy Day, climate policy coordinator with the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

“There’s a narrative to focus on incentives only, to focus on environmental problems by paying people to solve them rather than requiring people to solve them,” she said. “My opinion is we don’t get there without regulatory solutions.”

The 15 companies studied are based in 10 countries, five of which have increased livestock methane emissions in the past decade, the report said. China’s emissions have increased 17%, far more than other countries.

While it would be helpful for people to eat fewer meat and dairy products, Sharma said, the true solution to curbing methane emissions was to end factory farming.

“We’re not saying people need to go vegan or vegetarian,” Sharma said. “We’re just saying we need to do it better.”

Limit of 1.5C global heating is at risk, Alok Sharma warns at Cop27

Previous summit’s president tells ministers no ‘backsliding’ must be allowed over climate crisis ‘red line’



Alok Sharma at the Cop27 summit in Sharm el-Sheikh. ‘We’ll either leave Egypt having kept 1.5C alive or this will be the Cop where we lose 1.5C,’ he said. Photograph: Sedat Suna/EPA

Fiona Harvey in Sharm el-Sheikh

Mon 14 Nov 2022 18.33 GMT

Alok Sharma, the former UK cabinet minister who presided over the Cop26 climate summit in Glasgow last year, has warned delegates at Cop27 that the possibility of limiting global heating to no more than 1.5C may be at risk.

“We’ll either leave **Egypt** having kept 1.5C alive, or this will be the Cop where we lose 1.5C,” Sharma said at the opening on Monday of the high-level ministerial roundtable on pre-2030 ambition.

He said sticking to the global goal of limiting temperature rises to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels had to be a “red line” for all countries at **Cop27**, and insisted there could be no “backsliding” from it.

He reminded the gathered ministers of what was achieved last year, in very different geopolitical circumstances than the current talks.

“At Cop26 we did resolve collectively to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5C,” he said. “I have always said what we agreed in Glasgow and

Paris has to be the baseline of our ambition. We've got to stick to that commitment. We cannot allow any backsliding.”

But he warned: “We are already at 1.1C of global warming, and I know I don't have to remind all of you the impact of that around the world. Even at 1.5C we are still going to have devastating outcomes for many millions ... 1.5C needs to be a red line. And this cannot be the Cop where we lose 1.5C.

“We've got to fight for this, and every fraction of a degree absolutely makes a difference. It's the difference ... between a tolerable existence and an impossible future.”

He said countries needed to set out clearly how they would cut greenhouse gas emissions in line with the 1.5C target. “We've got a G20 leaders' meeting going on right now,” he said, referring to the summit in Bali. “They need to reaffirm their commitment to Paris and to Glasgow.”

He called on countries that had not yet submitted revised national plans on emissions, called nationally determined contributions, to draw them up urgently. He also called for a faster phasing-out of coal and of fossil fuel subsidies, and for technical issues in the Cop work programme to be resolved.

He added that keeping the 1.5C goal alive was fundamental to the other key issues of **Cop27**, including climate finance and the struggles over loss and damage. “The reality is [that] without progress on [cutting emissions] we are going to beyond our ability to adapt, and of course I want to see progress made on loss and damage here but unless we stick to [1.5C] all of that is going to be a lot more difficult.”

He concluded starkly: “You need to work out how you want future generations to look upon this Cop and each of us individually as countries. It's really up to us to decide. I hope we will decide to keep 1.5C alive.”

The warning comes amid anxiety that some countries may be trying to get the wording around 1.5C weakened. **Simon Evans of Carbon Brief reported on Monday** that some countries had been pushing to move from the 1.5C focus agreed at Cop26 to the higher 2C limit agreed in the 2016 Paris accord.