



19 OCT, 2021

Zero emission target a must for security

Daily Telegraph, Sydney

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The PM says we have to meet climate challenges to keep region strong, writes **Clare Armstrong**



ACTION on climate change is important for Australia's national security, Prime Minister Scott Morrison has warned colleagues as the Coalition remains divided on a net-zero target.

Liberal MPs briefed on the federal government's plan to reach net zero emissions by 2050 were told the target was important for Australia's global standing, particularly at a time when the country needed to rely on Western allies.

Sources familiar with the meeting on Monday said the potential for trading carbon credits with Pacific nations was highlighted in what was interpreted as being a way for Australia to counter China's influence in the region.

Nationals MPs are still considering the government's plan after being briefed on it two days ago.

Energy and Emissions Reduction Minister Angus Taylor presented the same plan to his Liberal colleagues at Monday's party room meeting, where sources said the proposal was generally well received.

During the meeting Mr Taylor said the government would not update its current 2030 target of a 26 to 28 per cent emissions reduction on 2005

levels.

Mr Taylor told Liberal MPs the government would instead take new projections to the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow showing Australia would exceed its 2030 target.

Both Mr Taylor and Mr Morrison are planning to attend the summit next month, with the Prime Minister previously confirming the government would be "finalising its position" on net-zero before then.

Mr Morrison said there were strong economic and security reasons

Australia needed to become carbon neutral.

Queensland senator Gerard Rennick spoke out against net zero and argued the government was caving to the left.

Sources also said NSW members Andrew Bragg, Hollie Hughes and Melissa McIntosh were among those who endorsed the plan.

Later during Question Time Mr Morrison said the government had to be "honest" about the likely economic impacts of the "world's response to climate change" if Australia did not also move to reduce emissions.

"There will be economic impacts in the regions in particular," he said.

"Those challenges need to be confronted and met ... (to) ensure that our regions emerge stronger."

Mr Morrison said Australia would beat the target by investing in regional areas.

"In particular (investing) in the



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changes in energy technology that is needed to ensure Australia remains prosperous over the next 30 years,” he said.

It is understood the government’s net zero proposal would include grants for carbon capture programs, as well as investment in the development of hydrogen and other green technologies.

The Nationals are continuing to discuss their position, after a four-hour meeting on Sunday yielded no final position on the climate target. Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce said on Monday the Nationals would not race to a decision.

Mr Joyce argued the Nationals were representing the views of the constituents in Australia and would not be “beaten into a position because others say that’s what they want”.