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New Study: Corporate Australia misrepresents its policy agenda with pro-climate PR

During the Albanese Government's first year in office, only 35% of companies and industry associations coupled top-line support for climate action with support for Federal climate policy

New InfluenceMap [analysis](#) finds that a significant majority of Australia's most influential companies fail to follow through on their supportive top-line climate messaging with support for climate policy. This contradiction calls Corporate Australia's commitment to climate action into question and may explain recent concessions to the fossil fuel sector by the Labor Government.

Researchers analyzed the climate policy engagement of the 70 largest companies active in Australia and the 25 most influential industry associations, providing a detailed assessment of these entities' climate policy influence during the Labor Government's first year.

87% of the companies and industry associations tracked by InfluenceMap issued top-line support for climate action during the Federal Labor Party's first year in office. However, only 35% went on to issue policy-specific support for high level climate targets and strategies, while only 10% adopted a supportive position on Federal consultations on emissions reduction policy.

"Most of Corporate Australia has perfected the art of double-speak on climate," said Jack Herring, lead author of the report and Australia Program Manager at InfluenceMap. *"Companies and industry associations appear to be trying to avoid scrutiny for their real agenda on climate policy by making positive high-level statements, but our research shows many of these statements are not followed through with tangible support for climate policy."*

As part of its assessment of real-world policy engagement activities, the study analyzed 179 public consultation responses to 10 climate and energy-related policies. Of the unsupportive responses, 81% came from the energy or mining sector, including:

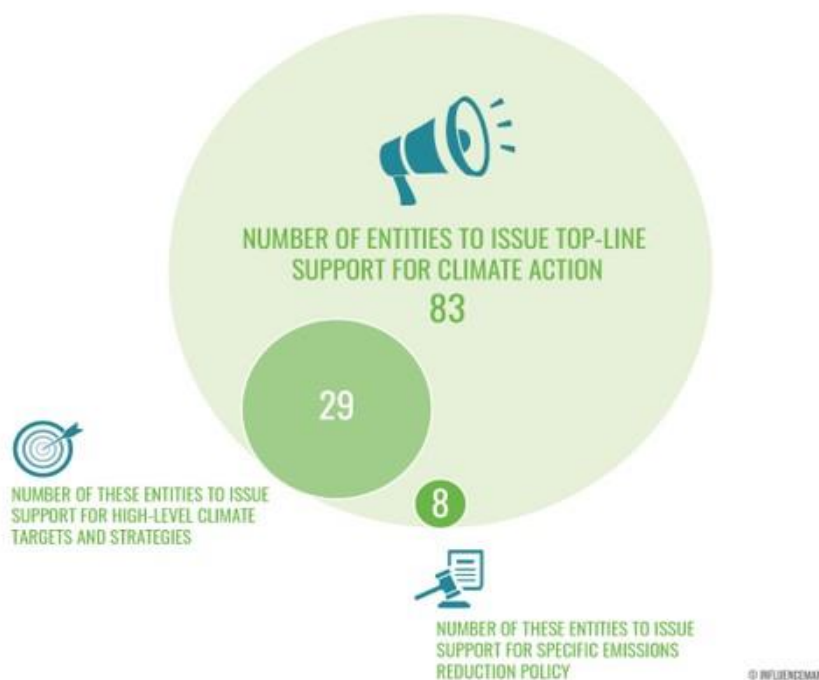
- [Glencore](#), which opposed the proposed design of Australia's Safeguard Mechanism Reforms.
- [Origin Energy](#), which advocated against the introduction of mandatory national energy efficiency targets in its submission to Australia's National Energy Performance Strategy.
- [Minerals Council of Australia](#), which opposed the introduction of a climate trigger in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

The research finds evidence of much higher engagement from vested interests in the fossil fuel sector compared to other sectors. Between May 2022 - May 2023, 13 of the 15 most engaged companies on climate in Australia were from the energy and mining sectors. In addition, InfluenceMap's analysis shows that 13 of the 15 most engaged companies and 13 of the 15 most engaged industry associations on climate in Australia during this period also advocated for a continued role for fossil fuels that is misaligned with the advice of *IPCC science* on the global use of coal and gas in 1.5°C decarbonization pathways.

During this same period, the Labor Government formalized approvals for Bowen Coking Coal's Isaac River Coal Mine, Santos' coal seam gas expansion in Queensland's Surat Basin, and offshore oil and gas exploration across almost 47,000 square kilometres of Australian waters.

"Corporate influence seems to be a major reason why we are not seeing the level of climate ambition expected from the Labor Government," said report author **Jack Herring**. *"The loudest corporates are those advocating for a continued role for fossil fuels that does not reflect scientific guidance. Such advocacy represents a significant threat to Australia's ability to achieve its climate targets."*

Translation of Top-line Support into Supportive Engagement with Climate-related Consultations



"We all know there is a big mismatch between what companies say and what they're actually doing on climate," said **David Pockock**, Independent Senator for the ACT. *"We see companies like Santos and Woodside claiming they're aiming for net-zero emissions while continuing to progress new fossil fuel developments. These two things can't be true. We also know this extends to their lobbying behind the scenes. Like the evidence we now have that Santos influenced the*

government's decision to introduce the 'Sea Dumping' Bill. This will allow exports of emissions under the guise of carbon capture and storage so gas companies can continue to expand their operations. This research from InfluenceMap helps shine a light on which companies are serious about emissions reductions and which ones are just talking the talk while actively lobbying against climate action. These companies are putting the future of the people and places we love at risk."

Addressing the findings of the briefing, **Persephone Fraser**, Senior Ethics Analyst at Australian Ethical Investment, said:

"This research demonstrates the dominance of the fossil fuel voice in climate policy engagement, a critical concern of responsible investors including Australian Ethical. The interests of these few are dominating over the interests of other businesses, investors and the community who all benefit from effective climate policy that limits warming consistent with the Paris Agreement. We need science based climate policy, and we need to hear voices from across the economy talking to government about what they stand to lose if we don't limit warming."

[Click here for the full briefing and graphics](#)

For further media information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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About InfluenceMap

InfluenceMap is a London-based think tank with offices in Canberra, New York, Seoul and Tokyo. We provide data-driven analysis to investors, corporations, and the media on issues related to energy and climate change. Our metrics for measuring corporate influence over climate policy are used by investors globally, including the Climate Action 100+ investor engagement process.

Note on 'policy engagement' terminology: InfluenceMap's definition of 'policy engagement' is based on the 2013 United Nations [Guide for Responsible Corporate Engagement in Climate Policy](#). This term is used rather than "lobbying" in InfluenceMap analysis given that the scope set out in the guide may differ from the definitions of "lobbying" in different jurisdictions, which often refers to a narrower set of activities. However, given that "lobbying" is the most recognized short hand for policy engagement in many English speaking countries, and is often preferred by journalists, it is used in the title.

Using this definition of policy engagement, InfluenceMap's methodology measures corporate policy engagement against the Science Based Policy recommendations of the IPCC, as well as government proposals to implement these measures. A full explanation of our methodology, alongside a glossary of terms, can be [found here](#).