

Too much idiocy over energy, Turnbull says



Malcolm Turnbull. Picture; AAP.

Anthony Klan, The Australian, 12:09PM October 11, 2017

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has rejected calls from two of the nation's most renowned economic reformers to wind back Australia's commitment to the Paris climate accord. Mr Turnbull said Australia was "on track" to meet its commitment to cut emissions by between 26 per cent and 28 per cent by 2030. "Australia is a nation that when it makes international commitments of this kind it keeps them," Mr Turnbull told reporters in Sydney this morning. "You keep the lights on, you ensure people can afford to keep them on and you meet your emission reduction commitments".

The Australian today reported Keating government adviser Fred Hilmer and Gary Banks, the inaugural Productivity Commission chairman, called on the government to wind-back its Paris emissions-reduction agreement and revive a market-based mechanism to curb greenhouse gases.

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The pair said they had all but given up on rational reform in the energy market. Mr Turnbull would not be drawn on whether former prime minister Tony Abbott was undermining his government, after Mr Abbott this week made a speech in London claiming global warming could be a good thing because “far more people die in cold snaps”.

Mr Abbott’s comments, to the Global Warming Policy Forum, were labelled as “loopy” by the ALP and the Greens and many of Mr Abbott’s supporters in government would not publicly stand by his claims.

Regarding Mr Abbott, Mr Turnbull told reporters: “I’ll leave all the personalities to you to write about.” Mr Turnbull said there had been “too much idiocy” in the energy political debate. He said there had been too much sloganeering and not enough action, but went on to repeatedly use the phrase “engineering and economics” when asked about the solution.