

## Global emissions to hit historic high despite renewables surge



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Graham Lloyd, Environment Editor, 4:00AM December 6, 2018

Global carbon dioxide emissions were accelerating and expected to hit a new high this year, with strong growth in China, the US and India despite billions of dollars spent on renewable energy and other measures.

A major report by the Global Carbon Project has found emissions were expected to rise by 2.7 per cent following a rise of 1.6 per cent last year after a three-year hiatus. The report, published in the journals *Nature*, *Earth System Science Data* and *Environmental Research Letters*, says emissions remain a long way from peaking, with coal use in China locked in for decades to come.

Release of the report coincides with a major conference in Katowice, Poland, where global leaders are attempting to agree on rules to put the Paris Agreement into practice.

Talks this week have centred on how finance will be provided to developing countries to help them make the transition to a low-carbon future. There are reports of early tensions over moves, led by China, for developing countries to be treated differently from the developed world.

Former US lead negotiator Todd Stern said any backsliding on the issue of universal coverage would ensure the US never re-entered the Paris Agreement. Australia is negotiating with the US for firm rules on reporting for all countries and universal coverage.

Increased emissions from developing countries were responsible for much of this year's rise in the global total. The data confirms that China's greenhouse gas emissions have not yet peaked and that investment in renewable energy is not enough.

"The rapid growth in low-carbon technologies are not yet sufficient to cause global emissions to peak, let alone drive emissions aggressively down and limit climate change following the Paris Agreement goals," the report says. The increase placed "us on a trajectory for warming that is currently well beyond 1.5C", said lead researcher Corinne Le Quere of the University of East Anglia.

"It is not enough to support renewables. Efforts to decarbonise need to be expanded throughout the economy," she said.

The Global Carbon Project report said the growth in global emissions put the Paris Agreement goals in jeopardy.

The report said global energy growth was again outpacing decarbonisation efforts, fuelled by increasing demand for personal transport, freight, aviation and shipping. Global coal use was 3 per cent below its historic high but was expected to grow in 2018, driven by India and China. Oil and gas use had grown almost unabated in the past decade.

Chinese emissions, accounting for 27 per cent of global emissions, were expected to grow about 4.7 per cent. "There was hope that China was rapidly moving away from coal-power generation, but the last two years has shown it will not be so easy for China to say farewell to coal quickly," said Jan Ivar Korsbakken, a researcher at CICERO Centre for International Climate Research in Oslo.

"Coal is likely to dominate the Chinese energy system in the decades ahead, even if the skyrocketing growth seen in the mid-2000s is unlikely to return."

US emissions, accounting for 15 per cent of global emissions, were expected to grow about 2.5 per cent this year after several years of decline. It is expected US emissions will decline again next year, indicating gas, wind and solar will continue to displace coal.

Indian emissions, accounting for 7 per cent of global emissions, are expected to rise 6.3 per cent this year, with growth across all fuel types.