

Australian Business Summit held in support of the Race To Zero

The UK in partnership with NSW Government virtually hosted (Wednesday, 22 September) leading members of the Australian business community to discuss climate action.

Major companies from across the economy expressed their commitment to greater climate action and their shared ambition to keep 1.5 degrees of global temperature increases within reach. This included several signatories to the UN-backed Race To Zero initiative (R2Z), as well as a number of companies in the growing cohort of Australian organisations committed to reaching net zero emissions.

The virtual summit was a milestone on the road to the upcoming UN climate conference COP26, to be hosted in Glasgow in November. COP26 will bring together governments from every corner of the world, making ambitious pledges for emissions reduction, global green finance, adaptation and resilience, and international collaboration on climate solutions.

British High Commissioner to Australia HE Vicki Treadell said:

As we look to the future, we must identify the key growth areas that will enable us to build a prosperous, low carbon economy. This requires vision and aspiration for all actors across the economy.

What is clear to me as a close observer of this great country is the immense economic opportunity in tackling climate change and becoming a global leader in the key clean industries of the future. There is an almost unparalleled opportunity to create jobs and growth domestically, and also to produce the key inputs needed for economies around the world to decarbonise. The opportunity is there for the taking.

Over 100 individuals from businesses across the country registered to hear from the esteemed panel and R2Z members on why they pledged to the initiative. They represented the diversity of Australian industry – from health to retail, finance to engineering, unified in an agreed understanding that effective climate policy must be at the core of their business.

NSW Energy and Environment Minister Matt Kean said:

Australia and NSW in particular has enormous opportunities to grow our economy as the world decarbonises.

We are not just a sunburnt country, we are a sun-blessed country, and it is on us to leverage that competitive advantage and secure

the economic and employment benefits for our citizens so we can protect our planet, prosperity and way of life.

Sam Mostyn, President of Chief Executive Women, chaired an expert panel of Australian executives on the challenges in formulating a credible emissions reduction plan, and the influence it has had on their stakeholder relations across their value chain. The CEOs of Macquarie, Lendlease and Origin offered their advice to firms in all stages in their journey to a climate friendly, resilient operating model.

Origin CEO Frank Calabria said:

Achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and demonstrating a clear, credible pathway towards that goal is a vital challenge for all businesses and the energy sector will be critical as we progressively decarbonise the energy we supply as well as helping our customers achieve emissions reduction in their businesses.

As an energy company, we are mindful of the crucial role we must play in supplying clean forms of energy and facilitating emissions reduction in other sectors.

Macquarie CEO Shemara Wikramanayake said:

We're at an inflection point for climate change, which is the defining challenge of our time. The science tells us there is a limited carbon budget and that we're not on track to achieve previously agreed milestones. That has compelled governments, regions, cities, corporations, investors, regulators, and financial institutions to come together to coordinate an increasing level of activity that is consistent with net zero.

Macquarie is committed to driving solutions to accelerate the reduction in emissions from energy, waste, agriculture, real estate and transportation.

Lendlease Australia CEO Dale Connor said:

We're committed to leading the evolution of our industry to be truly sustainable – environmentally, socially and economically, and we see this as fundamental to creating the best places for people today and for generations to come.

The road to zero carbon is a global challenge, and global partnership and collaboration is the only way to achieve these targets and support industry transformation.

Australia has the third highest number of Race To Zero members in the world. This demonstrates how Australian businesses, subnational governments, and universities have committed to playing their part in combatting global climate change.

COP26 Envoy John Murton said:

Every nation, every company, every investor, every city and region needs to move with conviction to turn their commitments to tackle climate change into action, and to keep the prospect of limiting global temperatures rising more than 1.5 degrees alive.

By taking action both at a national and international level through national governments, and also at the level of individuals and companies, we can make our recovery from COVID-19 one that builds a better future. One with green jobs, cleaner air, and increasing prosperity.

UN High-Level Climate Action Champion Nigel Topping said:

So far through our Race To Zero and government commitments we have more than 70% of global emissions covered by net zero commitments. But this will come to nothing if not backed by true vision, leadership, and the conviction that climate action first movers will ultimately reap the benefit from their leadership.

[Race To Zero](#) is a global campaign to rally leadership and support from businesses, cities, regions, investors for a healthy, resilient, zero carbon recovery that prevents future threats, creates decent jobs, and unlocks inclusive, sustainable growth. It has over 5,000 members globally, including around 3,200 business members. It is a UN-led initiative seeking to give credibility to subnational climate action through expertise sharing and verification of climate action.

The UK is President of the next UN Climate conference, [COP26](#) in Glasgow this November. As COP26 President the UK has four major goals; to secure global net zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 degrees within reach; to adapt to protect communities and natural habitats; to mobilise finance; and to work together for climate action in areas like energy, transport and nature-based solutions.

To contact the British High Commission for climate related media enquiries, please contact amelia.mcnairst@fcdo.gov.uk or 0416 645 857.

PM meeting with President Joe Biden: 21 September 2021

The Prime Minister met US President Biden at the White House today.

The leaders welcomed the important developments in the UK-US relationship that have taken place since they last met in June, particularly in the areas covered by the new Atlantic Charter they agreed in Cornwall including security, science & technology, trade, health and climate action.

The President and Prime Minister agreed that the new AUKUS alliance, announced last week, was a clear articulation of the UK and America's shared values and approach to the world. They underscored the important role the alliance will play in promoting peace and stability around the world, harnessing British, American and Australian expertise to solve future challenges.

The leaders welcomed the close cooperation between our countries during the NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan. The Prime Minister expressed his condolences for the American servicepeople killed during the operation. The Prime Minister and President Biden agreed that the best way to honour all those who gave their lives to make Afghanistan a better place will be to use all the diplomatic and humanitarian tools at our disposal to prevent a humanitarian crisis and preserve the gains made in Afghanistan.

To that end, they discussed the progress made since the G7 meeting last month to coordinate international action on Afghanistan. They agreed that any international recognition of the Taliban must be coordinated and contingent on the group respecting human rights.

The Prime Minister welcomed President Biden's leadership on the issue of climate, and his announcement today that the US would double its climate finance commitment. The leaders agreed on the need for G7 countries to deliver on the promises made in Carbis Bay, particularly with regard to phasing out the use of coal and supporting developing countries to grow cleanly. They agreed the Build Back Better World Initiative would be crucial in achieving this. The Prime Minister said he looks forward to welcoming the President to the COP26 Summit in Glasgow.

The Prime Minister and President Biden also agreed on the need to increase international vaccine access to deliver on the commitment made in Cornwall to vaccinate the world by the end of next year. They noted that the success of the British and American vaccine rollouts has been instrumental in allowing UK-US travel to resume. The Prime Minister welcomed the US announcement that they will allow double vaccinated British nationals to enter the country from November, a move which will allow families and friends to reunite and will help stimulate our economies.

The Prime Minister updated President Biden on the developments with respect

to the Northern Ireland Protocol since they last met in June. The leaders agreed on the importance of protecting peace in Northern Ireland.

The Prime Minister welcomed the resolution of the Airbus-Boeing trade dispute earlier this year. The whisky tariffs lowered by the US as well as President Biden's decision to lift the ban on British beef will boost UK-US trade, already worth £200 billion a year. The leaders agreed to continue working towards a future full Free Trade Agreement.

The Prime Minister and President also talked about a number of international issues including China and Russia. They agreed the UK and US would continue to have an approach to these issues driven by our shared values and the Prime Minister looked forward to the President's Summit for Democracy which will help drive international action.

[Foreign Secretary to convene meeting of Foreign Ministers from the UN Security Council's permanent five members](#)

Press release

The Foreign Secretary will today hold talks with her counterparts from the US, France, China and Russia to discuss the world's most pressing crises.



- Liz Truss will chair the talks today (Wednesday 22 September) with Foreign Ministers from the US, France, China and Russia, and the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.
- In the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, she will call for greater cooperation among the P5 on maintaining international peace and security.
- It comes on her first overseas trip in her new role and follows a visit

to Washington D.C. alongside the PM yesterday.

The Foreign Secretary will today hold talks with her counterparts from the US, France, China and Russia to discuss the world's most pressing crises.

Liz Truss will convene the meeting of the UN Security Council's five permanent members (P5) during the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meetings in New York as part of her first overseas visit in her new role.

The P5 will discuss the vital role the Security Council, including its permanent members, has to play in maintaining international peace and security, amid a backdrop of ongoing conflicts and crises, including in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Yemen and Tigray.

Truss will call for Russia and China to agree a co-ordinated international approach to Afghanistan.

Speaking ahead of the meetings, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The P5 have clear shared interests in maintaining stability in volatile regions to prevent terrorism and keep our citizens safe.

If we want to avoid Afghanistan becoming a haven for global terror then the international community – including Russia and China – needs to act as one in its engagement with the Taliban.

I want our foreign policy to be practically-focused and geared towards strengthening our network of economic and diplomatic partnerships, underpinned by strong security ties. My visit to the UN is the start of an autumn where Global Britain leads the way on the world stage.

The last meeting of P5 Foreign Ministers with the UN Secretary-General was in 2019 and convened by China.

Published 22 September 2021

[Government pledges to reduce overprescribing of medicines](#)

- Government-commissioned review estimates 10% of items dispensed in primary care are overprescribed with 15% of people taking five or more medicines a day, increasing the risk of adverse effects
- Around 1 in 5 hospital admissions in over-65s are caused by the adverse

effects of medicines

- Ministers accept all recommendations including introducing a new national clinical director for prescribing, increased use of social prescribing and better handovers between hospitals and the community

The Government will take action to prevent medicines being prescribed unnecessarily in England, as a new review highlights the impact of overprescribing.

Led by Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for England Dr Keith Ridge CBE, the government-commissioned review into overprescribing – published today – found 10% of the volume of prescription items dispensed through primary care in England are either inappropriate for that patients' circumstances and wishes, or could be better served with alternative treatments.

Overprescribing describes a situation where people are given medicines they do not need or want, or where potential harm outweighs the benefit of the medication. It can happen when a better alternative is available but not prescribed, the medicine is appropriate for a condition but not the individual patient, a condition changes and the medicine is no longer appropriate, or the patient no longer needs the medicine but continues to be prescribed it.

Around 1 in 5 hospital admissions in over-65s and around 6.5% of total hospital admissions are caused by the adverse effects of medicines. The more medicines a person takes, the higher chance there is that one or more of these medicines will have an unwanted or harmful effect. Some medicines, such as those to reduce blood pressure, can also increase the risk of falls amongst the frail and elderly.

The review sets out a series of practical and cultural changes to make sure patients get the most appropriate treatment for their needs while also ensuring clinicians' time is well spent and taxpayer money is used wisely. This includes shared decision making with patients about starting or stopping a medicine, better use of technology, ways to review prescriptions more effectively, and considering alternative medicines which would be more effective.

Ministers have accepted all recommendations and work will now begin to implement them, with reforms to pharmacist training already underway.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

This is an incredibly important review which will have a lasting impact on people's lives and improve the way medicines are prescribed.

With 15% of people taking 5 or more medicines a day, in some cases to deal with the side effects of another medicine, more needs to be done to listen to patients and help clinical teams tackle

overprescribing.

I look forward to working with Dr Keith Ridge and our dedicated NHS teams to deliver on these recommendations.

Dr Keith Ridge CBE, chief pharmaceutical officer for England, said:

Medicines do people a lot of good and the practical measures set out in this report will help clinicians ensure people are getting the right type and amount of medication, which is better for patients and also benefits taxpayers, by preventing unnecessary spending on prescriptions.

This report recognises the strong track record of the NHS in the evidence-based use of medicines, thanks to the clinical expertise of GPs and pharmacists and their teams, and our achievements to date in addressing overprescribing which is a global issue.

Continuing to tackle overprescribing requires a whole system approach involving clinicians and patients, so we can continue to build the change we all wish to see in how medicines are used for the benefit of patients, and with medicines production and use a major driver of greenhouse gas emissions – contributing to the NHS's net zero ambition.

The key recommendations from the review are:

- the introduction of a new National Clinical Director for Prescribing to lead a 3 year programme including research and training to help enable effective prescribing;
- system-wide changes to improve patient records, improve handovers between primary and secondary care, develop a national toolkit and deliver training to help general practices improve the consistency of repeat prescribing processes;
- improving the evidence base for safely withdrawing inappropriate medication (deprescribing), and updated clinical guidance to support more patient-centred care. This would include ensuring GPs have the data and medical records they need, and are empowered to challenge and change prescribing made in hospitals;
- cultural changes to reduce a reliance on medicines and support shared decision-making between clinicians and patients, including increasing the use of social prescribing, which involves helping patients to improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them to community services which might be run by the council or a local charity.

- providing clear information on the NHS website for patients about their medication and the creation of a platform for patients to be able to provide information about the effectiveness and the adverse effects of their medicines; and
- the development of interventions to reduce waste and help deliver NHS's net zero carbon emissions. The review also calls for more research to investigate the reasons why overprescribing is more likely to affect older people, people from ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities.

Health Minister Lord Syed Kamall said:

This vital review is a significant step forward which will benefit patients across the country, and we will help ensure busy primary care teams are supported with improved systems and resources.

Whether it's helping to change a culture of demand for medicines that are not needed, providing better alternatives and preventing ill-health in the first place, we will take a range of steps to act on this review.

The review concludes that key to stopping overprescribing is ensuring that patients are prescribed the right medicines, at the right time, in the right doses – known as 'medicines optimisation'. It also notes that reducing overprescribing will help the NHS fulfil its commitment to become carbon net zero, as the production and use of some medicines can generate significant greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, 25% of the NHS carbon footprint is as a result of medicines, some of this is down to the use of anaesthetic gases and inhalers, however it is mostly caused by the manufacturing and freight in the supply chain.

The causes of overprescribing medicines are complex due to a range of systemic and cultural factors. Significant progress has been made in this area in recent years, thanks to the hard work of GPs, pharmacists and their teams.

This includes the rapid expansion of clinical pharmacists working alongside GPs to review medication, and the move to more personalised care, shared decision making between patients and staff and the scaling up of social prescribing.

It's not too late to reverse biodiversity decline by 2030, UK's five leading nature bodies say

Greater action, investment and embracing natural solutions are crucial to reversing biodiversity decline by 2030, the five UK statutory nature agencies say in a new report published today (Wednesday 22 September).

It marks the first anniversary of the Leader's Pledge for Nature, which has been signed by over 80 Heads of State from around the world.

Natural England (NE), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), NatureScot, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) have together launched a new report – Nature Positive 2030 – which sets out how the UK can meet its commitments in the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, and ensure that nature's recovery plays a critical role in our path to Net Zero.

Findings from the joint report shows that achieving nature commitments will deliver huge benefits to human health, well-being and our economy, and will require transformative change across society and in the way we protect, value, use and engage with nature. The Nature Positive 2030 report draws on a wealth of experience and innovation in the UK to present solutions that can be scaled up to achieve change.

The report showcases the importance of utilising natural solutions to tackle climate change, highlighting the essential role of nature in helping us survive our uncertain future, and emphasising that nature's ability to do so depends upon biodiverse ecosystems that are resilient to the changes ahead. Delaying action for nature will lead to greater economic costs, and increased environmental risks.

The report also stresses the important role of nature in supporting human health and well-being, as demonstrated through the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nature Positive 2030 sets out the priority actions and achievable steps for becoming "Nature Positive" – reversing biodiversity decline – by 2030, and concludes that we are currently not on track to becoming nature positive by 2030, but that this aim is achievable. The report recommends nine changes that can be delivered rapidly, by national and local governments, landowners, businesses and others that will have particularly high impacts on reversing biodiversity loss this decade. These are:

- Ensuring wildlife thrives within protected areas on land and at sea.
- Better conserve wildlife habitats outside protected areas, in particular those areas identified as parts of nature networks or as important blue/green infrastructure.
- Investing in habitat restoration and creation to strengthen nature

networks that deliver for biodiversity and climate change.

- Ensuring outcomes for nature are integrated in development plans on land and at sea.
- Tackling atmospheric and diffuse water pollution, especially from nitrogen and ammonia.
- Developing the market for green finance.
- Deploying nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation by default.
- Developing the UK's evidence base so that it is ready to support the larger, transformative changes underway.
- Adopting targets to become nature positive.

The report stresses the need to put our ambitions for nature recovery on the same footing as those for climate change – those individuals, businesses, cities and governments that are striving to become Net Zero need to become nature positive too, including through adopting targets for nature, and taking nature positive actions such as through establishing wildlife habitat on land-holdings and gardens, ensuring nature is enhanced through supply chains, and using the power in our wallets to choose nature-friendly options in what we buy.

The priority actions identified in Nature Positive 2030 are about building a nature-rich future, with restored ecosystems that are more resilient to climate change and provide more benefits to more people.

Natural England chair, Tony Juniper, said:

Nature recovery is within our grasp – we can become Nature Positive by 2030, provided we act now. We need to go high nature and low carbon, tackling the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change together, and today's publication sets out how we can do this.

In the past year Heads of State from many countries, including from the UK, have made hugely important commitments to recover nature, in recognition that this is essential to our health, well-being and a sustainable, prosperous economy. Achieving these commitments will require transformative change across society and in the way we protect, value, use and engage with nature. We believe these commitments are achievable and our report shows how we can succeed in becoming Nature Positive by 2030 as an essential milestone on the path to full nature recovery.

Clare Pillman, Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales, said:

Restoring nature is our primary defence against climate breakdown, and this report demonstrates the collective ambition of all four nations of the UK to do just that.

While our window of opportunity is small, we know that real change can happen when governments, groups and individuals work together to protect our climate and natural world. Natural Resources Wales is committed to that effort.

We hope this report stimulates crucial conversations and triggers a wave of action amongst decision-makers around the world, providing an example to others of what it means to achieve environmental growth for the benefit of future generations.

NatureScot Chief Executive, Francesca Osowska, said:

It is everyone's responsibility to be nature positive. We know the twin crises of climate change and nature loss are inextricably linked – we do both, or do neither.

Scotland is stepping up to the challenges we face so that we can deliver our ambition of a nature positive future.

So, as we prepare to host COP26 in Glasgow, this is a crucial time to take bold, positive action for both nature and the climate.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee Chairman, Professor Colin Galbraith, said:

This is a key year for nature, climate change and for our future wellbeing.

This report makes a key contribution by showing how we can all help achieve a nature positive world. The report highlights a range of case-studies from across the UK that demonstrate how we are already helping nature recover. Whilst these examples show what is being done, everyone can play a part in future, helping to achieve a nature positive world by 2030, every contribution counts!

Importantly, the publication of the report provides an evidence base drawn from across the UK that supports the work to achieve ambitious global agreements for climate change and biodiversity at the forthcoming global conferences on biodiversity and on climate change.

The report shows that the UK is leading by example, and that the commitment to a Nature Positive world by 2030 is already creating examples of nature positive management on land and in our marine areas.

Paul Donnelly, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), said:

Healthy nature sustains us. However, our biodiversity is under severe pressure, at a time when we have never been more in need of it to counter the impacts of climate change.

Achieving a nature positive future and restoring our natural capital is essential for our health, well-being and prosperity. We all have a role to play in safeguarding, restoring, and reconnecting with nature. The UK Nature Positive 2030 Report helps show how this can be done. The examples, including those from Northern Ireland, show that positive action is happening and delivering for nature and people. We need to build on and accelerate these actions to ensure that we are building resilient nature for now and for future generations.

The report will support UK activities at international and domestic levels, as we work to achieve ambitious global agreements for climate change and biodiversity at COP26 and COP15, providing the evidence base to demonstrate that the UK is leading by example.

- The report will be available here after 00:01 Wednesday 22 September: www.jncc.gov.uk/nature-positive-2030
- Nature Positive 2030 is a publication by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, NatureScot and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.
- A partner pack of quotes is available here: <https://we.tl/t-Zz0988IcUm>