

# SA Industry Climate Change Conference Summary

8 and 9 May 2025, Adelaide Convention Centre





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## Introduction

The Government of South Australia and the Premier's Climate Change Council hosted South Australia's second Industry Climate Change Conference at the Adelaide Convention Centre on 8–9 May 2025.

The Conference brought together industry, business and government representatives to share knowledge, foster collaboration in response to climate change, and promote innovation in transitioning to net zero emissions.

The program involved over 80 speakers and moderators across the two days, including business and industry representatives, keynote speakers, panel sessions, and case study presentations. The state government strived for gender balance across our speakers, with a final split of 48% female to 52% male across the two-day event.

Martin Haese, Chair of the Premier's Climate Change Council, acted as the Master of Ceremonies for the Conference, with other members of the Council heavily engaged in the program. The final number of registrations for South Australia's Industry Climate Change Conference was 735 attendees, with most participants from business and industry.

A survey was circulated to all attendees following the event. Of the survey respondents, 93% said they would attend a future South Australia Climate Change Conference.

The state government would like to thank the following entities for the role they played in making the event a success:

- Premier's Climate Change Council
- Industry Climate Change Conference 2025 Across-agency Working Group
- Industry Climate Change Conference 2025
   Industry Associations Reference Group
- Sponsors and exhibitors (as per image on page 2).







**Major Conference Sponsor** 

# Adelaide University

**Conference Support Partners** 



pgg trellis







**Networking Drinks Partner** 



**Coffee Cart Partner** 

2XE









## **Exhibitors**















**Innovation Alley** 















#### Thursday 8 May 2025

## Day 1 – Inform and educate

Day 1 of the conference included keynote speakers, an interview session, and panel sessions with a focus largely on emissions reduction opportunities.

The Conference started with a Welcome to Country by young Kaurna woman **Kiera Kartanya Fitzgerald**, who provide a powerful message of the importance of Country and a clear call to action for attendees to be 'pulthawilta' [be bold] in the steps they take next in responding to climate change.

Video messages were shared from the Hon Chris Bowen MP, Federal Minister for Climate Change and Energy, and California's Governor, Gavin Newsom – praising the efforts of South Australia in tackling climate change and acknowledging the strong relationship that has been built over time with each of them.

## Session 1: Opening address – Government of South Australia

The **Hon Peter Malinauskas MP**. Premier of South Australia opened the Conference with a focus on the state's acknowledged leadership in renewable energy and the importance of science as the international language of truth. The Premier highlighted both the imperative to act decisively on climate change and opportunities to be gained from doing so - not just for our survival but also our prosperity - by leveraging the state's natural endowment of sun, wind, and critical minerals. The Premier reaffirmed the state's commitment to achieving net zero emissions and its ambition to achieve 100% net renewable electricity generation by 2027. The Premier concluded by outlining the case for why Adelaide is best placed to host the United Nations 31st Conference of Parties (COP) for Climate Change in 2026, should Australia's bid succeed.

That science indicates that calendar year 2024 was the hottest year ever recorded for our world should give us pause, but that science indicates that 2024 may well be the coldest year that we experience across the rest of our lives and for generations beyond – should fill us with a burning desire to respond.

— Hon Peter Malinauskas MP. Premier of South Australia

#### **Session 2: The global perspective**

Sarah Barker (Managing Director, Pollination Law) provided the first keynote presentation for the event, looking at the broader impacts of climate change. Sarah provided a financial lens into the challenges of climate change, sharing complexities with insurance; the need to be proactive instead or reactive; and why businesses should consider climate change a material financial risk as well as an opportunity.

Too long we've used the earth's atmosphere as a cost-free sewer for the global economy, and it can't keep up anymore.

— Sarah Barker, Managing Director, Pollination Law

## Session 3: Keynote address – innovation in sustainability

The second Keynote speaker was **Abigail Forsyth** (CEO, KeepCup) who presented her story of flexibility and business resilience. Abigail shared the battles she faced – from the impact from COVID and bans on reuseable products, to the perceived minimal impact of a reuseable cup when so much change is still required – and how these were overcome by revisiting her core values and the first principles of why she started KeepCup.

KeepCups certainly aren't going to change the world - but the shift in mindset to decide to use a KeepCup and think about reuse and think about those things, it will change the world and it is changing the world. We just need a little more momentum behind it.

- Abigail Forsyth, CEO, KeepCup

## **Session 4: Practical** solutions for **SMEs**

In the session, **Jon Dee** (Entrepreneur, Author, Broadcaster and Sustainability Expert) shared his experience with practical examples of reducing emissions for businesses. Jon was then interviewed by **Stacey Lee** (Radio Presenter, 5AA) where they covered the need to invest in renewable energy and how there are many actions businesses can and should do now to secure their future, particularly if they are a part of a larger corporation's scope 3 emissions.

## Session 5: Sustainable low emissions industry

Moderator: **Estha van der Linden** - State Head, South Australia. Al Group

Panellists:

- Susie Smith CEO, Australian Industry Greenhouse Network
- Brendan Beck General Manager,
   Policy, Australian Energy Producers
- Brenz Saunders Chair,
   Alinytjara Wilurara Landscape Board
- Tennant Reed Director, Energy and Climate, Al Group

The session considered what future low emissions industries could look like broadly across South Australia. The panellists covered the topics of South Australia's competitiveness; net zero ambitions; the role of land use; and different forms of energy. A key takeaway was the need to involve First Nations Australians in decarbonisation projects, in particular for projects in remote areas.

## Session 6 (concurrent sessions): Why decarbonising is good for business

#### Session 6a: Decarbonise your business - SMEs

Moderator: **Sanj de Silva** – Director, Strategic Communications, Flinders University

Panellists:

- Kate McCabe Finance Director, McCabe AgCo
- Mark Pickard Managing Director, Hallett Cement
- Jacob Potter Associate, dsquared Consulting

The session involved presentations from South Australian businesses that are taking advantage of market opportunities and new technology to support decarbonisation. Panellists shared their experience in progressing through sustainability measures and the impact this has had on their business's operations and investments.

## Session 6b: Decarbonise your business – large enterprises

Moderator: **Susie Smith** – CEO, Australian Industry Greenhouse Network Panellists:

- Susan Jeanes Chair, HILT CRC
- Dr Tim Richards Principal, Climate Risk and Intelligence, BHP
- Mel Squire Head of Sustainability and ESG, BAE Systems
- Ben Wallace Partner in Charge, Policy, Economics and Public Impact, KPMG

The session heard from industry experts who have found solutions to decarbonise their business, with a focus on larger entities that are undertaking financial disclosures. A call to action, particularly for SMEs, was to utilise the range of tools available to undertake climate risk assessments. The role of carbon offsets was also discussed, with panellists agreeing that these are important where tangible emissions reduction is not yet available.

## Session 7 (concurrent sessions): How to manage your emissions

#### Session 7a: Measuring your emissions

Moderator: **Estha van der Linden** -State Head, South Australia, Al Group

Presenters:

- Rachel Brdanovic Tandem Energy
- Pavlo Smoliy CEO, Trellis Technologies
- Professor Kannan Govindan Director of Centre for Sustainable Operations and Resilient Supply Chains, University of Adelaide

Panel members shared their tips on the basics of measuring your emissions, including where to start the process and who can support businesses. The session was filled with practical advice for attendees to consider in their businesses for action today.

Scope 1 is talking about the greenhouse gas emissions that are directly under your control... the petrol you burn in your cars, it's the refrigerant that leaks out of your air conditioners, it's the diesel in your generators...

Scope 2 is electricity...that's why people talk about how easy it is to reduce scope 2 emissions. You can put solar on, you can buy Greenpower energy...

Scope 3 I usually technically refer to as the kitchen drawer...everything else that doesn't fit neatly into those categories. It's all of your upstream supply chain emissions and downstream emissions as well.

— Rachel Brdanvoic, Sustainability Consultant, Tandem Energy

#### **Session 7b: Managing scope 3 emissions**

Moderator: Nicole Halsey – Director, URPS

Presenters:

- Karien Erasmus Director ESG and Climate Services, RSM Australia
- Mayor Angela Evans Mayor, City of Charles Sturt Low Carbon Roads Project
- Brad Lemmon CEO Recycling and Waste. ResourceCo
- Nick Palousis Founder and CEO, 2XE

The session discussed in detail how to decarbonise supply chains and the opportunities in tracking carbon emissions. Panellists shared practical examples of businesses that have successfully implemented changes to reduce their supply chain emissions, and the benefits achieved in measuring and managing Scope 3 emissions.

[Leverage] that Scope 3 emissions 'burden', turning that into an opportunity to innovate and to explore how your business can win in a net zero economy. If you think of it in that way, then the effort...is worth it.

— Nick Palousis, Founder and CEO, 2XE

#### Session 7c: Decarbonising housing and buildings

Moderator: **Jodie Bricout** – Design Director, Aurecon Presenters:

- **Ken Long** Regional Sustainability Manager Vic
- Frankie Muskovic Director, National Policy, Property Council of Australia
- Davina Rooney CEO,
   Green Building Council of Australia

and SA. Lendlease

This session considered the current dilemma across Australia of balancing the high demand for housing with the need to build more sustainably. Discussion included electrification of buildings; mandatory disclosure for commercial and residential buildings; and the need for compliance requirements and harmonised standards. Panellists also discussed the need to transition from "affordable housing" to "affordable living", taking into account factors such as public transport access.



## Session 8: Learning from climate savvy agribusiness

Moderator: **Emeritus Professor Simon Maddocks** - Chair, Primary Producers SA

#### Presenters:

- Dr Natalie Doran Browne Principal Consultant, Integrity Ag
- Louisa Rose Winemaker and Head of Sustainability, Hill-Smith Family Wines
- Dr Penny Schulz Livestock Technical Specialist, SA Drought Hub, University of Adelaide

Attendees were brought back together to hear from the final panel for Day 1, which consisted of agribusiness experts sharing their experiences in tackling climate change and building resilience for business. Panellists considered practical tips, such as ensuring climate change action was a business-wide commitment, communicating effectively with staff to ensure buyin at all levels, being aware of customer-driven requirements and the importance of collaboration.

#### End of day 1

The day concluded with closing remarks from the MC Martin Haese. This was followed by networking drinks, sponsored by RAA.

## Industry Climate Change Conference dinner event

The Dinner Event attracted 149 attendees for an evening of networking and celebrating a successful first day of the conference. Co-Masters of Ceremony **Tiahni Adamson** (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Manager, Bush Heritage Australia) and **Craig Wilkins** (National Director, Murray Darling Conservation Alliance) brought some light-hearted humor to the evening with witty puns and passionate storytelling.

Attendees heard from host of the evening - the Hon Dr Susan Close MP, Deputy Premier of South Australia — who shared her gratitude for those who had contributed to climate action across the state to date. Tim Jarvis AM (environmental scientist and explorer) then provided a memorable keynote address on the scientific facts of our natural environment, revisiting his trips to Antarctica, and explaining how fundamental it was to protect biodiversity and combat climate change.















#### Friday 9 May 2025

## Day 2 – Inspire and Act

Day 2 involved keynote speakers, an interview session, and panel sessions with a focus on climate resilience and adaptation, as well as emissions reduction.

The day started with Kaurna elder **Jack Buckskin** welcoming attendees to Kaurna Country through word and song.

## Session 9: Building South Australia's climate resilience

The **Hon Dr Susan Close MP,** Deputy Premier and Minister for Climate, Environment and Water, shared her deep insights on the state of the environment globally and locally and on the need to both mitigate climate change and address the biodiversity crisis currently unfolding – highlighting the importance of investing in nature-based solutions.

...nature has taken such a hammering that it is still in a very weakened state, and we need to restore it. And in restoring it we hold the answer to helping us get to net zero...We all understand that we need to use nature, and nature can help us as it always does.

Hon Dr Susan Close MP,
 Deputy Premier for South Australia

## Session 10: Keynote address - climate risks and hazards

**Dr Pep Canadell** (Chief Research Scientist, CSIRO) provided a global update on the latest climate science and future trends, including how climate change is impacting South Australia. Dr Canadell noted that climate change risks and impacts are now unfolding rapidly and widely across the globe, and that warming (i.e. the continued increase of temperature) will continue for a few generations at least – amongst other weather-related hazards specific to South Australia.

Warming...is here to stay for a few generations.
That's not a small statement, and that's guaranteed...
it gives the trajectory of work we need to take now
to build the resilience and adaptation required
to cope with the changes to come. And I think
best of all, we do have most of the solutions.

Dr Pep Canadell, Chief Research Scientist,
 Chief Lead Investigator, CSIRO – Climate Systems Hub

## **Session 11: Green finance** for today and tomorrow

**Dr Guy Debelle** (Chair, FundsSA and Board Member, Clean Energy Finance Corporation) presented on how the finance market is changing to support transitional growth of the green economy, noting that there are more investors looking for green projects than there are available projects. Dr Debelle noted that while Australia's emissions are small globally, we have a big role to play in decarbonising our exports.

Dr Debelle was then interviewed by **Stacey Lee** on topics such as nature-based solutions; roadblocks to accessing capital; electrification of homes; and stranded assets from the transition to renewable energy.

## Session 12: The real cost of climate change

Moderator: **Stacey Lee** – Radio Presenter, 5AA Presenters:

- Hon Andrea Michaels MP Minister for Small and Family Business
- Dr Mark Lawrence Managing Director, Mark Lawrence Group
- **Kylie Macfarlane** Chief Operating Officer, Insurance Council of Australia
- Karlene Maywald South Australian Water Ambassador

The session presented the hard facts about what businesses are likely to experience because of climate change, from insurance issues to water security. The panellists discussed the challenges in the insurance sector - noting the rising costs for insurance on homes and businesses as well as the increased payouts being made by insurance companies due to the higher frequency of natural disasters. Several other costs were also raised such as mental health impacts from the recent flooding events in the River Murray region, and water security and supplies when mitigating and adapting to climate change.

We have to think about mitigation investment the same way we think about defence, and the same way we think about public infrastructure – over 10-year timeframes, and it has to be a rolling and inflationary adjusted investment.

 Kylie Macfarlane - Chief Operating Officer, Insurance Council of Australia

## Session 13 (concurrent breakout): Insight conversations on decarbonising and building resilience across industry sectors

Content experts demonstrating practical solutions for business and industry to take away to reduce emissions and prepare for climate change.

#### **Session 13a: Transport**

Moderator: Nicole Halsey – Director, URPS

Presenters:

- Wendy Fennell Fennell Forestry
- Alexandra Kelly Zero Emissions Delivery Lead, IKEA
- **Dr Mihai Neagoe** Foresion

This panel session discussed the future of freight, and the current barriers and opportunities in the market. Discussion points included vehicle inefficiencies, the benefits of targets, and the collaboration opportunities between companies and their providers (e.g. freight subcontractors) to decarbonise. An effective regulatory framework was also suggested as a key tool to provide policy and financial incentives.

Key messages from panellists included the need to improve fuel efficiency before investing in new fleet as a more cost-effective measure; that electric vehicles are heavier and reduced payload but are cheaper to maintain at vehicle level; and the need to consider charging infrastructure and timing of movements.

#### **Session 13b: Knowing your consumer**

Moderator: **Tori Dixon-Whittle** – CEO, Food South Australia

Presenters:

- Naomi Downer State Director, SA and NT, Verian
- Chris Illman Head of Sales, Marketing and Hospitality, Bickfords
- Ben Owen Chief Strategy Officer and General Manager, Home and Energy, RAA

The session looked at customer behaviour and preference as drivers for market diversification and change. Panellists discussed the challenges with barriers such as access to finance for installing solar; the cost of sustainable options; and availability of sustainable products (e.g. recyclable materials). Discussion also focused on work needed from an education perspective in terms of the responsibility of individuals as well as corporations and government. A key take-away message from the session was for businesses to build in sustainability credentials systematically and cost effectively.



#### Session 13c: Rethink, reuse and reap rewards – how the circular economy is driving success in business

Moderator: **Kat Heinrich** – Director and Principal Consultant, RAWTEC

Presenters:

- Nick Hutchinson General Manager, Fleurieu Milk
- Brad Scott Director. Transmutation
- Anoop Thakur General Manager Procurement and Sustainability, Asia Pacific, Orora Limited

Panellists discussed how the transition to renewable energy is only half the journey towards decarbonisation, and how our society also needs to look at how we manage and value our resources. Case studies were presented from businesses that have successfully shifted from the traditional linear 'take, make, waste' approach to an approach that prioritises avoiding waste, reducing consumption, reusing materials, and recovering resources — and shared the benefits that have seen from this shift.

## Session 13d: Harvesting resilience – carbon farming for sustainable business growth

Moderator: **Dr Penny Schulz** – Livestock Technical Specialist, SA Drought Hub, University of Adelaide Presenters:

- Frances Carter TFI Group Sustainability Advisor
- John Fargher Co-Founder and Chief Strategy Officer, AgriWebb
- Julian Marchant ESG Program Manager, Wine Australia

This session focused on how carbon farming can support emissions reduction goals across agriculture businesses. The panel shared insights on the cobenefits of carbon farming, including soil restoration, increased efficiency, market access and increased business profitability. The need to supply customers and international markets with an increasing number of low carbon products was also emphasised.

The key message was that good carbon practices can drive productivity and profitability, with a call for all businesses to get started on the journey and work together through any challenges.

## Session 14 (concurrent breakout): Foresight conversations

Hear from experts on emerging trends.

#### **Session 14a: Transitionary fuels**

Moderator: **Nicole Halsey** – Director, URPS Presenters:

- Simon Roycroft Manager Future Fuels, Refuelling Solutions
- Patty Therrios Head of Strategy and Sustainability, Adelaide Airport
- Craig Wood CEO, Vast Energy

Panellists presented on the short- and medium-term fuel solutions to reducing transport carbon emissions. Key sectors to benefit from alternative low emissions fuels include agriculture, construction, marine and mining – with panellists covering a range of technologies including biofuels, renewable diesel, sustainable aviation fuels and green methanol. Collaboration was again a key theme amongst the discussion, with the panellists agreeing that more support was needed to make alternative fuels cost comparative with other options.

## Session 14b: Protecting your business and the environment

Moderator: **Kathryn Bellette** - Executive Director, Science, Climate and Programs, EPA

Presenters:

- Dr Jon Gorvett Chief Executive, Environment Protection Authority
- Victoria Chantra Partner, Climate
   Adaptation, Risk and Resilience, Deloitte

Panellists shared how to identify and manage the physical risks of climate change to protect your business and the environment. The session commenced with an introduction to the Environment Protection Authority's climate change program followed by some practical examples from Deloitte around of how some businesses have identified climate change risks and put in place measures to address them. The audience was then invited to share their insights into the challenges and opportunities of incorporating climate risk into their business.

## Session 14c: Driving climate action in healthcare: transforming the sector for a sustainable future

Moderator: **Craig Wilkins** – National Director, Murray Darling Conservation Alliance

#### Presenters:

- Professor Nicola Spurrier Chief Public Health Officer, SA Health
- Amba-Rose Atkinson PhD candidate, UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health
- Damien Breen Operations and Sustainability Director, Celsus
- Daniel Panic Director, Corporate Services, Barossa Hills Fleurieu Local Health Network

This session explored emissions reduction and adaptation strategies in the healthcare sector to drive sustainable, resilient solutions. Panellists discussed the importance of 'high quality, low carbon healthcare', and the link between healthy Country and healthy people.

#### **Session 14d: Future cities**

Moderator: **Professor Ariella Helfgott** – Director of Foresight and Strategic Learning, World Energy Council

#### Presenters:

- Lord Mayor Dr Jane Lomax Smith
  - City of Adelaide Council
- Professor Chris Daniels Chair, Green Adelaide Board
- Larry Lye Hock Ng Board member, Board of Architects (Singapore); Former Group Director of Urban Redevelopment Authority (Singapore)
- Craig Holden Chair, State Planning Commission



Panellists discussed the current and future challenges and opportunities for creating better cities in South Australia – including the challenges with population growth, the importance of walkability and the need for effective public transport infrastructure, green spaces, protecting and expanding the natural environment in cities. Attendees were also privileged to hear from the conference's special international guest – Larry Ng from Singapore, who is an expert in urban planning and the importance of linking biodiversity to the urban environment.

Climate change is an existential threat to all of our homes. It has brought rising sea levels, extreme weather patterns, around the world millions of lives and livelihood are in danger...So even though many cities are changing and going forward... every city is affected by climate change.

 Larry Lye Hock Ng, Board member, Board of Architects (Singapore); Former Group Director of Urban Redevelopment Authority (Singapore)

### Session 15: Building the skills of the future

Moderator: Callan Markwick – Exec. Director, Industry and Workforce Capability, Department for State Development

#### Presenters:

- **Tiahni Adamson** National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Manager, Bush Heritage Australia
- John Adley Vice President, SA Unions
- Commissioner Cameron Baker Chair of the South Australian Skills Commission
- Professor David Lewis Executive Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Engineering and Technology, University of Adelaide
- Allys Todd Co-Founder and CE, ValAi

The final panel session for the conference looked at the action needed to meet workforce requirements from changes associated with decarbonisation.

Panellists touched on a range of topics including the need to integrate future skill requirements into the state's education system; how to transition existing workforces as needed; ensuring First Nations Australians are genuinely engaged; the need to design the transition process with flexibility for diversity; and the challenges of keeping talent and knowledge in South Australia.

Climate change is a global problem, but resilience is local"

- Tiahni Adamson, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Manager, Bush Heritage Australia

One of the fundamental interests of workers is to live on a planet that has an environment that has the capacity to sustain life and human civilisation as we know it. There are no jobs on a dead planet.

- John Adley, Vice President, SA Unions

#### Session 16: keynote address

Craig Reucassel (Radio and television presenter, ABCs War on Waste) provided the final keynote presentation, perfectly summarising how small actions can have big impacts in a light-hearted way. The presentation included practical examples of actions for businesses to consider; a recommendation for businesses to think about whose supply chain they are a part of and potential impacts from this; as well as reflections on the leadership South Australia has shown to date.

Craig ended his address with a call to action for businesses to ask the question - "can we do our business better?"

#### End of day 2

Conference MC Martin Haese closed South Australia's second Industry Climate Change Conference with a brief recap of the key messages from across the various sessions, and a call to action for all attendees to consider their role in the state's transition towards a low emissions and climate resilient economy.

Our encouragement to you is to act. Do something. Seek out the experts...speak to all of the local South Australian companies [speakers, sponsors and exhibitors] who have been showcasing today here...they will help you.

- Martin Haese, Chair Premier's Climate Change Council

## South Australian business and industry case studies

There are many businesses and organisations in South Australia who are leading the charge and implementing changes to reduce emissions or build their climate resilience.

Scan the QR code below to find out more or head to:



www.environment.sa.gov. au/climate-action-in-focusindustry-case-studies-fromacross-south-australia



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