

Groups in Australia and Japan join forces to highlight damage caused by their nations' coal trade

Civil society groups in Australia and Japan have teamed up to release “**Out of sight, out of mind: Impacts of Japanese use of Australian Coal**”, a new report that examines the damage caused by coal mining in Australia and coal consumption in Japan, shining a light on the costs of Japan’s reliance on Australian coal.

The report by the Australian Conservation Foundation, the Australia Institute and major Japanese climate organisation Kiko Network highlights the impacts on the climate, human health, ecosystems and wildlife habitats as a result of Japan’s use of Australian coal.

- Japan is the world’s fifth largest greenhouse gas emitter. More than 60% of the coal it burns is imported from Australia. Australian coal burned in Japan produces around 490 million tonnes of greenhouse gas per year that contribute to global climate change.
- Japan is Australia’s biggest coal customer. Coal demand from Japan is a key factor in the expansion of coal mines and Australia’s coal export industry.
- In recent years, the expansion of Australian coal mines has affected the Great Barrier Reef, critically endangered animal species, forests (including koala habitats), rivers, farms, rural communities, human health and First Nations rights.
- Burning Australian coal contributes to the poor air quality in Japan’s cities. It is estimated that at least 60,000 premature deaths occur from air pollution in Japan every year.
- Japanese companies own stakes in many coal mines in Australia, including some of the most controversial mines in the country.

The Australian Conservation Foundation’s Gavan McFadzean said:

“This report brings to light the true costs of Australia’s coal trade with Japan – on koala habitats, water resources, human health, rural communities and First Nations’ rights.”

Kiko Network’s Kimiko Hirata said:

“Japan relies heavily on coal, but people in Japan barely know the impacts incurred in Australia due to our consumption of coal. We need to end the utilization of coal power by 2030 – not only for the climate, but also for nature and the people of Australia.”

Rod Campbell, Research Director at The Australia Institute, said:

“Australia is the third largest exporter of fossil fuels in the world, yet the government is only interested in further growing its coal and gas exports to the region. As a result, Japan and Australia both suffer more climate damage. The emissions in Japan from burning Australian coal are roughly equivalent to all the climate pollution emitted in Australia every year.”

The groups, which are calling for Australia and Japan to phase out their coal trade by 2030, will use the new report to raise public awareness as part of their advocacy for the move from dependence on high-risk coal and nuclear energy to a sustainable future based on clean, safe renewable energy sources.

Report is available here:

https://www.kikonet.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Australia-Japan-Coal-Repoer_202106_eng.pdf

Contacts

Kimiko Hirata (Kiko Network): khirata@kikonet.org

Josh Meadows (Australian Conservation Foundation): media@acf.org.au

Anna Chang (The Australia Institute): anna@australiainstitute.org.au