

Bill Shorten tries trumping Malcolm Turnbull on greenhouse emissions

James Chessel AFR

Opposition leader Bill Shorten has moved to gazump Malcolm Turnbull on the eve of [the Paris climate change summit](#) by saying a Labor government would aim to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent from 2005 levels by 2030, and to zero by 2050.

This is much greater than the 26 per cent to 28 per cent 2030 emissions reduction target that was set when Tony Abbott was prime minister and which has been adopted by Mr Turnbull.

Mr Turnbull will put his pledge on the table when he and 129 other world leaders meet in Paris on Monday to kickstart the two-week United Nations sponsored summit.

Mr Shorten will use a speech on Friday to the Lowy Institute to challenge the Prime Minister.

"Malcolm Turnbull is flying to Paris carrying Tony Abbot's climate-sceptic baggage," he will say.

The Prime Minister will walk onto the aerobridge with a pathetic target in one hand and an expensive joke of a climate policy in the other."

Mr Shorten will set use the Climate Change Authority's recommendation of a baseline emissions reduction of 45 per cent by 2030, on 2005 levels, "as the basis for our consultations with industry, employers, unions and the community".

"We will undertake this process mindful of the consequences for jobs, for regions and for any impacts on households," he said.

The 2050 zero emissions target means "by 2050, every tonne of pollution we produce will need to be balanced by sequestering, off-setting or purchasing".

"This is an ambitious goal," he will say.

Mr Turnbull will first visit Malta for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting where leaders will unite on climate change ahead of the Paris summit.

Terrorism will be the other major subject of discussion at the meeting which French President Francois Hollande and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will also attend.

With CHOGM wrapping up on Sunday – a day before the UN talks begin in Paris – the meeting will be closely watched for signs of consensus or disagreement on climate change. The Commonwealth includes developed nations such as the UK, Australia and Canada as well as small Pacific states such as the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu that face serious environmental issues such as rising sea levels.

"CHOGM is taking place during a critical year when the world determines the path forward on significant global issues," said Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma, an former Indian diplomat who has argued smaller island nations have not caused climate change but are suffering disproportionately from its impacts.

In an interview with Britain's Sky News television this week, Prince Charles, who has championed green causes, said rising global temperatures needed to be dealt with urgently.

"Do we really have to face catastrophes and chaos before we understand that real action needs to be taken?", he said.

The Commonwealth is proposing debt for climate action swaps, which allows smaller nations to get debt relief in return for action on climate change. Canada's Justin Trudeau, a progressive leader who replaced Canada's conservative prime minister Stephen Harper in early November, will use Malta to re-establish his country as an advocate for tougher measures to combat carbon emissions.

"In Paris, a united Canada will demonstrate we are serious about climate change," Mr Trudeau [told reporters earlier this week](#) before flying out to the UK.

Australia will focus on getting other nations to sign up to transparency and accountability mechanisms that ensure carbon reduction pledges made in the lead up to Paris are met.

Australian officials believe these mechanism are essential to ensuring countries that do meet their targets are not put a disadvantage.