

## PACIFIC'S CALL FOR AUSTRALIA TO LEAVE ITS COAL IN THE GROUND IS ALSO POSITIVE FOR REDUCING SHIPPING EMISSIONS

**SUVA 15 September, 2017: The Pacific has been vociferous in demanding from Australia, a close neighbour and supposedly a friend, a phase out of its coal mining industry in the global effort to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C, the target to be met through the Paris Agreement that Australia is a party to.**

“The burning of the coal alone would be enough to tip global temperature above this 1.5 degree C target”, said Mr François Martel, Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Development Forum, “Add to this the upward of 450 million tonnes in emissions as a result of shipping that coal to its destination countries, and Australia alone can guarantee we will bust that target. And this to the detriment of its small island neighbours. That is morally wrong and totally against the spirit and letter of the Paris Agreement”.

In October 2015, Fiji Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama issued a special plea for Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to “impose a moratorium on the development of further reserves of Australian coal.” This followed a call the previous month by Tuvalu Prime Minister and AOSIS chair Enele Sopoaga when AOSIS said it wanted a moratorium on new coal mines, but was realistic about its chances of convincing Australia to give up its lucrative fossil fuel assets.

The issue has now been revisited at the recent Pacific Forum Leaders Meeting in Apia, this time the Tuvalu Climate Action Network is condemning Australia for its continued promotion of the coal industry saying it is putting Pacific communities at risk, a statement echoed by numerous Pacific leaders.

Both Fiji and Tuvalu are active Pacific members of the current International Maritime Organisation negotiations over the Roadmap for reducing international shipping emissions. Alongside other Pacific states and a growing coalition of countries and industry voices, they continue to press for shipping to agree its ‘fair share’ of the overall emission reduction needed to halt climate change within a 1.5 degree warming guardrail. This would require decarbonisation of shipping by 2050 at latest.

To date, debate over how shipping might achieve emissions reductions has largely centred on the technology of the industry and increased efficiency measures. Now that decarbonisation is being recognized as the needed necessary response by shipping, discussion turns to a broader basket of measures; including alternative fuels and energy sources, changes in operational practices, especially ship speed, and market based measures and instruments.

But the deeper issue of the quantity of commodities being traded via shipping and the potential change of this if a global agenda of deep decarbonisation was fully embraced have not yet been broached.

The call for Australian coal to stay in the ground allows us to begin to explore this. Australia is the world’s largest exporter of iron ore and coal. Over the last five years, coal has accounted, on average, for more than 15 per cent of Australia’s total exports. 388 million tonnes were exported in 2015/16 and overall tonnes produced are projected to increase by over 40% over the next 15 years.

Australia has been among the greatest beneficiaries of a decade-long commodity super cycle, whose record prices led to around \$400 billions of investment in Australia. If this continues and the future results in no more than current BAU energy efficiency savings for shipping, what is the added cost of this to global shipping emissions? Alternatively, were the Pacific calls for coal exports to cease heeded, what would the effect of this be on international shipping emissions?

Researchers with the Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport in the Marshall Islands estimate that the emissions savings from shipping if Australian coal maritime exports ceased could be in the order of 0.01 - 0.03% of total anthropogenic emissions or 0.5 - 1.5% of international shipping's CO2 per annum. No full analysis of Pacific island total emissions is available but estimates of 0.03% have been made previously. By ceasing exports of Australian coal, not only would the carbon currently sequestered in the lignite not be emitted, but the tonnes of carbon saved in shipping emissions from not carrying the coal would be of a similar scale to the combined total emissions produced by Pacific Island States. Although these are only preliminary estimates, if taken from a carbon budget perspective where we have ~550 Gt of emissions left before we hit the redline of 1.5°C global warming, another 15 years of current shipping emission associated with Australian coal exports could use upward of 450 million tonnes of the 'available' budget. If coal exports increase as Australia is projecting, without new advances in shipping efficiency, this could also increase by 40%.

Pacific states continue to press for all emitting sectors to bear their share of reduction responsibility and shipping is critical to this. None are under any illusion as to the size of paradigm shift required for sectors like shipping to make the move to decarbonisation. Planning for such a future is essential for the future of the Pacific and must entail a true visualizing of what this means within the context of a global shift to a low carbon economy.



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