

Backing away from climate funding will further damage Australia's credentials

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Australia's refusal to support developing countries' efforts under a new climate change agreement or the new [UN Green Climate Fund](#) will undermine its claims to being a good international citizen, writes Development Policy Centre Associate Jonathan Pickering [in an opinion piece for The Conversation](#).

While the Labor government relied on the aid budget to meet its fast-start commitments, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop — in a rare point of common ground with the Greens — has [stated](#) that “climate change funding should not be disguised as foreign aid funding”.

But if Australia wants to avoid relying on the aid budget without renegeing on its 2020 pledge altogether, it needs to be part of an internationally coordinated effort to harness new sources of funding. For this reason, Australia is painting itself into a corner by [backing away](#) from the Green Climate Fund, which aims to attract private as well as public investments.

The notion that pledges to multilateral funds simply siphon away taxpayers' hard-earned cash to distant bureaucrats intent on creating a world government is a preposterous but regrettably common [refrain](#). [Independent analysis](#) has found that multilateral funds are generally more cost-effective and transparent than bilateral aid programs.

Australia's [previous role](#) in co-chairing the Green Climate Fund has helped to ensure that it will provide value for money. Now that the Coalition has taken an [axe](#) to the aid program's ability to administer funds, it does not have the luxury of ruling out the best available alternatives for channelling climate finance.

Climate finance is not, as insinuated by the internal summary of Cabinet's discussion, “socialism masquerading as environmentalism”. Statements such as these are just sloganeering masquerading as policy-making.

What they disguise is that a commitment to shoulder our fair share of climate finance makes sound policy sense for Australia, as well as helping countries far less fortunate than our own.

[Read Jonathan's full piece on The Conversation.](#)