Clean Energy, Electrification to Take Centre Stage at COP31 in Turkey

Accelerating the global transition from fossil fuels to clean energy and expanding electrification will be among the key priorities at the upcoming UN climate conference COP31 in Turkey in November, speakers at a sustainability dialogue said.

The conference, to be hosted by Turkey with Australia leading the negotiations, will place a strong emphasis on clean energy investment, electrification, climate finance and practical implementation of climate commitments.

Emily Follett, Deputy High Commissioner at the Australian High Commission in Singapore, said energy security concerns arising from recent global energy shocks could encourage greater investment in renewable energy.

“More clean energy and greater electrification can reduce exposure to volatile fuel markets, strengthen energy security and reduce emissions at the same time," she said during a panel discussion at the Sustainability Dialogue 2026, organised by the British Chamber of Commerce Singapore on September 3.

One of the key proposals being advanced by Turkey is to increase the share of electricity in global energy demand from around 20 per cent currently to 35 per cent by 2035 through wider electrification.

Electrification can help cut carbon emissions by replacing fossil-fuel-based technologies with electricity generated from low-carbon sources, including renewable energy. The transition from conventional internal combustion engine vehicles to electric vehicles is one example.

Sadik Arslan, Turkey's ambassador to Singapore, said his country had already made significant progress in renewable energy, with more than half of its electricity generation coming from renewable sources, mainly hydropower, solar and wind.

He said the success of COP31 should be measured by balanced progress on mitigation, adaptation and climate finance, alongside tangible action beyond the negotiating rooms.

"For Turkey, implementation of COP means linking multilateral consensus to practical delivery," Arslan said.

Singapore's Chief Negotiator for Climate Change, Joseph Teo, said Singapore strongly supports the proposed target of raising electricity's share of global energy demand to 35 per cent by 2035.

"We really need to talk about practical ways of getting countries to retire coal early and then to phase in renewable energy," he said.

Teo also highlighted the need for greater investment in energy grids and said Singapore could serve as a connector by bringing together governments, investors and the private sector.

He cited Singapore’s Financing Asia’s Transition Partnership (FAST-P), which uses blended finance to support projects aimed at replacing coal with cleaner electricity sources.

Under the blended finance model, public or philanthropic capital is used to reduce investment risks and attract private-sector financing into sustainable projects.

Follett said climate finance should also focus on helping vulnerable countries adapt to the growing impacts of climate change. Adaptation measures include strengthening flood resilience, improving food security and making infrastructure more climate-resilient.

Australia’s other priorities for COP31 include mobilising climate finance and investment, expanding green industries and highlighting the needs of Pacific island nations, which are among the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

Teo said Singapore hopes COP31 will build on the outcomes of COP30 in Belém, Brazil, and reinforce multilateral cooperation at a time of growing geopolitical tensions.

He also rejected the idea that climate conferences are merely “talk shops”, saying COP decisions send important signals to governments and the private sector about future climate policies and investment priorities.

According to Teo, national climate targets and adaptation plans can provide investors with clearer signals about where governments intend to direct their economies.

The COP31 summit is scheduled to take place in Antalya, Turkey, in November 2026, with negotiations expected to focus on turning climate commitments into concrete action, particularly in clean energy, electrification, adaptation and climate finance.