

# COP, LOOK, LISTEN

ISSUE 3 | Thursday 10 November

Hi,

Welcome to the third edition of **COP, LOOK, LISTEN**, a bulletin covering information attacks and anti-climate trends in and around COP27.

**We welcome requests from journalists, civil society and policymakers to provide evidence where relevant. If you have a lead regarding climate mis-/disinformation, malign influence operations or other suspicious activity, please email [contact@caad.info](mailto:contact@caad.info).** All requests will be reviewed from both an ethical and technical perspective, ensuring data is used responsibly to map and counter these threats.

To subscribe to the **COP, LOOK, LISTEN** bulletins, please register [here](#).



## HEADLINES

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*An overview of top opposition content across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Reddit, YouTube, Telegram and mainstream media – includes active disinformation, malign influence campaigns and broader adversarial messaging around climate, which may require an immediate response from the*

sector.

As negotiations around **Loss and Damage** play out for the first time formally on a COP agenda, right-wing pundits and media are already trying to **reframe the debate around 'unjust reparations'**.



## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

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*A deeper look at anti-climate actors or phenomena impacting the public debate, who reveal something important about the disinformation playbook.*

A well-funded **right-wing organisation** - Advance Australia - is expected to launch a **significant anti-climate effort to coincide with COP27**. Tactics include stoking fears around the cost of living crisis, energy security, and living standards.



## ON OUR RADAR

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*Emerging trends that have not yet reached a critical mass, but may prove a bellwether for anti-climate campaigns and messaging.*

**'Wokewashed' messaging**, including reference to anti-colonialism, is becoming more common in delayist rhetoric and efforts to thwart climate action - this **includes State-sponsored messaging from Russia and China**.

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# HEADLINES

## OUR VERDICT:

This is a question of **STRATCOMMS**, but the fight to define public understanding will happen swiftly - climate sector bodies and the media need to mobilise with clear messaging in the coming days. If not, the Loss and Damage debate may already be lost to misperception, false framing and other culture wars backlashes by the time COP Week 2 begins.

It is imperative that communicators [embrace](#) and [explain](#) the rationale for why [polluters should pay](#) based on [current and historic emissions](#). The opposition is attempting to make 'climate reparations' a toxic wedge issue and draw on nativist, xenophobic and polarising rhetoric to gain support - as many countries sit on the brink of a recession such arguments will find fertile ground, even among those who broadly support climate action.

Some key tips from the [Journalist Field Guide](#), published in November 2022:

1. **Assess whether to report or ignore specific pieces of misinformation** (bearing in mind the '[Trumpet of Amplification](#)'). The Data Society's '[10 Tips for Reporting of Disinformation](#)' has some useful guidance here, both on how to assess when a tipping point has been reached and how to avoid mainstreaming dangerous ideas.
2. **Assess if you are being manipulated into covering misinformation.** The Data & Society Research Institute's [Source Hacking report](#) examines tactics that are used to manipulate reporters into helping misinformation spread, along with

brief recommendations.

3. **Do not include or directly negate misinformation in headlines.**

Research shows that most people on social media share news without reading beyond the headline. As such, headlines that repeat or question a falsehood without context risk doing more harm than good.

4. **Do not use the language of misinformers** - bad-faith actors will screenshot, excerpt and generally mis-represent anything which seems to bolster their argument. Even when reporting is amended to avoid confusion, images will circulate for months or years to come and provide so-called evidence for those claiming a 'cover-up' or 'conspiracy' on climate (see our ['Climate Lockdown' report](#) for clear examples). Read through everything *before* publication and ask: how could this be skewed?

## WHAT ARE WE SEEING SO FAR?

**At COP26 there were intense negotiations around Loss and Damage, but our monitoring showed minimal interest on social media** beyond a narrow circle of journalists, politicians and activists. These more technical aspects of the summit were not the focal point for climate contrarians or culture warriors, who instead focussed on arguments such as Absolutionism, Hypocrisy and Elitism and Discrediting Renewables. **COP27 reversed this trend before the summit even started. The situation is most acute in the UK**, after a Nov 6 [interview](#) with former Labour Party leader and current Shadow Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband on Laura Kuenssberg's Sunday morning BBC programme.



Martin Daubney   
@MartinDaubney

"What planet are they on? We need to end the madness of 'climate reparations' that will bankrupt the West.

"How can Sunak find £15billion for Pakistan & Mauritius when British voters can't afford to turn on their heating?" My turn on [@GBNEWS](#) earlier



9:10 AM · Nov 8, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone



Jacob Rees-Mogg  
@Jacob\_Rees\_Mogg

There is no need to pay reparations. Our leadership of the industrial revolution brought prosperity to the world and led to increased life expectancy and better living conditions.



telegraph.co.uk  
Climate change reparations are a toxic distraction  
Blaming all the planet's problems on Britain's Industrial Revolution is irrational  
buck-passing

9:13 AM · Nov 8, 2022 · Twitter Web App

On Twitter, the conservative ecosystem surrounding GB News immediately attacked Miliband, attempting to rebrand Loss and Damage as "climate reparations" and make that idea toxic for citizens - a disinformation playbook made [explicit by Chris Rufo](#) in his [work pushing the anti-Critical Race Theory narrative](#).

Among the most widely shared posts were those by journalist [Toby Young](#), GB News host and former politician [Nigel Farage](#), former MEP and Deputy Leader of the Reclaim Party [Martin Daubney](#), Leader of the right-wing Reform UK Party [Richard Tice](#), conspiracist [Darren Grimes](#) and Conservative Party MP [Jacob Rees-Mogg](#) (until recently Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy).

**Several of the top posts shared mainstream media stories** by the [Daily Telegraph](#), [Daily Mail](#) and [Daily Express](#), as well as content from smaller outlets like [Guido Fawkes](#) or the [Daily Sceptic](#). **Commentators affiliated with these outlets were also among those prominently attacking 'climate reparations,'** such as [Dan Hodges](#) (Daily Mail) or [Allison Pearson](#) (The Telegraph).

**The Telegraph was by far the most prominent, with tweets containing links to the paper being shared over 7,000 times.** Several of these posts were direct attacks on, or criticism of, either Ed Miliband or Conservative Party PM Rishi Sunak.

On Facebook, the most widely shared posts on public pages included those by [Sky News Australia](#) and prominent former Australian MP [George Christensen](#), adopting similar lines to those used by right-wing pundits in the UK.

The main lines of pushback were those [claiming](#) 'climate reparations' would benefit China and [Pakistan](#), the latter of whom suffered unprecedented floods earlier this year and [strongly endorses](#) a negotiated loss and damage outcome at COP27 - its diaspora have also been a regular target of racial discrimination since communities established in Britain in the late 20th century.

One widely shared [post](#) demanded COVID reparations from China in turn, while others reframed the discussion to play on identity politics and national pride, claiming that Britain is being [punished](#) for [spearheading the industrial revolution](#) and thus global human flourishing. The issue was also widely linked to the cost of living crisis, with arguments around [strained public finances](#) and high energy cost for British citizens (compared to housing ["illegal migrants in 4/5 star hotels"](#)).

More at the fringes, but including at least one widely shared [post](#), were claims that linked PM Sunak's openness to a Loss and Damage outcome at COP27 with alleged influence from the World Economic Forum. This ultimately links to conspiracy theories around the so-called Great Reset, which gained prominence during the COVID pandemic and has since infected climate denial communities.



Allison Pearson ✓  
@AllisonPearson

And this week's lunatic idea:  
Let's give all the money we don't have to poor  
countries with bad weather.  
Climate reparations!  
The loyalty of Conservative voters is being tested to  
destruction.

8:52 AM · Nov 7, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

590 Retweets 37 Quote Tweets 2,706 Likes



Bernie's Tweets  
@BernieSpofforth

RISHI 'TRUDEAU' - it's not like we didn't warn you he was a WEF stooge.  
Climate change reparations and now the paid media are nudging Universal Basic income.

We have Labour in power and Labour in opposition.



Mirror Politics  
@MirrorPolitics

Rishi Sunak is being urged to examine the radical idea of a universal basic income to protect Brits from the rocketing cost-of-living



## UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

### OUR VERDICT:

This is primarily a question of **ADVERTISING**, and the continued use of social media products and services to amplify mis-/disinfo. As highlighted at length in CAAD's '[Deny, Deceive, Delay](#)' report (p.92 onwards), companies can no longer justify profits generated from such activity, whether led by Carbon Majors themselves or their extensive network of front groups, PR firms and lobbyists. Writ large, the contribution of the ad ecosystem is two-fold: 1) creating a funding model for bad-faith actors and outlets, who generate advertising revenue through incendiary, false or misleading content; 2) increasing reach, as advertising tools can be applied to disinformation or greenwashing content to target consumers and other key constituencies.

Challenging ad tech business models is among the most powerful tools at our disposal - see [Elon Musk's current battles](#) at Twitter to understand the leverage

advertisers hold with Big Tech, and where the climate sector should continue applying pressure. Not only should spreading outright denial be prohibited in ads, but there is also the opportunity to provide more preferential structures for verified climate scientists, institutions and green energy companies who have far less money to invest in PR.

While social media companies claim to have policies in place to limit political disinformation, in practice those policies, [and similar ones](#), have allowed for oil companies to advertise *against* climate action while [preventing environmental groups](#) from advertising *for* it. Multinational energy firms have direct advertising account representatives who can quickly and easily solve any issues, but climate groups struggle with an opaque and time-consuming appeals process that rarely works. Balanced playing field? We think not.

For more information in this area, check out:

- Conscious Advertising Network's [manifesto](#)
- IPA Media's [Climate Charter](#)
- [Check My Ads](#) watchdog
- Wreck The Brief's [Sabotage Handbook](#)
- [Eco.Bot-Net](#) library of greenwashing content

## WHO IS ADVANCE AUSTRALIA?

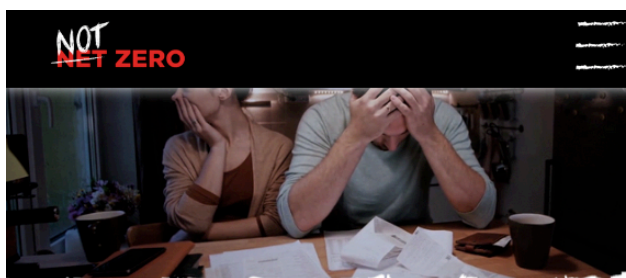
Advance (aka Advance Australia) is a well funded, right-wing organisation rapidly building its profile and audience, with documented [connections](#) to far-right movements in Australia and the US. Advance came to prominence through their online and [billboard-based campaigns](#) during Australia's 2022 Federal Election and had an advertising spend of over AU\$650,000 (US\$420,000) on Facebook and Instagram over the last few years, according to records available on the platform. **While Advance at first appears to be a right-wing and 'culture wars' group, climate denial and messages opposing climate action have been at the core of their campaigning.**



## ANTI-CLIMATE ACTION CAMPAIGN IN THE MAKING

Based on current data, we suspect that Advance is preparing to launch a major anti-climate effort to coincide with COP27. The campaign is aimed at galvanising conservative audiences and actors against climate action by stoking fears around the cost of living crisis, energy security, and living standards.

The themes of their ads, videos and website echo similar content from [anti-Net Zero campaigning in the UK](#), blaming green policies for rising prices and claiming that Australia is transitioning to 'unreliable' renewables too quickly. Advance's email newsletter from 3 November [announced](#) their aim to launch the 'biggest campaign yet' to shift conservative Australian political powers against climate action. In addition, last week (31 October) the group launched a new campaign website at [notzero.com.au](#).



**Sign the petition to  
tell Peter Dutton and  
the Coalition you  
want cheaper power**



**Advance Australia**

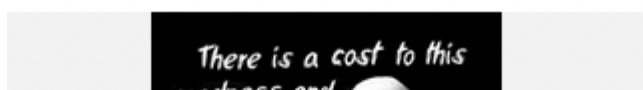
Sponsored • Paid for by Advance Australia

WARNING:

Don't let their 'Net Zero' nonsense send you broke.

You know it's getting more expensive to put food on the table, fill up your fuel tank and keep the lights on.

But there's something even worse than runaway inflatio...





Over the past fortnight, Advance appears to have been trialling [Facebook and Instagram ads](#) targeting mostly men above 45 in two Australian states, **Queensland and New South Wales**. It deployed 25 visual variations of an ad with text, spending under AU\$2675 (US\$1700). This is very low compared to their regular investments and likely indicates an 'A/B testing' or 'ramping-up' phase of a campaign.

Moreover, **the Facebook ads link to a Nation Builder-based petition website, which harvests contact details**. Advance has also published a video campaign ad on [Facebook](#) and [Vimeo](#) mirroring its anti-climate campaign (over 4k views), as well as another short [video](#) with over 206k views and 1.8k comments.

**The Facebook and Instagram ads have collectively made between 79k-112k impressions** (as of 9 November). Beyond their own posts, links to Advance's Nation Builder site have already appeared on Twitter (31 posts) and Facebook (2k public interactions) in the last week.

So far, it would seem that social media linking to the campaign website mostly originated from Advance Australia's accounts and beyond that was only picked up by smaller climate sceptic and right-wing political fringe groups on Facebook.

**Advance appears well connected with Sky News Australia, a Murdoch-owned outlet and among the biggest social media and online news networks in Australia.** (It was found to be a major promoter of climate denial and delayism in our monitoring last year, as covered in the 'Deny, Deceive, Delay' report and subsequent [reporting by The Guardian](#)).



# ON OUR RADAR

## OUR VERDICT:

This is primarily a question of **DISCREDITING KEY AMPLIFIERS**, both by calling out the disingenuous, inconsistent nature of their arguments and by exposing links to vested interests (e.g. Big Oil). Much content may not constitute active disinformation, but still poses a credible threat - at an increasingly polarised moment in time, campaigns that weaponise the idea of social justice to thwart climate action may well resonate (see [here](#) for more context).

Delayists are at pains to claim that the green agenda [in fact hurts progressive causes](#) or reinforces unfair power dynamics, whether that means geographic (e.g. Global North vs. Global South), socio-economic (e.g. elites vs. working class), racial (e.g. White people vs. minority communities), or historic (e.g. colonial powers vs. former colonies). Examples of this can include everything from “electric vehicles are bad because rare earth minerals are mined in DRC and China” (see [Climate Nexus](#) and [Union of Concerned Scientists](#) for analysis) to “African nations deserve a chance to prosper, so why deny them fossil fuels?” - the latter is a particularly beloved line of attack from [Michael Shellenberger](#) and other pundits.

A [key element](#) of propaganda campaigns is the adoption of opposition rhetoric to appear more reasonable and dilute the meaning of key terms (or render them defunct, as with Donald Trump and ‘fake news’). Our monitoring of state-affiliated accounts from Russia and China has made this approach clear, with ‘Anti-Colonialism’-style messaging used more and more in reference to climate change and the energy transition. **Do not forget that Africa is a key target for both countries on a trade, military, resource extraction and diplomatic front, especially for Russia in the wake of their Ukraine invasion (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) for more analysis).** Be on guard!

**Throwback Thursday:** This type of messaging follows a longer Soviet tradition of [adopting](#) anti-imperialist and anti-colonial rhetoric, which was most acute during the Cold War as the USSR sought to expand its own influence while pushing back against Western powers. In the current context, where **Russia seeks to relieve diplomatic pressure and isolation from the West following its own imperial invasion in Ukraine**, the tactic appears to be [making a comeback](#). Six months after Russia launched its military campaign, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [tweeted](#) FM Sergey Lavrov's comments about the "conditions of global turbulence caused by the neo-colonialist course of [the] West."

**Why Climate?: COP27 provides a welcome backdrop to deploy this playbook, while in the process targeting decarbonisation and perpetuating fossil fuel reliance in Africa.** The use of seemingly progressive anti-colonial rhetoric was evident in a [tweet and video](#) by Russia Today (RT) on 5 November, which argued that '*the West's green agenda has come at Africa's expense*.' Such framing seeks to [mimic](#) similarly phrased arguments, like those by Angolan and Ukrainian climate activists Ina Maria Shikongo and Svitlana Romanko in their [Reuters Op-Ed](#) from 3 November, or by [Al Gore](#) at COP27 itself. The key difference is that these latter statements criticise Europe's fossil fuel demand and the resulting cost for African nations.



redfish

@redfishstream

🇷🇺 Russia state-affiliated media

...

His death brought an end to the Libyan "Jamahiriya" where the country's oil wealth was used to invest in free healthcare, education, subsidized basic services and housing for the population. These measures had lifted Libya's human development to the highest in Africa.







12:32 PM · Oct 20, 2022 · Twitter Web App

↻ African Energy Chamber Retweeted



**NJ Ayuk** ✓  
@nj\_ayuk

...

Oil and natural gas will be playing an ongoing role in Africa's energy mix for years to come. Renewables are expensive, unreliable and can't do the heavy lifting for now. We need to drill for Gas and Make Energy Poverty History while fighting Climate Change.

[#cop27egypt](#) [#COP27](#) 🌞



8:25 PM · Nov 5, 2022 · Twitter for Android

**Even prior to the summit, ‘wokewashed’ messaging was prevalent among climate deniers, delayists and those with vested interests.** For example, a [tweet](#) from Redfish, a Berlin-based news outlet owned by Ruptly (and by extension Russian state media RT) on 20 October 2022 commemorated the anniversary of former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi’s death, stating he had used “the country’s oil wealth [...] to invest in free healthcare, education, subsidized basic services and housing for the population.”

**Russia is not alone in this approach, as Chinese state media accounts have been promoting a similar line,** either [amplifying](#) Russian messaging or [using](#) the same framing for China itself. This also extends directly into the realm of climate action. A [video](#) posted by Chinese state media CGTN Africa on 27 October 2022 covered the Africa Energy Week in Cape Town, South Africa. During the event, **different participants interviewed raised criticism towards the idea that all countries should decarbonise.**

**This chimes with arguments from fossil fuel interests on the continent itself, which seek to [portray](#) their industry as indispensable for economic development.** Once again we see an overlap with broader greenwashing, as such content seeks to present new fossil fuel developments as compatible with climate action or to [present](#) natural gas as clean energy. (To note: At COP26 last year, when an \$8.5bn [Just Energy Transition Partnership \(JETP\)](#) was announced with South Africa, [we wrote in ‘COP, Look, Listen’](#) about a flurry of domestic opposition which also branded the deal a “colonial takeover by the West”).

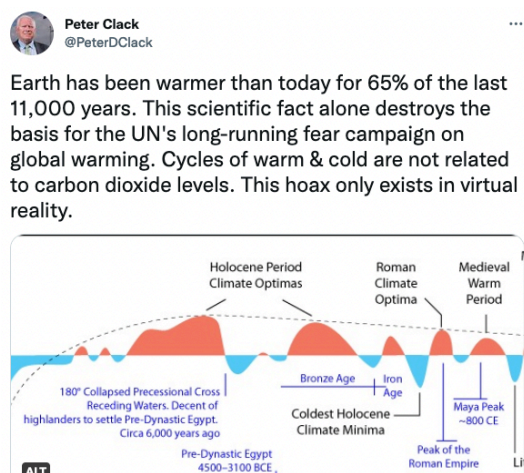
At the time, Deputy Leader of the Economic Freedom Fighters (a party holding the 3rd largest number of seats in the National Assembly) said: *“there are clean coal technologies that we can explore. We have 400 years of coal lifespan and we are just instructed by Americans to ‘stop that we are going to give you money for that.’”* **More on the African gas lobby in tomorrow’s bulletin!**

# HALL OF SHAME

Some of the worst-offending or most outrageous content we have found 'in the wild' - if you want to stop this nonsense from preventing climate action, start by signing [CAAD's Open Letter for COP27](#).

Posts below tally with the **three pillars of CAAD's proposed definition for climate mis- and disinformation**.

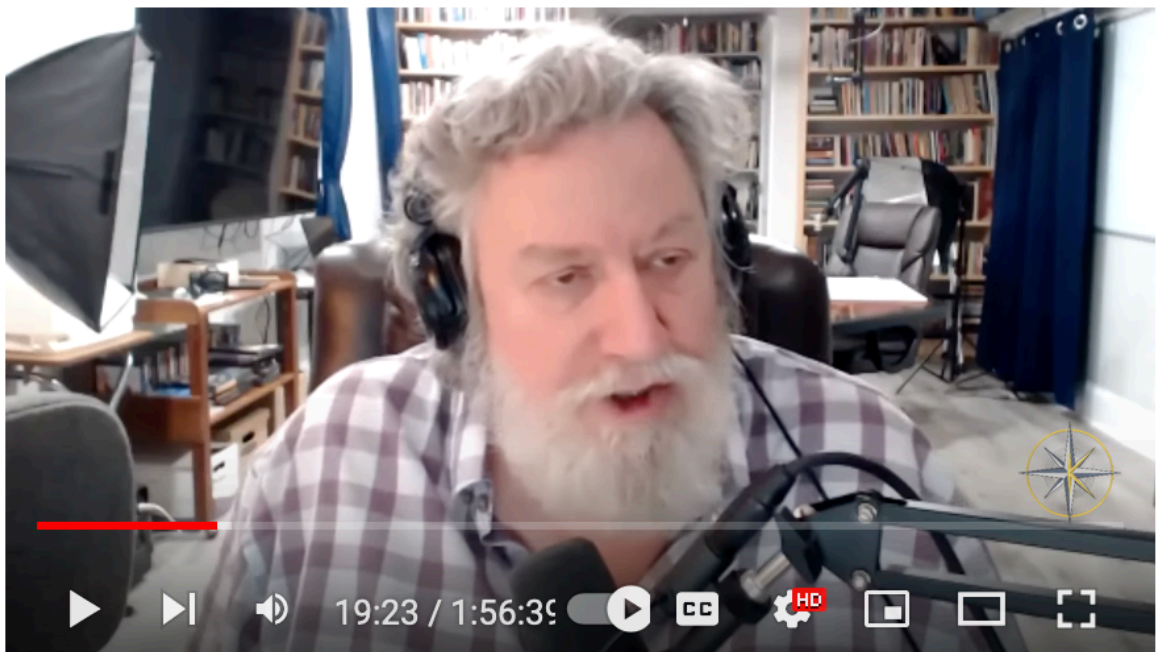
1) **Undermines the existence or impacts of climate change**, the unequivocal human influence on climate change, and the need for corresponding urgent action according to the IPCC scientific consensus and in line with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement;





*These Tweets are plain and simple climate denial - claiming that climate change is a 'hoax'.*

2) **Misrepresents scientific data**, including by omission or cherry-picking, in order to erode trust in climate science, climate-focused institutions, experts, and solutions.

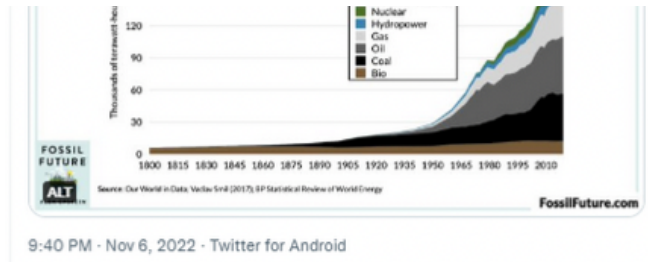


## Ep090 500 years of EXTREME Storms / Hockey Stick Hoax -Kosmographia -The Randall Carlson Podcast

YouTube video from the channel 'The Randall Carlson', which speaks in part about the 'Hockey Stick Hoax' (disputes the reliability of an authoritative graph showing cooling global temperatures over 1,000 years and rapid warming in the 20th century). [Full fact check from Reuters as to why this 'hoax' is false here](#). Video has 23K views and the channel has 132K subscribers and has been monetised by ads.







*Misrepresentation of scientific data by @PetersDClack on Twitter whereby he dismisses the effects on CO2 in global warming, and pushes for the use of fossil fuels.*

**3) Falsely publicises efforts as supportive of climate goals** that in fact contribute to climate warming or contravene the scientific consensus on mitigation or adaptation.

● In March 2022, an A380 took off from Toulouse for three hours of flight, with 100% sustainable fuel.

Produced by TotalEnergies in Normandy, this fuel is made from used cooking oil.

This is the first time that unblended SAF has been used for testing.



10:25 AM · Nov 5, 2022 · Metricool

*This Tweet touts the decarbonisation of aviation, but fails to mention the emissions caused from aviation or the industry's plans for expansion.*

Much of the intel in this bulletin was powered by [Beam](#) - an award-winning system developed by CASM Technology and the Institute for Strategic Dialogue to track and confront information threats online. The bespoke climate dashboards used by CAAD collate, enrich, and visualise data from around 3000 actors across climate denial, political, media, industry, influencer and conspiracy ecosystems online, as well as over 250 media outlets worldwide. The system also analyses millions of posts across 4Chan, Facebook, Instagram, MediaCloud, Reddit, Telegram, Twitter and YouTube to capture content broadly related to COP27, as well as discussions

around specific policy areas such as Loss and Damage. Complementary tools from Dewey Square Group, [CARDS](#), Graphika and the University of Exeter have provided invaluable analysis in tandem.

## Media Requests

If you are a media outlet or a journalist with a data request, or in need of a spokesperson, please feel free to get in contact with our team at [contact@caad.info](mailto:contact@caad.info), who will do their best to assist with any requests.



Climate Action  
Against Disinformation



ISD

Powering solutions  
to extremism  
and polarisation



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