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To The Secretary;

It is imperative that Australia's ratification of the Kyoto protocol proceeds because to reverse any of the outcomes of that summit now would show other nations that not only are we obstinate, myopic and backward thinking, but we also dither when it comes to making anything resembling a decision. Over the course of the past five years any environmental credentials this country had have been completely eroded away to the point where nobody in their right mind would take us seriously.

Government policy is to totally disregard any wishes of the U.N. or other governments unless of course they support the same destructive policies that we seem fit to endorse, such as Mexico's desire (past) to build an enormous dam, condemned by many governments but proudly supported by ours, provided of course, they see eye to eye. On the back of decisions such as this and the Federal governments call to increase emissions which they have succeeded in doing beyond their wildest dreams, does anyone even remotely believe they will change their tune? Not likely. Obviously the call for submissions into the Kyoto protocol is not supposed to be a whinge forum but I must state how disgusted I am by the obsequious nature of the governments position.

It would appear that the current environmental practices in this country are moulded via business and their accompanying lobby groups which makes it particularly difficult for the average punter to effect change. The main proposal being pushed by industry and, not suprisingly, lauded by environmental groups is the carbon credit scheme which would appear to be a rather dubious copout akin to a 'get out of jail free card' for environmental offences. Scientific research, routinely commented upon in journals such as *Nature* and *New Scientist* has failed to support the figures touted by the government regarding carbon trading. Creative accounting lets call it. Energy Australia, for example, is happy to offer green power at a price, thereby putting the onus on the consumer. They are quite happy to go on burning brown coal forever if possible and are under no responsibility to do otherwise, however, if you would rather take up the offer of getting your power from some guy's roof in Singleton, well, good luck to you, but remember you are going to pay a little more for it.

I use this point as an example of the business practices that are proportionally responsible for our appalling emission figures, yet are

spurred on by relentless consumer demand. The RTA in NSW is under no jurisdictional guidelines to provide alternative, less harmful means of transport such as compulsory cycleways accompanying all new road construction. Same applies to motorway consortiums. Local council guidelines for building construction don't demand North facing well designed housing built from sustainable means incorporating sensible thermal properties, independent solar heating and water tanks to name but a few, all of which would greatly reduce household energy demand.

Enforced carbon taxes and concessions for research and development spending by business, currently woefully inadequate, would go a long way to addressing this issue at management level. Intelligent land management practices that don't ultimately end with massive salinity problems would be another plus, but without any support from the coalition government which would much rather stick its head in the sand than confront its redneck minded constituency I can't see that happening in the near future. With a completely ineffectual Environment minister at the helm it seems far fetched to expect any change in the near future and who's going to rap them over the knuckles?, the U.N., world opinion, you?

If the current government doesn't listen to its own legal advice, how can Joe Average expect it to listen to a Joint Standing Committee? If you can answer me this I'd be delighted.

Yours, in abject horror,
Martin white