



Parliament to review Kyoto Protocol

Climate change is one of the major issues facing the international community and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is a necessary measure in the response to climate change. The Kyoto Protocol aims to address climate change by enforcing binding international greenhouse gas emission targets. The Protocol sets binding emission reduction targets against 1990 levels for Annex I parties (of which Australia is one) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for the commitment period 2008-2012.

Australia signed the Kyoto Protocol on 29 April 1998 and ratified it on 12 December 2007. The ratification of the Kyoto Protocol was a key election commitment for the Government, along with a domestic emission reduction target of 60% by 2050, and the establishment of an emissions trading scheme by 2010.

On 25 June 2008, the Kyoto Protocol was tabled in Parliament and referred to the Federal Parliament's Treaties Committee for review. Chair of the Committee, Kelvin Thomson MP said 'I believe the Treaties Committee investigation will provide an opportunity to call witnesses and hear evidence concerning:

- the position Australia should be taking to future international negotiations concerning the 'second commitment period' (beyond 2012), both for itself and other nations,
- the opportunities and the obligations arising from ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, including Australia's development of an emissions trading scheme, and
- the present and prospective impacts of global warming and climate change on Australian industry, agriculture, transport and the environment.

I look forward to this opportunity for the Treaties Committee to be at the forefront of contemporary public debate about an issue of enormous significance for Australia's future.'

The National Interest Analysis undertaken by the Department of Climate Change states that following ratification, Australia is actively engaged in the discussion on future climate change action, including in negotiations for a second commitment period for the Protocol.

The Committee is now calling for submissions from the public and interested organisations. Submissions are to be received no later than 15 August 2008. The Committee will also be conducting public hearings on the Protocol.

Further information is available on the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/jsct

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