

Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Bellingen Environment Centre  
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## SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

I believe that Australia must ratify the KYOTO protocol and meet its emission targets by 2008. Failure to do so would be demonstrating that the nation's politicians have washed their hands of any concern for environmental degradation, and would send the wrong message to developing nations such as China, which have the potential to either cause monumental harm to the atmosphere, or move in a more sustainable direction.

The concession which Howard extracted from the KYOTO summit involves Australia restricting its greenhouse emissions to 108 percent of 1990 levels by 2008...a shamefully high figure when the ongoing damage to the upper atmosphere is taken into consideration. Actually, according to the Australian Greenhouse Office, we are currently on target to achieve a level of 120-percent.... A result which Saddam Hussein would probably be proud of. Although Australia has less than one-third of one percent of the world's population, we produce nearly one and a half percent of the world's greenhouse gases, making us one of the worst offenders on a per capita basis.

A step which can be taken immediately with few wider economic ramifications would be to halt deforestation, or at least radically reduce it. Bush has been cleared in Queensland and northern New South Wales in the past year at a rate which exceeds the vandalism in the Amazon Basin, with the bull dozers working under floodlights at night in some cases. We also need to reduce our dependence on coal for electricity generation... it won't happen overnight but the sooner we begin the better. Many opportunities exist to promote alternative technologies, such as solar, wind power, hydro power without the construction of dams, wave power and methane extraction. Much can be achieved if we promote these alternative technologies, including exporting them to the rest of the world.

There is no doubt that Global Warming is occurring, despite the protestations of the apologists for the big polluters. British Meteorological Office research shows that average temperatures around the world in 1998 were the highest since they began keeping records around 1860. The CSIRO estimates that average temperatures will rise by up to 1.4 degrees by 2030, and by more than 3.5 degrees by 2070.

This is almost certain to cause widespread food shortages, the inundation of low-lying coastal settlements and the spread of mosquito borne diseases. Wars will probably be fought over access to potable water supplies

Ratifying the Kyoto Protocol should be an early step on the road to slowing and then reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It Must Happen. The Government must grasp the nettle and learn to look beyond the next election. On a local neighbourhood level, generous subsidies would be welcome to encourage sustainable technologies. Many more people would convert to solar and wind power, and solar water heating, if a significant part of the cost was met from the public purse. If the big polluters were made to pay for the damage they cause, then there could be a neutral cost to the Treasury, with the environment reaping untold benefits.

Yours sincerely,

Dennis Hannon (for B.E.C)