

The Secretary,

The House Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts

**Inquiry into climate change and environmental impacts on coastal communities**

**Submission by Dr Bill Laing**

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**THE WAR AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING:  
AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED  
REGISTER OF PLANET GUARDIANS**

## PROPOSAL

Global warming is a threat to humanity which requires mobilisation of people and resources on a scale never before seen. To succeed – and we must succeed – requires in democratic nations a mandate from the people to the Government, to commit to changes in our physical and social dynamic directly analogous to the *war commitments* made by national peoples throughout history.

The Australian Government position on global warming is constrained by a large range of interest groups, many of whom exercise huge power and influence. Global warming is a people issue even more than an economic issue, and the response required to combat global warming is not necessarily in accord with the aims of many of these power groups.

A recent media poll (The Australian, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008) showed that over 61% of Australian voters think an emissions trading scheme could slow global warming, 56% of voters are prepared to pay more for energy and transport, and more voters want petrol included in an emissions trading scheme (46%) than want it excluded (42%). The poll reveals a citizenry ready for the next step in a global war against global warming: a national mandate to our Government to place us on a war footing.

My proposal is for the Australian Government to create a *Register of Planet Guardians*. This comprises a simple and comprehensive Affirmation and Pledge (next page), which can be signed by Australian citizens of appropriate age, and commits them to personal action to combat global warming, and to mandate the Australian Government to design and execute all required measures to combat global warming. The Government commits to the Register as a barometer of the depth of commitment by the Australian people, and as a mandate for the war against global warming.

The Register of Planet Guardians would comprise a website with a simple and rapid (2 minute) registration process, a summary of the current Australian Government policies and actions on global warming, links to similar registers and information sites internationally, and the capacity for citizens to lodge Suggestions/Proposals. Citizens could register and lodge suggestions/ proposals by post. I suggest that upper secondary school age is the mark at which Australians are capable of independent thought and action on this issue; perhaps the age of 16.

The prime purpose of the Register of Planet Guardians is to embody the commitment of the Australian people to the war against global warming.

It is important that the Register be receptive to the new “global warming order”, by empowering community groups who may have something to teach us about living in harmony with the Planet, such as indigenous people, naturists and dwellers on the fringe of the mainstream community, who may not have the technological means to register via internet. Young Australians would be particularly encouraged, perhaps targeted by Government campaign, to register, as they are the recipients of the Planet we bequeath. The Register would have a human face, in the form of a bureau with whom citizens can communicate. The Register would be a non-statutory body, with limited responsibilities, and the simple function of a registration and information-sharing body. Although not its prime purpose, the Register may in time evolve into a valuable source of information and advice (technical and social) on global warming, for the Government, the Australian people, and the international community. The Register would *not* be termed the “Register of *Australian* Planet Guardians” to emphasise the borderless nature of global warming.

Similar registers of more limited scope are common but I know of no global warming register. The Register of Planet Guardians gives the Australian Government an opportunity to provide international leadership, in the form of a model of global warming action in a democratic society.

## AFFIRMATION AND PLEDGE

### I AM A PLANET GUARDIAN

I believe that

1. Planet Earth is on loan to me from the next generation, my children and my children's children.
2. The scientific evidence and arguments show that global warming is taking place due to our human activities.
3. Global warming threatens our physical environment, our community, and mankind Homo sapiens.

I pledge that, within my power,

1. I will do all I reasonably can to guard the planet from future environmental degradation.
2. I will do all I can in my own life to reduce my impact on global warming.
3. I will vote and lobby for Government actions and legislation which reduce global warming.
4. I will stand against Government actions and legislation which will increase global warming.
5. I ask my Government and my political representatives to design and implement everything possible to reduce global warming. I recognise that some of these measures will be difficult and may reduce my material lifestyle, but I am committed to the more important task of saving Planet Earth for the next generations. We have begun a war against global warming which requires measures and a commitment greater than any previous war. In losing some material things I am reclaiming and strengthening my connection with Planet Earth and my spiritual heritage.

Signed

(Name)

.....

(Possibly Gender, Age and Address)