

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Additional Estimates Hearing – February 2010
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Topic: Australia's Greenhouse Gas Emissions

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Question: (Senator Birmingham)

- a) By what percentage has the Government cut Australia's greenhouse gas emissions since 20 November 2007?
- b) Does the Department consider that it is on track to meet the Government's commitment to cut emissions by 60 per cent on 2000 levels by 2050?

Answer:

- a) Historical emissions are measured by the National Greenhouse Gas Inventory at quarterly and annual intervals. Quarterly estimates of Australia's emissions have been used as a proxy for these calculations because daily and monthly data are not available. The most recent Inventory data available is for the September quarter 2009. Fine grained data is not yet obtainable to allow an estimate or projection to be made up to March 2010.

In the December quarter 2007, Australia's emissions were 137 Mt CO₂-e¹. Emissions declined by 4 Mt CO₂-e to be 133 Mt CO₂-e in the September quarter 2009, a fall in Australia's emissions of 2.9 per cent on a seasonally adjusted basis. This is a trend figure that provides the best indicator of underlying movements in emissions. The fall is consistent with projections of emissions released in Australia's Fifth National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- b) Departmental and other analysis indicates that the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) will, with a high level of confidence, reduce emissions by at least 60 per cent by 2050.

Without the CPRS, Australia's emissions are projected to increase, and in 2020 are projected to be 669 Mt CO₂-e on a Kyoto accounting basis, equivalent to 121 per cent of 2000 levels.

¹ Department of Climate Change 2010, *Quarterly Update of Australia's National Greenhouse Gas Inventory September quarter 2009*, January 2010, Canberra.

Practical experience suggests a broad based carbon price such as that provided by the CPRS is necessary to achieve cuts in emissions of the magnitude required to put Australia on track to achieve a 60 per cent reduction in emissions by 2050.