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**From:** s.jeeves@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au [SMTP:s.jeeves@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 24, 2000 7:09 PM  
**To:** jsct@aph.gov.au  
**Subject:** Kyoto Protocol response

3/6 Baldwin Road  
BLACKBURN VIC 3130  
22 August 2000

The Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing in response to your request for comment on the implications of the Kyoto Protocol for Australia. I am deeply concerned that Australia may not sign. The implications for proceeding are fraught with difficulty but the implications for not may be catastrophic.

It is necessary to confront the Australian economy's heavy reliance on greenhouse-gas fuels and start the process of change. It is not necessary that these changes will adversely affect the economy. They may challenge individual businesses, which is of course politically sensitive, but Australia as a whole can only benefit. In the long term current procedures are not sustainable socially, environmentally or even economically.

Australian's enjoy a high standard of living. As a developed country we have benefited from the advances since the industrial revolution. But all of this has been powered by fossil fuels, fuels that have taken millions of years to form. We live in a fortunate country at a fortunate time and can either use our present opportunity whilst resources and sinks are still available, to develop an abundant sustainable future or to squander our fossil fuels, polluting the earth to the point of impoverishment and potential destruction.

I am not speaking of tweaking at the edges of the problem with incremental changes (promoted to appear adequate), nor of overturning the system, but a serious commitment to change. It is imperative we phase out present unsustainable practices and push for the development of sustainable energy alternatives within Australia. We must foster a lifestyle in alignment with the limits of the earth.

Many climate scientists believe the emission goals agreed to in Kyoto represent minimal and inadequate reductions. Yet even this first step is confronting and difficult to achieve. Difficult as they are, the longer the nation delays making the inevitable changes, the smaller the window of opportunity becomes.

Regarding the plethora of conflicting views surrounding climate change is it not obvious that conflicting interests drive much of the debate? There is however general consensus that anthropogenic driven climate change is occurring. Most debate now surrounds the gravity of the situation.

In regard to grandfathering, trading credits, carbon credits and other economic instruments. It is essential these instruments be used to best direct present profits from fossil fuels to the funding of research and development of renewable sources. We haven't time to squander these resources. They are a gift from the earth available only for a small time. We have enjoyed the opportunity they have given for development in our culture. But once we have polluted the atmosphere to such an extent that we are forced to cease their use, the support they could offer to a transitional process is gone. Wasted in procrastination over possible slowing of the

economy, possible loss of ones job, possible loss of the election. With insight, ingenuity, careful consideration and decisive action these need not be lost anyway.

Grandfathering I do not agree with. It allocates the most to those already having contributed the greatest pollution and having profited from the prior freedom. Permits represent real profit to a company as they substitute directly for potential abatement costs whether tradable or not. For this reason it is essential they be paid for at their true value. I realise the difficulty of determining this price but not compared to the cost of the too-hard basket. It has been a free ride until now but can no longer be. Funds raised must be directly allocated to the research and development of renewable energy, as per previous paragraph.

Alternatively use economic incentives to encourage firms to conduct the research and development. Good examples are tradable permits and carbon taxes. Best is a combination of private and government R & D.

"In Australia's national interest" tends to suggest we should make this decision based entirely on internal consequences. Is it not time we start to think as global citizens? For such a global issue surely this is the crucial component that can unify all nations in genuine desire to find solutions. Self-interest will destroy the earth. It is time for us to move forward with a greater compassion for the earth and all its inhabitants. Maybe I am biased being a mother with two young children, but surely most of us care beyond our own pockets.

You who I write to are in a position to make some difference. Do you wish to be looked back on with respect for your foresight and compassion, or with regret for you myopic self-interest? Or would you prefer to be not looked back on at all, for the longer these hard decisions are postponed the more likely that there will not be a future. What a shame for such a beautiful planet.

I hope you will truly consider my concern.

Yours Sincerely

Sonia Blackburn