

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

The proposed Emissions Trading Scheme and the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme are severely flawed. People do not hear the 15% in the 5-15% announced by Minister Wong. They hear 5%. They will be aiming disastrously low.

REDUCE OUR DIRTY HABITS

I believe that an Emissions Trading Scheme will allow big organisations to buy their way out of reducing carbon emissions. If we truly want to reduce carbon in our atmosphere, we must all, every one of us in the world, reduce our carbon footprint. Large corporations and mining giants cannot be allowed to continue their dirty habits, as they inevitably will under a trading scheme.

It is not an analogy, but the words "Bottom of the Harbour Scheme" come into my mind every time the trading scheme is mentioned. Large corporations have enormous capacity to resist actions which they see as pushing up their costs. My view is that they have had twenty years to put their R&D into finding new ways to operate and to train personnel. If they didn't, they should not be expecting the public purse to bail them out.

Change can be gradual or sudden, but we have wasted the available time for slow change by keeping our heads in the sand. When all the sea ice has melted and the oceans have become acidic, it is too late.

A CARBON TAX

A carbon tax on the carbon emitted is the only way to seriously change our dirty habits quickly. Time for change is fast running out. The Carbon Tax needs to be applied ASAP. It is possible to start with a very low tax, with predictable increases every financial year, and also for higher levels of emissions. The government already has a similar model operating for income taxation. Once industry realises the government is serious about change, it will set about making change.

OUR PLANET IS AT STAKE

This is not just an Australian problem. It is a worldwide problem, with our planet at stake. It is no solution to encourage corporations to buy green credits, but to continue producing carbon. It is even worse if we pay these corporations to continue their dirty habits at the expense of cleaner industries and ordinary householders.

CARBON SEQUESTRATION

The talk of carbon sequestration is nonsense. The idea of storing carbon in the ground is totally unrealistic in terms of the amount of carbon requiring storage and the space that would require. There is no credible science for sequestration. The oceans are already showing signs of severe stress from excessive carbon absorption. Large areas of the Antarctic are already sufficiently acidic to alter the breeding of krill, the mainstay of our food chain.

EXCESS CARBON IN THE OCEANS CAUSES CLIMATE CHANGE

More carbon in the oceans and more warming alters the currents, which determine our weather patterns. These currents are huge underwater rivers. Their courses are being altered. Were the Amazon or the Nile or any other very large land based river to alter to this extent, we would take notice. (We have fiddled while the Murray Darling is in its death throes, and so threatened food production in SE Australia.)

COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES

An emissions trading scheme is just one of the tools the federal government can use to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. But there are other tools available, such as a mandatory renewable energy target, a renewable energy feed-in tariff, energy efficiency standards for homes and commercial buildings, fuel efficiency standards and investment in trains, buses and trams.

Ending the logging of Australia's native forests would reduce Australia's emissions by substantially more than 5%. All these policies should be pursued regardless of the CPRS.

IDEAL TIME FOR CHANGE

This period of financial upheaval is an ideal time to make the science based changes. Incentives for new development and restructuring are necessary. The world is ready to listen to solutions and put them into effect. To fail to set solid targets now is to allow industry to budget for a future which is unrealistic. To protect polluters is ridiculous, and doesn't allow for sufficient support to those industries making change.

PEOPLE WANT CHANGE NOW

The people of Australia voted in the Rudd Government because they were ready for change, not only in the workplace and Middle Eastern politics, but also with regard to climate change. Kevin Rudd is allowing himself to be swayed by the heavy influence of the coal industry. We will all choke in its dust if we do not act now.

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