

Dear Committee Members

I am profoundly disappointed by the Government's proposed Emissions Trading Scheme. In its present form it is worse than useless in addressing the crisis surrounding climate change.

- This scheme protects polluters for years into the future by handing out free pollution permits, perverting the intention of emissions trading by protecting the profits of Australia's worst climate offenders instead of encouraging clean competition.
- Protecting polluters also unfairly transfers the cost of meeting the target to industries with less lobbying power and to the community at large.
- By setting such a weak target, and ensuring that Australia's emissions cannot fall below that level, the scheme will also mean that the efforts of everyone from householders to State Governments to reduce emissions will be helpful only in reducing the price pressure on polluters.
- Setting a weak target is likely to see bad investment decisions made, where public and private money is spent on "lower pollution" infrastructure which will need to be swiftly moth-balled and replaced with zero emissions infrastructure when serious science-based targets are adopted.
- People often think that any action to reduce emissions, even by as little as 5%, will reduce the risk of climate change. In fact we know that there are tipping points in Earth's systems which, if breached, will send our climate spinning out of control with catastrophic consequences for all of us.
- If we are to have a reasonable chance of preventing runaway climate change, we must make every effort to avoid these tipping points. That means high-polluting countries like Australia moving towards carbon neutrality as fast as possible, with cuts of at least 40% by 2020.
- Emissions trading is important. By setting a target and sending a price signal, it should provide a strong framework for all our other policies, such as renewable energy feed-in tariffs and home energy efficiency retrofits, to grow on and flourish. However, a badly designed emissions trading scheme can become a box rather than a framework, constricting the growth of the zero emissions economy and actively preventing the transformation we need. Better to let the other policies do their job unassisted than hold them back with a bad emissions trading scheme.
- Locking in a weak target, refusing to accept cuts of more than 15% by 2020, could undermine global efforts to reach agreement on ambitious targets at the Copenhagen climate conference at the end of the year .

I would urge you to take the preceding points into consideration and recommend that the Australian Government rework the proposed Emission Trading Scheme so that Australia takes a decisive step towards helping the world deal with the problem of climate change in a constructive manner.

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