

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

It is obvious that the government had been hoodwinked by the coal industry, ill informed union leaders and other pressure groups, into accepting a totally ineffective course – ultimately one that is very much against the national interest. Sadly, the indefensible and illogicality had been effectively advocated by the Minister FOR Climate Change – like a ‘good barrister’ making the case for an extreme crime.

The whole trading scheme is too complex and would lock in very high emission levels. It must be understood that the \$1.5 billion given to the "clean coal" - read "mine more coal" lobby, is wasted and should have been applied to subsidize all alternate (ultimately all solar + hot rocks) technologies - research and installations. Additional money for this should be raised from a carbon tax paid for by end-users; that would create the incentive to install more energy efficient equipment, better insulation, including externally applied wall insulation and retro fitted double-glazing. It ought to be financially attractive to install a maximum of solar panels, water heating, wind turbines etc - regardless of income and if its business or private, rich or poor. These measures properly organized would in time reduce the requirement for some existing coal-fired stations. It would also increase economic activity and thus help and not hinder economic recovery.

In shorthand, this would be my plan for Australian action. Overseas countries will do their own thing, but the course the government pursued is leading the race to the bottom of global irresponsibility. We could have held our heads high and expected others to do similarly in international forums. Through the UN we should establish which countries are acting irresponsibly and an agreement should be sought for all coal exporting countries to apply a ‘rogues tax’ to coal exports, at levels set by a UN body. This funding could then be used to further build up our fossil fuel dependence.

I've liked several policies introduced by the Rudd Government, however the climate change measures are scarcely better than the 12-years of nay-saying by the Howard Government - even then, the climate issues had become bleeding obvious. Consider that half of the damage by the recent Queensland floods and the horrific bush fires should be counted as climate change' collateral damage. Worse is to come: it appears that the Barrier Reef will be much diminished and ocean rises of 1m within less than 50 years are very likely. It seems that the Rudd government was too eager to please the coal miners. Nothing illegitimate about mining coal and these activities have helped us all in the past - but now we know better and we must seek the means to eliminate coal mining within 30 years.

The Rudd Government sided with mining magnates - none of whom seems to have children or grandchildren. To merely proceed with high pollution level is to deny that humanity has a future and is a reiteration that profits are the only thing that matters. It's a case of extreme myopia.

Jim Darley