

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

I would like to voice my very strong criticism of the CPRS legislation. It is badly flawed and will lead to catastrophic climate change. It will also sabotage any hope of reaching effective international agreements. This legislation makes a mockery of Kevin Rudd's key election promise to take real action to tackle Climate Change.

A well designed emissions trading scheme would greatly reduce Australia's emissions with a minimal effect on the economy.

Compare this small cost with the incalculable cost of failing to tackle climate change by adopting the current CPRS. This point was made strikingly in both the Stern and Garnaut Reports.

The Current scheme is completely inadequate for a number of reasons.

Firstly the target of 5% by 2020 is nowhere near the 40% cuts that scientists warn are necessary. If we do not make the necessary cuts then we will exceed a tipping point beyond which the Earth's systems will become so damaged that they will themselves emit vast amounts of carbon creating an unstoppable feedback loop. Catastrophic Climate change will be an irreversible certainty.

The CPRS pays the biggest polluters to continue polluting and puts a grossly unfair burden on the community and smaller industries. This also hinders the development of clean industries and the many jobs that would be created in these industries.

Australia must take account of the fact that the atmosphere belongs to all of Earth's inhabitants and all have an equal duty of care. As such the only fair scheme is one which is based on emissions per capita. As one of the very worst emitters per capita in the world, Australia must take a leading role and make deep, decisive cuts in our emissions beyond those we could expect from countries with lower emissions per capita. To expect other countries to make great sacrifices while we take a "free ride" is the height of selfishness and arrogance. We would expect more from children in a playground. It is clear that if rich nations like Australia are not prepared to do their share then other nations will feel no obligation to make any sacrifices. Global agreements will be sabotaged.

Under this scheme any voluntary emissions reductions by the community will have no net benefit and only serve to reward the big polluters. Such a scheme provides no incentive for community action and is cynical in its disregard for the Australian community and its desire to act on climate change.

In addition to a well designed scheme Australia needs many other measures in place. We need significant mandatory renewable energy targets, decent renewable energy feed in tariffs, stronger energy efficiency standards in domestic and commercial housing as well as appliances. Massive investment in sustainable transport such as public transport and bicycle paths as well as much greater standards of sustainable urban design and planning.

Climate Change Minister Penny Wong has tellingly described the scheme as 'better than nothing' which surely is an admission that in reality it is not good enough. The decision we make today will affect our children, our grand children and all future generations. If we choose to do very little then we will condemn them to a catastrophic future in which they will suffer and struggle to survive.

We can decide however to take bold and moral action and do everything in our power to avert climate catastrophe. May future generation look back with thanks, in the knowledge that we did everything possible to pass on to them a healthy life sustaining planet.

Yours Sincerely

Adam Watson