

Manningham City Council

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Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy
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Submission to the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Manningham City Council is pleased to be able to make the following submission to the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy.

On 31 March 2009, Council endorsed the following statement and motion.

The Federal Government's Emissions trading scheme will effectively undermine all efforts of Manningham Council and ratepayers to reduce their own carbon footprint.

Under the scheme as proposed, carbon savings made by councils, businesses and individuals will not reduce Australia's overall carbon emissions but only make it easier for major carbon-emitters like power companies (including those under foreign ownership) to meet their 'targets' without having to reduce their own carbon emissions.

Further, the relevant federal government minister has confirmed that the scheme will set not limit on 'offshoring' of carbon liabilities – that is, it will allow Australian companies, and foreign-owned companies trading in Australia to meet their carbon limit not by any change to their industrial practices but by purchasing cheap credits issued by poorer countries: a variant of the offshoring of jobs and suppliers that has been the hallmark of Australia's industrial decline under 'globalisation'. Under the proposed ETS, initial carbon credits will be issued free to major carbon polluters while those communities, councils, businesses and individuals who wish to respond to the government's rhetoric about 'encouraging' reduction of carbon emissions must do so very substantially from their own resources

Motion:

Council supports the efforts of Manningham council officers to reduce carbon emissions in Manningham as demonstrated in the innovative Carbon Ration Action Groups (CRAG) program to deliver solar-electric power generation to some 200 Manningham ratepayers who have contributed to the scheme.

Council notes the potential of the continuation of this scheme, and other initiatives as outlined in Climate 2020 Action Plan, to make a significant local contribution to Australia's response to the urgent matter of Global Warming.

Council is now seriously concerned that the impact of the Federal Government's Emissions Trading Scheme as currently drafted will actually negate all such efforts and expenditure by Council and ratepayers through including consequent carbon reductions in an overall 'carbon cap' for the benefit of major carbon polluters, with no additional benefit in terms of total national carbon emissions.

Council calls on the Federal Government to ensure that legislation for carbon reduction does not negate the efforts of councils and local communities but instead maximises and encourages their contribution to the national effort.

Council directs the appropriate officers to prepare a submission to the current Senate Enquiry in support of Council's view and to notify and seek input from relevant bodies including MAV, VLGA, NAGA and other municipal councils.

(end of motion)

In general, core concerns of the proposed scheme for local government are:-

1. The Rudd Government's targets to cut greenhouse pollution by just 5-15% by 2020 are far too weak. If the rest of the world was to adopt similar targets Australia would face a future of more frequent and extreme weather events. If we fail to tackle the climate crisis now, we will suffer more deadly bushfires[1], costly floods and extreme weather events. The proposed 5-15% cut in emissions is inadequate and not based on science based evidence
2. Everyone needs to do their fair share on climate change, including big polluting companies. The proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme will see Australian taxpayers funding the activities of companies that are fuelling climate change to the tune of \$9 billion in the next three years. That's over \$1000 for every household in Australia. The scheme must be fixed by the Senate this year to stop big business from loading the problem of climate change onto everyone else.
3. Strong action on climate change will create millions of new Green collar jobs, and drive investment into renewable energy, not destroy jobs as the big polluters claim.[2]
4. The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is badly designed and negates individual and community efforts at reducing emissions;
5. The proposed scheme negates the leadership shown by local government, and needs to endorse their work and set higher emission targets sooner in line with community expectations;
6. Any emissions trading scheme should cover the expense of upgrades to Municipal waste facilities to meet new emission targets.

Local Government has been at the forefront of community action to reduce carbon emissions over several years. The proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is structured in such a way so that many voluntary actions by Councils and the community such as green power and solar panels will simply help Australia to meet its

international commitments through the Kyoto Protocol, but will not bring about an additional reduction in emissions. Voluntary actions will simply free up permits for use by others.

In addition to the lack of recognition of voluntary emission reduction activities in the current proposed scheme, there will be significant cost implications for local government and its communities because some landfills will be included in the scheme. These costs will need to be passed onto ratepayers, as currently there are no programs to directly compensate local government for the increased costs that will arise from the proposed scheme.

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Council calls on the Federal Government to ensure that legislation for carbon reduction does not negate the efforts of councils and local communities but instead maximises and encourages their contribution to the national effort.

We look forward to reading the outcomes of the Climate Policy Inquiry in the Senate Select committee's report due by the 14 May 2009.

Yours faithfully,



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[1] A joint CSIRO/Bureau of Meteorology study of the impact of climate change in bushfires found parts of Victoria faced up to 65% more days of extreme fire risk by 2020 and 230% more by mid-century.

[2] According to CSIRO economic modelling, 2.7 million new jobs will be created in Australia by 2025 if we set course to become carbon neutral by 2050.