

Douglas McIver

The Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy
Parliament House
Federal Commonwealth of Australia
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam,

The Australian Federal Commonwealth's environmental credibility is under question, as is the courage of the governments to be strong regulators for the sake of the domestic and global environment and future mankind. Scientific findings, and anecdotal evidence, are revealing that climate change is happening much more quickly than previously thought. The Arctic summer sea ice is now expected to melt entirely within the next five years.

The Australian Government's 5-15% emissions target is not adequate to avoid dangerous climate change. This weak target is undermining efforts to form a crucial international agreement and must be improved before December's important UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen. 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 cyclones.

The Australian Government's proposed target of 15%, in the context of an international agreement, is not consistent with the Prime Minister's statement that the Government "accepts the findings of the Garnaut Climate Change Review that it is in Australia's interests to pursue a fair and effective global agreement delivering deep cuts in emissions, so as to stabilise concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at around 450 parts per million or lower by mid century" (PM Kevin Rudd, National Press Club, 15/12/2008).

The Garnaut Review and Treasury modelling equate Australia's full and fair share of a global outcome of 450ppm or lower as an Australian target to reduce emissions by 25 per cent or more by 2020 on 2000 levels.

The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) currently proposed by the Australian Federal Government over-compensates polluters at the expense of the community and environment. 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. This is not wise policy.

Because the CPRS imposes a floor beyond which emissions cannot fall, the action individuals and small businesses take to reduce energy will not reduce Australia's total greenhouse emissions further than the Government's weak target of 5-15%. In fact their action will only make room for industry to increase their emissions under that cap. This raises many ethical and social responsibility issues. Everyone needs to do their fair share on climate change, including big polluting companies. At the very least, the scheme must be fixed by the Senate this year to stop big business from loading the problem of climate change onto everyone else.

Australia should commit to reducing Australia's greenhouse pollution 50% by 2020 (on 1990 levels). A well-designed scheme to achieve this target will ensure Australia does its fair share to avoid dangerous climate change. It will also help refocus our economy to take advantage of new growth industries in renewable energy. The Federal Commonwealth of Australia should be at the 'leading edge' of creating a "green economy" with new jobs and skills being integral to such an economy. Strong action on climate change could create millions of new "green jobs", and drive investment into renewable energy, not destroy jobs as the big polluters claim. (2)

A holistic approach to reducing Co2 emissions, and achieving "win - win " outcomes for the Australian and global environment, is vitally important. Such an approach would include the requirement that Federal, State & Territory Governments be strong regulators in their environmental impacts statement processes - whether for new or existing projects and infrastructure - to achieve optimal environmental outcomes. Australian Governments will require courage in using their regulatory powers to ensure the domestic and global environment is enhanced and protected.

The Federal, State & Territory Governments should be encouraged to do "whatever it takes" to ensure strong environmental regulation and be good examples to ensure Australia plays its part in helping the survival of the planet. Otherwise, Australia's environmental credibility is in question. Actions and example speak louder than words.

[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.

Kind regards,

Doug McIver

ALP Life Member

Member: ACF, Greenpeace Australia, Friends of the Earth

Member: Uniting Church in Australia (Mia Mia-Kyneton)

Australian Centenary Medal (community mental health)

Paul Harris Fellow (Rotary Foundation, Rotary International)

Recipient of other community awards

7th April 2009