

SUBMISSION to the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy

Signatory:

Wendy Miller

Submission is to the inquiries referenced below:

On 11 March 2009, the Senate established a Select Committee on Climate Policy to inquire into policies relating to climate change, with particular reference to:

- a. *the choice of emissions trading as the central policy to reduce Australia's carbon pollution, taking into account the need to:*
 - i. *reduce carbon pollution at the lowest economic cost,*
 - ii. *put in place long-term incentives for investment in clean energy and low-emission technology, and*
 - iii. *contribute to a global solution to climate change;*
- b. *the relative contributions to overall emission reduction targets from complementary measures such as renewable energy feed-in laws, energy efficiency and the protection or development of terrestrial carbon stores such as native forests and soils;*
- c. *whether the Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is environmentally effective, in particular with regard to the adequacy or otherwise of the Government's 2020 and 2050 greenhouse gas emission reduction targets in avoiding dangerous climate change;*
- d. *an appropriate mechanism for determining what a fair and equitable contribution to the global emission reduction effort would be;*
- e. *whether the design of the proposed scheme will send appropriate investment signals for green collar jobs, research and development, and the manufacturing and service industries, taking into account permit allocation, leakage, compensation mechanisms and additionality issues; and*
- f. *any related matter.*

Submission:

Climate change is an issue of intergenerational equity and justice.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Rudd Labor Government for taking great steps forward on tackling climate change.

I want to see us making the CPRS work and pledging our commitment today for the survival of the generations of tomorrow.

Key Point 1. Strong early action is required for the best shot at beating climate change. Without strong action industry transformation will be weak and we will face stiff global competition as other nations power ahead with new industry, climate change skills development, green jobs and lucrative innovations.

Leadership is **critical** for the preservation of our future environmental, social and economic prosperity, and for the enablement of Australia to move swiftly into a new modus operandi within the global economic landscape.

In industry, we need a clear, transformational mandate that gives us the power to harness exciting new opportunities that will position us for success amongst our regional and global trading partners.

Capital must be unlocked, major project pipelines allowed to flow and entrepreneurship given the commercial sustenance it needs to deliver superb economic outcomes.

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.[\[2\]](#)

Key Point 2. The Government's 5-15% target is not at all adequate to avoid dangerous climate change. We should instead commit to reducing Australia's greenhouse pollution 50% by 2020 (on 1990 levels).

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 cyclones.

Key Point 3. In addition, setting a floor on reductions limits the possibilities for change and sends the direct opposite signals to the market that the CPRS is fundamentally meant to send.

The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) currently proposed by the Government is a badly designed scheme that will do more harm than good. The scheme design over-compensates polluters at the expense of the community and environment.

Setting a strong target with a well-designed scheme will ensure Australia does its fair share to avoid dangerous climate change, and it will also help refocus our economy to take advantage of new growth industries in renewable energy.

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.

Key Point 4. Which assets are getting the right attention? We must prioritise the Great Barrier Reef and other national assets over big polluters.

It is also unreasonable to prioritise short to mid-term vested interests (who have had many years to recalibrate business models and maintain competitiveness through the laws of market-centric strategy and foresight) over Australian assets that are unable to be adequately valued ... because they are priceless.

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.

A steady stream of new scientific findings is showing 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 Great Barrier Reef, Kakadu National Park, the countless niche ecosystems that aren't known by name. These assets provide the conditions for the food bowl on which our nation depends, they provide the richness of life experience and fulfillment that no annual profit can come even slightly close to providing.

It is unacceptable to make decisions that it is scientifically understood will destroy the very fabric of our nation.

Key Point 5. As the *developed* nation standing to experience the worst impacts of climate change, Australia needs to recast its perception of national protectionism and realise that we need massive global climate change action to protect our nation. Australia needs to step up to the plate in international negotiations and should be exerting major pressure on getting a strong deal through.

Australia's weak target is undermining efforts to form crucial international agreement and must be improved before December's important UN Conference on Climate Change in Copenhagen.

It is reasonable to consider the relationship between national action and international action.

In this vein our priority should be on partnering with nations, providing resources and skills wherever there is need, demonstrating leadership to the global and regional communities, demonstrating first-class technology transfer at large scale and great pace.

Strong targets should be the base step in international leadership. In light of Australia's interests, we should be contributing in a determined, highly proactive and in an "above and beyond capacity" to the UNFCCC negotiations.

It is not reasonable – as a relatively affluent and fully developed nation – to play at the edges of strong action and not step up to the plate as a bold and visionary nation.

Sincerely yours,

Wendy Miller

[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.