

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

I am dismayed that the proposed legislative model for an Emissions Trading Scheme still calls for cuts of only 5-15% by 2020. After consideration of scientific and economic arguments, both Treasury and government advisor Professor Garnaut recommended Australia's proper, affordable share and contribution towards global carbon pollution reduction should be at least 25%. This finding inter alia was accepted by PM Rudd in his speech of 15Dec08.

But many of us already thought Garnaut had 'gone soft'. We were expecting closer to 50% target. Is it a matter of our survival or merely a matter of economics?

Setting a low target of 5% sets a poor example to business and industry. If they don't achieve, then they haven't lost much. It may also be reflected in conservative planning that will undermine enhancement of future efforts to reduce emissions.

Perception of Climate Change

Climate change is a serious issue, and affects my life now. In the past, I may have blamed more specific causes, eg land clearing, but impoverishment of our natural world and resources has long been apparent to me. Extremes of weather may be short term and property devastation is compensable, but we need to consider the less perceptible longer term changes to climate and its impact on food and water resources, and our quality of life. Australians have been notably short sighted in our past choices of where to live on our narrow coastal plains, building on scarce arable land, putting ground water down drains or into backyard pools. We continue to be short sighted in our exploitive old world methods of agriculture. So please, let us not be short sighted in addressing climate change as a nation.

Now that we [our media] are prepared to accept the truth of global warming, new evidence of the gravity of our situation appears almost daily, for example break-up of the Wilkins ice shelf in the Antarctic. Well researched scientific documents provide data and suggest actions that could ameliorate climate change. The White Paper released by the Australian Conservation Foundation in March 2009, outlines a range of achievable, affordable measures also. Please have regard to scientific as well as the economic arguments in recommendations on the ETS.

Personal and Voluntary Measures

The proposed model for a Emissions Trading Scheme [ETS], appears to me like a parallel universe modelled on our current decrepit and wanting economic system, in which big business will profit while consumers are there only to consume, otherwise we are faceless and legless. This model does not acknowledge or reward individuals' ongoing endeavours. Future costs of the ETS will likely be underwritten by ever diminishing taxes of PAYG Australians to the detriment of their social wage. I thank the government for its coming stimulus payment: but it may not be enough compensation for all that awaits me.

Buildings

The proposed ETS does not take into account the current built environment. Rebates offered by various levels of government for 'climate smart' initiatives, transfer readily to the accounts of companies and contractors engaged in supplying products.

I suggest this is an inefficient method of 'greening' Australian homes on a number of levels:

1. Why is it that all three companies I contacted to provide home ceiling insulation, can all manage to quote very close to the rebated value for both similar and diverse

products? Could there be manipulation of pricing to suit the guaranteed income from the rebate? As a consumer this makes little difference to me, but as a taxpayer, it does matter.

2. Insulation on my ceiling or a plant to treat and recycle my grey water does not ensure that my household will not consume the electricity or potable water these measures save. It will make saving resources easier and may improve my quality of life, but that desirable consequence is still a matter for thoughtful and disciplined action. There is no real incentive for me to achieve savings on a continuing basis. Of course government cannot intervene in the running of every household, and flexible targets are necessary, but it should be possible to design a technologically sound scheme that rewards householder efforts as well as 'green industry'. A gross 'feed-in' tariff for excess to needs solar generated power would be an example of a mechanism of this sort.

3a. There is little incentive for right minded investors in the home rental property market to address deficiencies in their rental properties. In this regard, as in all aspects of building improvement, not only do PAYG tax and capital gains tax mechanisms strongly dissuade rental property owners from expenditure, so do rebate guidelines.

3b. There is no incentive or mechanism for commercial property owners to address existing building stock either. Please digress to an "Efficient Building Scheme" as postulated by Lend Lease, or as attached to my submission:
<http://www.lendlease.com/sustainability/index.html#/direction-detail-continued>.

Transport

The proposed ETS does not address consumption and pollution due to our motor vehicles. It doesn't take much of my decaying arithmetic ability to calculate that spending twice as many dollars to buy a hybrid car that gains not a lot in fuel consumption over my late model light utility is cutting off my nose to spite my face. The carbon footprint of production of the hybrid is probably higher.

How about encouraging decentralisation of communities, instead of the centrist models that all state governments have allowed to develop? That may reduce the need for more roadbuilding as well. How about incentives to governments Australia wide for new train services? A goods train is said to be 300 times more efficient than a truck on the same haul.

I rode a motorcycle for 30 years because initially it was all I could afford, and for a long time, all I needed. Age and circumstance has obliged me to change. Discriminatory roadbuilding practices accelerated this – I could find no way to ride to my last job that allowed me a continuous 'escape route' for dangerous situations. Yet how much fuel and resources did I save over the course of my working life, and what consideration will I ever get for my conservatism?

How about greater incentives for manufacturers to develop, cheaper, less consumptive forms of transport? Then don't disadvantage their drivers by forcing us to mingle with truck traffic and 4 WD's.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Naomi J Beacham