



R.M.Dow

8-4-09

The Secretary
Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA
ACT 2600

Dear Senators,

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to write a brief submission to the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy.

I am a teacher who has had a career and personal interest in environmental/sustainability education. Working in schools over the past 30 years with staff, students and local communities I have witnessed some positive changes in peoples awareness and personal habits towards their local environment and an improvement in the use, reuse and recycling of resources.

The most effective changes I have seen have been at schools where there are committed and inspirational members of the community who inform, educate and lead through the development of consultative and often student lead environmental action. There are clear policies, well understood by the community and easy to follow procedures and systems that are acted upon by the school community.

Systems are based on a simple cause and effect model. Our bins fill with recyclable materials, so easy to follow procedure sheets are produced and The Student Voice representatives are given the responsibility to inform their peers. Water consumption needs to be reduced, so grants are applied for and a variety of water saving measures are implemented. A Butterfly Garden and Frog pond are suggested and once again systems are put into place, letters written, support sort and leadership is provided so these projects manifest.

So where am I going with this I hear you ask? It is simple really. We NEED Leadership on such a critical issue, such as climate change, especially as an Adelaide resident from our esteemed Government. The evidence is dire and grows each day, yet the there appears to be a paralysis of action within the Government and Opposition.

We need a SIMPLE easy to follow approach for businesses and Australians to follow. All these exceptions are confusing, lead to dispute and end up rewarding some of our most carbon producing companies.

I'm fully aware of the difficulties being created by the current economic crisis, but this will be nothing compared to the effects of global warming if we ignore the opportunity to act strongly now. How poorly will future

generations look at our selfish shortsighted approach to such a globally threatening problem? Surely if you have to exempt companies, be consistent!! Imagine the classroom chaos you would create by playing ‘favourites’ in the manner being suggested.

Also if because of the economic ramifications of taxes applied to high producing carbon users is just not viable at the moment, give them a clear timeline, 5 years max to clean up their act or pay for it. This leads to my next point, once again simple, but easy to follow and implement.

Surely a carbon/water tax, which can be applied in a similar manner to The GST, would be wise. This way carbon and water users pay!! For far too long, they have had a free ride and surely our free market system needs to factor in the environmental costs of production and use. If this means producers have to add costs to their retailers and consumers surely this is just and fair.

This may also lead to renewable energy options becoming far more viable and alternative research would suddenly receive much needed funding.

I follow this debate closely on TV, radio, the Internet and within my local community and believe we really need to be thoughtful about what we do at this critical time in our history. I have confidence in our political processes and the commitment of our senators to making an informed decision on this matter. The future of our nation and the world does in-fact rest with the actions and leadership we provide at this time.

If Australia can't make wise decisions, what hope is there for other nations? The United States is now listening to the global warming debate and also preparing to act. Our leadership is critical; we have the knowledge and the support of our people to be leaders in this action!!

I also strongly agree with the points made by The Australian Conservation Foundation and ask these be also adopted.

As you hear from experts from around the country I urge you to listen to Australia's best climate scientists and think of the future we are leaving for our kids.

If the rest of the world followed the Rudd Government's weak targets to cut greenhouse pollution by just 5-15% by 2020 we would face catastrophic climate change – with more deadly bushfires¹, costly floods and cyclones.

Australia needs to champion an effective global agreement if we are to avoid devastating effects on our environment and economy. We need to set a strong climate change policy before the crucial Copenhagen climate change conference in December. This is the best – and possibly last – chance the world will have to solve the climate crisis.

Australia needs to lead by example and increase its weak 2020 target to at least 30%, moving to 40% in the context of a global agreement.

I ask that your committee recommend policies that make strong cuts in Australia's carbon pollution, make Australia energy smart and drive investment in renewable energy to make it cheaper than coal power.

Strong action on climate change will create millions of new Green Collar jobs, not destroy them as the big polluters claim.²

In 2007, Australia voted for strong action on climate change. In 2009, I urge you to use your important role to recommend Australia make a response to the climate crisis that future generations will thank us for.

Thank you for taking the time to read and respond to this,

Yours sincerely,

Rose Dow

¹A 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.

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