

Dear Senators

I'm glad you are having an enquiry into climate change policy. Climate change is the biggest challenge facing both Australia and world in our present time. It is a bigger challenge than the current economic downturn and in fact the economic downturn presents us with a great opportunity to change the way we live and spend our money both as individuals and as a society. It is high time we began to invest in ways that are both economically and environmentally sustainable. This is not as contradictory as it might sound and fact is quite feasible when one considers the myriad of proposals on offer from environmental and business groups, and specifically Beyond Zero Emissions.

Like Beyond Zero Emissions I believe we need we need set a target for 100% renewable energy by 2020 and that with the right investment and early bold decisions being made THIS IS DOABLE. This would represent a dramatic cut in carbon emissions and simultaneously promote a lot of green jobs.

These sort of targets are necessary given the latest science that is emerging that continues to find that the effects of climate change are happening quicker and quicker. The governments targets of up to 15% are so weak as to be completely inadequate. How can we possibly argue for other countries to pull their weight when we as the highest per capita emitter in the world refuse to make any serious changes. We do need a serious international effort but we as one of the worlds richest nations who is surviving the world economic downturn better than most we need to take a lead.

Not only are the government's targets way too low the system it is proposing does not seem at all well designed. We should have a scheme that can include the efforts of all energy consumers, households, businesses small and large, industry and those who are able to absorb carbon and remove it from the carbon cycle.

Most importantly we should not be providing compensation for industries that have been polluting for years when scientists have been telling us for years that we have a problem. Companies that take initiative to change their energy sources should be supported to do so. But companies that simply stall and show little willingness to change should be left to dwindle. However, the workers in these companies should be supported to re-skill and explore new opportunities in green industries and be compensated further if necessary.

I want to see a scheme which is ambitious, utilises government investment and market forces in complementary way and is tough on stubborn emitters.

Yours sincerely

James Tonson