

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

I am extremely unhappy with the Government's CPRS as currently proposed. We need to take urgent action on climate change now, and this means setting a strong target for reducing Australia's emissions by 50% by 2020. There is currently a lot of money and resources being thrown at resolving the global financial crisis, we need the same amount of commitment to be shown to tackling climate change - there is no economy on a dead planet.

The Government's current target of 5-15% is completely inadequate to avoid dangerous climate change. And we know that Australia is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with the impact already being felt, as demonstrated by recent natural disasters like the bushfires in Victoria, the floods in Queensland and of course the ongoing drought. I do not want to see the Great Barrier Reef die because this Government fails to take the action needed. I do not want to see more dramatic climatic events affecting Australia. There is no time to waste.

Science is telling us that climate change is happening much more quickly than previously thought. The Antarctic is becoming one of the most rapidly warming regions on Earth and time and time again we see the effects, most recently with the break up of the Wilkins Ice Shelf which has survived for centuries, but is now set to be yet another victim of global warming.

Australia's weak target will undermine global efforts for a strong international agreement on tackling climate change and reducing emissions. Australia has a moral obligation to lead the way in international fora. We need to do our fair share to avoid dangerous climate change.

I believe that the CPRS is badly designed and will do more harm than good. The scheme design over-compensates polluters at the expense of the community and environment. What incentive is there for individuals and households to reduce their emissions when this will just give the big polluters the ability to pollute even more? Because the CPRS imposes a floor beyond which emissions cannot fall, the action individuals and businesses take to reduce energy will not reduce Australia's total greenhouse emissions further than the Government's weak target of 5-15%. This is just not good enough.

We need to create meaningful employment in "green collar" jobs. By creating green jobs, we can reshape Australia's economy and lock in future prosperity. We need to reduce Australia's dependence on fossil fuels and increase our use of renewables. It will obviously be to our advantage to take real action on climate change and refocus our economy to take advantage of new growth industries, like those in renewable energy.

The Government was elected on the promise of tackling climate change. This CPRS is NOT THE ANSWER.

The Government seems to think that any action to reduce emissions, even by as little as 5%, will reduce the risk of climate change. In fact we know that there are tipping points in Earth's systems which, if breached, will send our climate spinning out of control with catastrophic consequences for all of us.

If we are to have a reasonable chance of preventing runaway climate change, we must make every effort to avoid these tipping points. That means high-polluting countries like Australia moving towards carbon neutrality as fast as possible, with cuts of at least 50% by 2020.

What Australia needs right now is real leadership, real vision and real change. We need a strong, ambitious and fair emissions trading scheme, not a plan that protects polluters and stands in the way of the change we need.

We really need to act now to protect the planet and the future of our children, our grandchildren and all generations to come.

Senators, Australia must reduce its greenhouse pollution by 50% by 2020 (on 1990 levels).

Thank you.

Nicole Rodger