

Dear Secretary for the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

I am a strong activist on climate change. Although I am only 16, I am far more knowledgeable than most people about the climate crisis. Activities I have been involved in include writing to numerous politicians such as Bob Debus, Peter Garret, Penny Wong and the Prime Minister; being a multi-solar installation community project coordinator in Winmalee, the Blue Mountains; being a member of various climate groups including the Australian Conservation Foundation, the NSW Nature Conservation Council, Stop Global Warming, Standby Saturday, Say No to Plastic Bags, Alternative and Renewable Energies and Katoomba Area Climate Action Now. I am also involved in the community as a volunteer for bushcare, in which I get involved in active discussions about the climate crisis and as a climate project presenter for screening the documentary "Telling The Truth."

The main issue that I am concerned with is the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, although my other key points to address are the weak carbon reduction target of 5%-15% and energy sources and efficiencies of the future. The major potential for energy efficiency, and thus productivity increases, will be unlocked very slowly, placing the whole Australian economy at a competitive disadvantage to the rapidly growing 'low carbon' economies.

I apologize that I sent this email four days too late, but I was under the impression that it would be worth sending a submission as an indication of my concern. The following quote from the ACF executive director Don Henry is an accurate, factual description, supported by the Bureau of Meteorology, of the effects in Australia of the climate crisis:

*"It is in Australia's national interest to act early and strongly to tackle climate change. Australia's best climate scientists warn that if effective global action to achieve deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions does not begin in the near future, Australia will see a future of dramatically increased days of extreme bushfire and heatwave stress, more severe and regular droughts in southern Australia, more destructive cyclones and risks of mosquito-borne diseases in the North and devastating damage to the Great Barrier Reef and many other natural icons.*

*"Recent bushfire and heatwave disasters in Australia are a foretaste of a much worse future if we don't act now. Every year of inaction knowingly locks in a more devastating future. Every year of inaction knowingly locks out the opportunity for Australian jobs growth and prosperity in the rapidly emerging 'low carbon' industries of the future."*

From the amount of correspondence that I have had with politicians, I am aware that the government is acting on climate change through strategic priorities such as Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), solar photovoltaic and geothermal energy production; a \$500 million Renewable Energy Fund, \$500 million for a National Low Emissions Coal Initiative, \$150 million for solar and clean energy research and \$240 million to establish Clean Business Australia; and helping households and businesses use energy more wisely through direct financial incentives, strengthened energy efficiency regulations and targeted information. However, the Australian Government can be taking stronger, more effective action by implementing several solutions to problems.

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, costly floods and cyclones. The solution to this problem is that Australia should champion an international agreement to stabilise atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at 450ppm or lower, maintain

flexibility for stronger global targets later and lift the top end of the 2020 target range to 40 per cent in the context of a global agreement. It is also vital that Australia's 2020 emissions reduction targets are kept out of the CPRS legislation until after the Copenhagen climate deal has been finalised.

Every reduction in emissions by a further 10 per cent by 2020 would require an additional 55 million tonnes of abatement. This could be easily achieved through:

- The Renewable Energy Target – the Federal Government's Tracking to Kyoto 2007 document estimates the 20 per cent renewable energy target will reduce 20 million tonnes of carbon pollution by 2020.
- The \$3.7 billion insulation package – Prime Minister Rudd noted in Parliament that "Once fully implemented, the initiative could result in reductions of greenhouse gas emissions by 49.9 million tonnes by 2020, or the equivalent of taking one million cars off the road" (3/2/09).
- A national energy efficiency strategy for households, commercial buildings and industry.
- Household actions, including purchase of GreenPower – there are more than 850,000 GreenPower customers in Australia who have saved over 5.7 million tonnes of carbon pollution through their actions.
- Commitments by companies to go carbon neutral or reduce emissions.
- Transport efficiency improvements and public transport investment, which includes increased scheduling in buses for convenience and reduction of freight. For example, the Blue Mountains corridor is a route for freight to inland NSW. This method of transportation is 7 times less energy efficient than trains. Impacts of freight are numerous including constant upgrading of highways and alternate routes to be planned.
- Mandatory fuel efficiency standards for cars.
- Action on land management, agriculture, reforestation and rehabilitation. These factors are a must in strategic priorities for climate change and in implementing the energy target. Measuring pollutant emissions for some areas of agriculture (rural farms) is impractical so this needs to be made possible, as well as implementing energy efficiency, sustainability and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in sectors that are possible. Encouraging the consumption of vegetables is vital since methane emissions from cattle and sheep are so high.
- State-based programs (eg. white certificate schemes, solar gross feed-in tariffs and hot water rebates).
- To encourage a strong global agreement Australia should allocate at least \$1 billion per year from CPRS permit revenue to help developing countries reduce emissions and to prepare for climate change impacts that cannot be avoided.
- Legislation of a ban on all new coal-fired power stations in Australia and a moratorium on all new coal exploration and mining.
- Plan to phase out existing coal-fired power plants over the next ten years. Change the requirements for assistance to coal-fired generators under the CPRS to be conditional upon the 10-year phase-out plan.
- Suspend all subsidies, tax incentives and financial support to the fossil fuel industry, including compensation measures proposed.
- Redirect the \$500 million Clean Coal Fund into promoting and advancing renewable energy technology, growth and infrastructure.

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 is grossly uneconomical and must be fixed by the Senate this year to stop big business from loading the problem of climate change onto everyone else. National targets must be strengthened and will remove the burden for future strengthening from Australian taxpayers.

The Australian government fails to invest in energy efficiency across the economy, with a high risk of entrenching a 'high' carbon pollution economy in Australia to the detriment of future jobs growth. The White Paper proposes more than \$9 billion in handouts to emissions-intensive industries to 2012. This assistance is the equivalent of every Australian household paying an average of \$558 by 2015 to fund the activities of the companies that are fuelling climate change.

Further, the rising proportion of free permits dedicated to supporting emissions intensive, trade-exposed (EITE) industries may place significant pressure on future budgets. The proportion is expected to rise from 25 per cent in 2010 to 45 per cent in 2020. As noted by Professor Garnaut, there is no room to allow targets to be increased beyond 5 per cent, or for industry to grow faster than expected, without requiring either cuts to household support or dipping into consolidate revenue. The White Paper proposes a high and increasing level of 'polluter protection' that will disadvantage Australia in the future. Additionally, the White Paper removed the Green Paper proposal for quantitative restrictions on the use of international permits. Treasury modelling shows with the proposed 5 per cent domestic target, emissions do not reduce from the Australian economy until 2035, because of unlimited access to purchase of permits overseas. There is little incentive for Australian industry to improve its carbon productivity and to prepare for a low carbon future.

#### Solutions:

- Reduce the proposed portion of permit revenue allocated to EITE activities assistance to 10 per cent, and abandon compensation to electricity generators.
- Ensure EITE assistance is reviewed every two years by an independent authority with the goals of environmental effectiveness and economic efficiency.
- Increase the default carbon productivity improvements for EITE assistance from the proposed 1.3 per cent to 4 per cent to return to levels consistent with the Green Paper.
- Implement 'world's best practice' complementary energy efficiency regulations.
- Reinstate quantitative limits on use of international permits to ensure most abatement occurs in Australia.

The Australian government lacks significant support for renewable energy, energy efficiency, healthy ecosystems and additional action. The major potential for energy efficiency, and thus productivity increases, will be unlocked very slowly, placing the whole Australian economy at a competitive disadvantage to the rapidly growing 'low carbon' economies. If the CPRS was passed as proposed no action by any level of government, business or households will reduce emissions further than the national target.

Healthy ecosystems are essential for a low carbon economy and to continue jobs growth in areas such as tourism and sustainable land management, however the CPRS provides no support or funding for these areas.

#### Solutions:

- Introduce a national energy efficiency strategy.
- Free-up 10 per cent of CPRS permit revenue to invest in low emissions technology research and development by reducing handouts to emissions intensive industries.
- Adopt a national renewable energy target of 50%-100% by 2020
- Adjust targets for voluntary action by businesses and households to reduce emissions.
- Allocate at least \$1 billion per year from CPRS permit revenue to build resilience to climate change, for people and ecosystems, and provide stewardship payments to land managers in rural Australia to reward carbon pollution abatement.

Renewable energy production by Australian households from solar power and wind turbines would revolutionise Australia. Drive-by-wire cars such as the General Electric Volt would release the dependence upon petrol. Grassroots energy production would

become a large percentage of energy production in Australia, accelerating climate change by further funding renewable energy research and climate change funding.

I hope that these solutions are taken into consideration.

Regards,

Mr. J. Ray