

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

My fellow Australians. My name is Ben Aspinall. I am 46 years old, a father of 3 teenagers, a 7th generation Australian, a High School Science and Biology teacher, also a Physiotherapist with an interest in paediatrics, and a family historian.

I am writing to you to express my serious concern about the inadequate carbon emission reduction target set out in the Government White Paper late last year. My concerns come as

1. a father for my own children
2. as a 7th generation Australian for this unique and timeless land
3. as a teacher for the bad "lesson" that this target creates
4. as a paediatric physiotherapist for the health of children in areas where global warming will increase disease and
5. as a family historian for my future descendants.

I have remained well informed of the Climate Change science for many years now. My vote for Labor at the last federal election was based entirely on their promise of strong action on Climate Change, and the previous Government's inaction on setting targets for Carbon reduction.

You can not imagine how disappointed I am with the Governments targets as set out in the white paper.

Based on Mr Rudd's own introductory speech to the announcement of these targets in December, this issue is far too important to go soft on, and play around with weak targets. However this is what these proposed targets do.

Based on the science available to you all in Parliament (I won't repeat the facts and figures here), you can see why I have concerns for my children, children of the world, future generations, and the natural wonders of this land.

If we take these targets, and the lack of targets from the previous Government, people in the future will be able to look back and say that for a quarter of a century (1995-2020), when they knew the problem, they only reduced Carbon emissions by 5 percent. How can we hold our heads up when faced with that fact? You all have a chance to rewrite that historical fact now. Please don't let inaction be your legacy.

My other concern is as a teacher trying to educate future generations about managing their own individual emissions to secure a future lifestyle that is as lucky as our present lifestyle, and trying to "act locally" to bring about simple changes in our own school community. How can I talk to those students and convince them this is serious when their own political leaders say it is only a "5% issue"? The perception of only 5 % is very real to those students. It is also a weapon in the arms of the still many skeptics among their parents and my fellow teaching staff. I know! It has already been used against me by my own children and my friends who are skeptics. "See, even the Government doesn't think it is serious enough. They only think it is a 5% issue."

A 5% target not only puts our future at direct risk, it is the wrong message to children learning about how to manage their own future, and it is an incredibly effective weapon in the hands of the skeptics.

SO if this is not the message you want to give the children of Australia, or the climate change skeptics, then you must amend this target to the targets recommended by the IPCC.

The target set for reduction of "Homeless people in Australia" announced a couple of days after the Carbon Pollution Reduction Targets was for 50 % which, while admirable and necessary, provided a stark contrast to the electorate on the perceived seriousness of the government about

climate change. It is not the level of seriousness that the Government went to the election promising.

The argument that we will only go to a 15% reduction (which is still inadequate) if other countries do, is petulant and irresponsible. "I will only stop throwing my waste into the gutters of my street if my neighbours do." That only ends up with more waste in the gutters and a bad street for everyone. Please show me, and my children, that you are above such immature strategies to deal with serious issues. "I'll only do it if Johnny does it" is not even heard in the school yard these days. If a student said that to me in class you can imagine my response to them about leading by example, being accountable for your own actions, and community responsibility. Please apply those sentiments to yourselves when making the decisions on this issue.

I ask you to please amend these targets to the targets recommended by the IPCC (25 – 40%) by 2020. Do not wait for other countries. Do not write history to show that in a quarter of a century, a whole generation, we only reduced targets by 5%, when we knew the problem, the consequences, and we knew it was the only window of time where action could have made a difference.

I will be watching for your response.

Ben Aspinall