

# CLIMATE ACTION CANBERRA

## SUBMISSION TO SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS ON THE CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME

### **Background**

Climate Action Canberra is a grassroots climate action group with over 50 active members and a broader network of over 400 people. We are a group of people that are concerned about climate change who are interested in helping to catalyse an emergency response in the lead-up to the Copenhagen negotiations in December 2009. This submission has been prepared by the 'policy group' of Climate Action Canberra and has received unanimous approval for submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Economics. A recent open lecture on the CPRS held in Canberra attracted over 100 people, demonstrating that concern amongst the community about the scheme's flaws is real, and growing.

### **General Comments on the CPRS**

Human-induced emissions of greenhouse gases are changing the world's climate systems. These changes may become irreversible due to the triggering of climate 'tipping points' in the near future. It is widely recognised that emergency action is needed to reduce global emissions if we are to minimise the risk of catastrophic climate change.

Due to Australia's high levels of historic and per capita emissions any notion of justice demands that Australia lead the way in reducing its own emissions.

The most recent science indicates that a stabilisation target of 300 parts per million of atmospheric carbon dioxide will most likely be required if we are to stay within a safe range of climate scenarios.

This target would require Australia's anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions to peak during 2010, reduce by at least 60% (on 1990 levels) by 2020, by at least 90% (on 1990 levels) by 2030, and have substantial carbon 'draw-down' efforts in place by 2050.

Many climate scientists have criticised the Australian Government's stabilisation target of 450ppm and 2020 target of 4% (on 1990 levels) as baseless in science and completely inadequate to the challenge of maintaining a safe climate.

The Australian Government's *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) Bill 2009* is not only worse than doing nothing but will also preclude more effective policies. There are a number of reasons for this, including all evidence indicating that a CPRS will:

- entrench inadequate targets;
- entrench the 'right to pollute' as property;
- violate the 'polluter pays' principle by its provision of free permits and extensive corporate compensation;
- undermine household emission reduction efforts; and,
- undermine efforts for an international climate agreement.

### **Conclusion**

Climate Action Canberra calls on the Senate Standing Committee on Economics to:

1. support science-based emissions reduction targets that minimise the risk of diverging from the safe range of climate scenarios, and thereby condemn the Australian Government's inadequate emissions reduction targets;
2. support an emergency effort to transition Australia to a sustainable and low-emission economy, in a way which ensures fair outcomes for all workers, and thereby condemn the Australian Government's support for an expansion in unsustainable industries, including the coal industry;
3. oppose the *Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Bill 2009* in its current form.