

Submission into the inquiry into the exposure drafts of the legislation to implement the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme

/Submission from: /

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/Context: /

I am submitting this as a private citizen of Australia. I am a 49 year old male, deeply concerned about the sustainability of life on this planet, and believe as a society we face grave risks to our lifestyle. On the forefront of my mind are my children, but beyond them, all of their generation and those to follow. Given the outlined risks identified by the world's scientists, I am motivated to submit the below in the hope that Australia gets it right(er) the first time in this critical arena, to help allay those fears. And to be able to say to my children that, should the worst case scenario unfold, at least I tried and we tried.

Critique of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) legislation

I believe the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme legislation is, overall, a fair first draft of a potentially useful instrument to help Australia reduce its impact on global climate change. The draft however I believe could be made significantly more effective in reducing emissions. These changes may or may not be at the cost of cost effectiveness, but I believe given the identified risks, cost effectiveness is a secondary issue.

To this end, I make the following criticisms and suggestions for improvement:

1.

The emissions reduction target is far too weak

According to a number of credible scientific sources, if adopted, the 5%-15% target would guarantee the loss of significant natural Australian assets including the Great Barrier Reef and the Kakadu Wetlands. This cannot be countenanced. Other weather changes would incur significant if not potentially catastrophic changes on the Australian environment and economy over the medium term. As a result, the CPRS targets need an urgent increase. The 'balance' has not been reached.

2.

Pollution permits are defined as property rights rather than licences or allowances

3. Free permits given to the largest emitters of carbon pollution

The rationale for the giving of free permits is incorrect, as it obviously defeats the 'market mechanism' of an emissions trading scheme - which must be that pollution costs to polluters must rise in order to incentivise the necessary - urgent- shift to less polluting means of production. It is more and more clear every day that high pollution industries need to be shut down if long term survival of the planet in a livable form is to reemerge as a possibility.

4. The CPRS makes people, not industrial polluters, pay

As much touted in the media, with targets fixed, the more I reduce, the more they can pollute. This flaw de-incentivises overall reductions and will render large scale society wide intentions impotent and may generate widespread anger and social unrest over time.

5. The lack of a permit price floor

International experience with cap and trade schemes have foundered on the lack of a decent minimum price, which have rendered many of these schemes similarly impotent. We may hope this is not the government's original intentions, but that this is not the case can be confirmed by instituting a minimum permit/carbon price. Otherwise, manipulation of the permit system (which is bound to occur) will rapidly take the prices down and the scheme out of contention.

6. The CPRS only covers reforestation, not deforestation

The Garnaut Report clearly recommends that emissions from deforestation be covered in any Scheme and those undertaking it liable for the emissions generated, which are not insubstantial. As noone can argue that all relevant sources of carbon emissions should logically be included in any Scheme, this omission needs to be rectified.

I trust this submission will be considered in the spirit with which it is given - in the true long term interests of Australian environment, society and economy.