

Surely it is the role of any government to protect its people by protecting the environment that we rely on for survival.

When scientists identified CFCs as depleting the ozone layer, governments worldwide legislated to phase out CFCs. Now, with scientists identifying rising carbon emissions as the biggest threat ever to human survival, the Abbott government is approving expansion of coal mines, has removed the carbon price, and is attempting to wind back every measure we previously had to facilitate greater uptake of renewable energy.

The Abbott government's attacks on the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, the Australian Renewable Energy Agency and the renewable energy target, the Climate Change Authority and the Climate Commission not only threaten the well-being of Australian citizens by removing mechanisms for reducing carbon emissions, they also condemn the rest of the world to harsher climate change impacts.

As global warming progresses scientists warn we can expect food and water shortages, yet the Abbott government is putting good food producing land and clean water at risk by allowing coal and gas companies to rip up farmland and drill into our aquifers, even though the world cannot afford to burn more coal and gas if we want to survive climate change. Any short-term wealth this might generate will be cold comfort if there is no food to buy and our groundwater is contaminated. Hundreds of thousands of Australians are doing everything they can to 'do the right thing' by reducing their own carbon footprint, yet the Abbott government wipes out those achievements with the stroke of a pen when it supports fossil fuel expansion.

The Abbott government claims they have a mandate from the people. Why then, when it sacked the Climate Commission as one of its first actions on taking government, did 'the people' respond by donating over \$1 million in about a week to keep it functioning? When the government removed EDO funding, the people stepped up with donations to fund environmental cases. When the government failed to support a rapid transition to renewable energy, community groups started funding renewable energy projects themselves. When the government slashed funding for conservation bodies, again the people stepped up. It's almost starting to seem like a game. "Let's slash funding for everything that is good for the environment and see how long public generosity will last."

It's not a game. People understand that it is our own lives on the line if we don't reduce carbon emissions rapidly. We understand that our forests, fertile land, and water resources need to be protected if we want to survive. Good people are even risking arrest, hefty fines, and gaol terms in an attempt to prevent environmentally destructive commercial activities.

The Abbott government is not only failing to protect the Australian people from the effects of environmental destruction and rising carbon emissions, they are assisting the destruction. The betrayal of our interests is quite frightening.