

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

I applaud the Government for taking swift action on Climate Change mitigation by attempting to introduce emissions trading. However, the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) proposed by the Government is flawed due to unacceptably weak targets and a design which over-compensates polluters at the expense of the community. I believe that in its present form the proposed scheme may do more damage than good and suggest that the scheme be redrafted to:

1) Impose realistic targets, in line with scientific recommendations by the scientific community, of 25-40% by 2020 for high-polluting developed countries like Australia. Australia should and can take an international lead in this issue. If we can't afford to take decisive action on what is shaping up to be the most threatening situation to confront humanity in the past few thousand years, who can? We are a smart, rich, free and wonderfully resourced country that has made much of its wealth at the expense of carbon emissions, and we are a nation that punches well beyond its weight on the world stage. It is morally reprehensible that we do not lead the charge in combating climate change. Moreover, by doing so and making an early transition to a low-carbon economy, we would position ourselves cleverly in the new world markets, provide clear goal posts and certainty for business, and promote a more rapid transition of the rest of the world to a low carbon economy.

2) An effective carbon reduction scheme should allow the community to respond to the challenge of reducing emissions, whereas the proposed CPRS does not do this, but instead effectively passes any savings by the community on to businesses: the more the community does to reduce emissions, the less business need do. This is very unfair on the community and divisive at a time when unity of purpose is desirable. A clever scheme would not let the nation's worst polluters off the hook so easily, but rather strive to allow all people and businesses to make meaningful reductions to carbon emission.

3) As is stands is a pay-the-polluter scheme rather than a polluter-pays scheme, and as such it would seem fated to fail in the longer term. Billions of dollars of compensation in cash and free permits to pollute will be provided by the proposed CPRS and this will protect the profits of Australia's worst climate offenders at the expense of clean industries. While I can appreciate the current economic concerns and the reluctance of the government to impose constraints on businesses at this time, the fact is that Australia is in a very strong position by global standards at this time and we can afford these changes better than most nations.

Sincerely

Dr Joe Benshemesh