

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

One of the platforms on which the Rudd Government was elected was for its commitment to tackle climate change. In its current format the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme does not tackle climate change. What is required is an emission scheme that will ensure that:

- emissions do not exceed 450ppm - this should be the absolutely highest emission figure that is even contemplated if we are to ensure that current warming does not lead to a pattern of positive feedbacks over which we have no control.

- existing fossil fuel use is phased out quickly and efficiently. This will only happen if the market signals for alternative forms of energy (of which Australia has an abundance) are competitive. In its current format the largest fossil fuel polluters are compensated at the expense of the public and our environment. Also the target is too small. A minimum target should be 25% on 1990 levels; a preference would be for targets around 40%.

- the efforts I make to reduce my carbon footprint are counted. In its current format the polluters get a free ride on the back of my efforts. What kind of signal does this send to the community? It means that the Government is not serious about climate change.

The Hawke and Keating governments brought in sweeping changes which resulted in significant job losses in the manufacturing industry in the 1980's and 1990's. However, Australia faced up to this challenge and was in a sound economic state to meet the existing financial crisis. The Rudd Government must be prepared to again make some difficult decisions, in particular with regard to that most polluting of energy sources, coal. In the medium to long term, with Australia's abundant forms of alternative energy (for example solar, thermal, wind and wave) we have the capacity and endeavour to position our nation to be market leaders in alternative forms of energy and to future-proof the nation against energy shocks. This exciting future for Australia will not happen if the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is passed in its current format.

Every day that we remain uncommitted to seriously facing up to the consequences of emitting carbon dioxide into our atmosphere the greater the economic and environmental pain is going to be in the future. The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme reflects a nation that is uncommitted. Is that the kind of legacy we wish to leave future Australians?

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