

Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy - submission

I write in an individual capacity to express my concern about aspects of the government's proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. While I commend the government for recognising the threat posed by climate change and attempting a policy response, I fear that the scheme as proposed has significant limitations.

First, the reported emissions reductions target of 5-15% by 2020 is significantly less than that recommended by climate scientists. This should be able to be increased so that Australia can play a fair and effective part in international carbon pollution reduction. Limiting this target to 15% could dissuade fellow countries from more ambitious efforts at the Copenhagen climate conference at the end of the 2009.

Second, I am concerned that the emissions reduction scheme effectively imposes a maximum as well as a minimum on carbon reduction. This has been well explained in the Australia Institute briefing paper "Fixing the Floor in the ETS". Any reduction in emissions on the part of individual citizens that can be counted within the scheme will have the effect of reducing the price of carbon pollution permits, and therefore just relocate pollution from households to industry. This is extremely disempowering for individual citizens (like myself) who hope to play a small but important role in reducing global warming through individual behaviour change.

Third, significant financial handouts to polluting industries will slow the pace of the necessary adaptation by these industries to survive in our low-carbon-pollution future, and will inhibit the ability of new technologies to compete in the marketplace.

I urge the committee to recommend significant policy changes, so that substantial pollution reduction targets may be achieved, individuals will be able to play an active role in this process, and industry is encouraged to adapt.

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