

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

Please increase the target for emissions reductions to a level that will give some hope for avoiding the worst effects of climate change. The current target of 5% to 15% is a national embarrassment. How can we expect developing countries such as China and India to reduce their emissions if developed countries such as Australia are unwilling to make the necessary cuts?

I agree with the statement made by the Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, that the world will expect some sort of differentiation in targets. That form of differentiation should be in the form of the strongest cuts in emissions being applied to those countries that are already developed and have the highest per capita emissions. Australia is one of those nations that should make the deepest cuts in its emissions. It is our moral duty to do so and it would be immoral for Australia to do less than any country that is less developed or that already has lower per capita emissions.

By setting targets that are well below the minimum that scientists have recommended, Australia sends a message to the world that either: a) it does not think the world should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to prevent catastrophic damage; or b) that Australians are incredibly selfish and would prefer to see a greater burden placed on poorer people.

I do not think that Australians are so selfish. Rather, it seems to me that the government has ignored the advice of the majority of experts and has ignored the concerns of the majority of Australians, and has instead pandered to a minority of rich business folk intent on the short sighted protection of their own financial self-interest. Please reconsider and show the courage to be a true Australian and stand up for what is important. Please set strong and meaningful targets for emissions reductions that can provide true world leadership.

In addition, the design of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) needs to be overhauled. The extent of freebies to be given away to large polluters is yet another national embarrassment.

We also need to fix the problem with additionality. Mine is one of many households I know of that have taken extra steps to reduce our own emissions. Amongst other things, we buy our electricity from renewable energy through the government accredited GreenPower scheme. But if GreenPower is not allowed to be additional to the CPRS, then our efforts will be wasted as all we will be doing is paying more to pollute less so that big polluters can pay less to pollute more.

We will be canceling our GreenPower subscription if CPRS does not make provision for GreenPower, and I expect that more than 880,000 other GreenPower customers will feel the same way. This adds up to close to a million voters who will be very upset. Rather than kill off GreenPower, the CPRS should allocate emissions certificates to be voluntarily retired for all voluntary actions that reduce emissions, as is the case for GreenPower.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Dr David Mills