

The study by Innovest Strategic Value Advisors shows that Australian taxpayers will be giving away \$3.5 billion of their hard-earned money in 2010 and \$5.3 billion by 2015 to some of the countries worst polluting companies under the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

These figures mean that every Australian household will be paying an average of \$389 a year in 2010 and \$558 by 2015 to fund the activities of the companies that are fuelling climate change.

Not only will Australia's weak targets of 5% lead to the destruction of the Great Barrier Reef if adopted globally, every household is being expected to pay more than \$500 on year to our biggest polluters to hasten the reef's destruction.

I don't want to be part of this and I ask you, is this the type of world we want to be handing down to our future generations?

I believe a large majority of submission made on the emissions trading scheme called for the adoption of strong 2020 targets and asked that government offer no free permits to pollute. It seems in this case, both democracy and logic have been thrown out the window. I have seen this unreasonable attitude at a state level in regard to the Victorian desalination plant and North-South pipeline. I am disgusted to now be seeing it at a federal level.

(I would like to point out the Victorian desalination plant will increase state emissions by 14%. The recently approved Gunns' pulp mill in Tasmania is expected to push national emissions up by a staggering 10% and WA is looking to build a gas plant which again will cause emissions to rise 13%) The Innovest study also states that corporate compensation is expected to go to just one company, Rio Tinto, over two years and is an amount greater than the Federal Government's entire renewable energy fund. This is in no way justifiable.

Australia's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme should not be a pay-the-polluter scheme. We need to lift the 2020 targets in at least the 25% plus range and drop the handouts to big polluters if we are to do our bit in avoiding disastrous climate change.

In 2008 the people of Australia were told if other countries take strong action to cut their emission we would follow suit. Although waiting for other countries to take the lead was wrong from the start, many developed European countries already have miniscule emission in contrast to ours and now America, under the leadership of President Obama, has made a strong commitment to doing the same. How much longer must we wait?

I am also horrified by a flaw in the Emissions Trading Scheme which would mean any carbon dioxide reductions achieved by future solar households could simply allow polluting industries to increase emissions by a corresponding amount – without jeopardising Australia's overall target. As Richard Denniss of the Australian Institute puts it, "The only effective way for households to reduce carbon emissions will be to buy emissions permits and rip them up."

Voluntary actions by companies and individuals to reduce emissions including Green Power schemes and buying offsets for emissions on plane flights currently save 6 million tones of emissions a year and involve one in six Australian families. The emissions trading scheme will effectively desecrate the voluntary market in Australia.

Summarized key points to consider are listed below.

- This scheme protects polluters for years into the future by handing out free pollution permits, perverting the intention of emissions trading by protecting the profits of Australia's worst climate offenders instead of encouraging clean competition.

- Protecting polluters also unfairly transfers the cost of meeting the target to industries with less lobbying power and to the community at large.
- By setting such a weak target, and ensuring that Australia's emissions cannot fall below that level, the scheme will also mean that the efforts of everyone from householders to State Governments to reduce emissions will be helpful only in reducing the price pressure on polluters.
- Setting a weak target is likely to see bad investment decisions made, where public and private money is spent on "lower pollution" infrastructure which will need to be swiftly moth-balled and replaced with zero emissions infrastructure when serious science-based targets are adopted.
- People often think that any action to reduce emissions, even by as little as 5%, will reduce the risk of climate change. In fact we know that there are tipping points in Earth's systems which, if breached, will send our climate spinning out of control with catastrophic consequences for all of us.
- If we are to have a reasonable chance of preventing runaway climate change, we must make every effort to avoid these tipping points. That means high-polluting countries like Australia moving towards carbon neutrality as fast as possible, with cuts of at least 40% by 2020.
- Emissions trading is important. By setting a target and sending a price signal, it should provide a strong framework for all our other policies, such as renewable energy feed-in tariffs and home energy efficiency retrofits, to grow on and flourish. However, a badly designed emissions trading scheme can become a box rather than a framework, constricting the growth of the zero emissions economy and actively preventing the transformation we need. Better to let the other policies do their job unassisted than hold them back with a bad emissions trading scheme.
- Locking in a weak target, refusing to accept cuts of more than 15% by 2020, could undermine global efforts to reach agreement on ambitious targets at the Copenhagen climate conference at the end of the year

It is vital that we do what we can now, as we will never get a second chance at this.

Name: Michael Beasley