

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

I cannot begin to express how important I believe taking climate change in a far more serious way is to all of us. Targets of 5-15% reductions by 2020 are completely inadequate. We are relying on others to carry our burden which is morally unjust - either that or we are deliberately aiming for (or accepting) temperature rises well above the expected tipping point of 2°C (or 450ppm CO₂-e) which will lead to an Arctic free of ice, burnt Amazon, melted permafrost, rises in ocean acidity rises, massive loss of agricultural land, and significant sea level rises. We must do better with scientifically based targets, not politically acceptable ones.

We are dangerously close to this point already with 0.8°C rises in global temp above pre-industrial average of the last 10,000 years and a further 0.6°C "locked in" due to already released GHGs (currently 387ppm), we have very little room to spare, if any.

The science is clear, and has been for many years. On top of an already highly degraded planet with ecosystems across the globe in crisis and collapse, with too many people extracting too many resources and creating too much pollution, we are now stacking a rapidly changing climate on top of this. We are going to realise too late how critically interdependent we are on our environment. I believe we are heading towards a disaster of ecological, social and economic consequences of a magnitude far beyond anything we have experienced as a civilised society in any period in history. Yet we stall and delay.

Yet the urgency for action from the Australian government is wholly inadequate given the scale and urgency of the problem. You are the government of a wealthy nation with the ability to act, we are a nation that has contributed far more GHG pollution per capita than its share (and continue to do so), we live in an ecologically mega diverse country that stands to lose some of the most incredible environmental assets this world has - yet our actions to date have been minimal to address this.

The sort of action we require on climate change will only come through brave leadership. It will come from nations that are prepared to step up and do their bit. Many European nations have taken this step, we are not "going it alone" as some would have us believe.

Australia needs strong targets of 40% reductions on 1990 levels by 2020 to show it is serious and to support those countries that are wavering to also set targets that every person on earth needs them to make. Such targets are entirely possible and can stimulate the 'green economy', with science and innovation (and uptake of already proven technologies) this is achievable. This will not come about through giving credits to the major polluters in a CTS. Voluntary reductions must also count separately from the reductions set for industry, not as an offset to let them off the hook.

We must "dare to dream" of such reductions as New Zealand's Helen Clarke put it. It is politically very difficult, but as the government of this country, you must lead us, the people, to see how important such massive changes to our economy and lifestyles is, not seek a mandate to do it - with the ignorance and greed in enough (powerful) sections of our society, unfortunately by then it will be too late.

This is a hugely defining time in history. Copenhagen is really the last roll of the dice. Australia must set stronger targets or we will be recalled in history as the selfish generation that failed to act. Having just lived through the Black Saturday bushfires here in Victoria, I am personally prepared for a lot of sacrifice if necessary because the pain that my children and grandchildren will suffer living in a drought stricken, fire ravaged, biologically poor, war torn (from lack of food and water and international failed states) country makes me sick with worry. I love them far too much, yet currently have that future as my "target".

Please take this issue more seriously and set stronger targets.

Regards,

David Blair