

Submission to the Senate Committee on Climate Change Policy

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I am a member of the Mount Alexander Sustainability Group and I am active in the Maine's Project at Castlemaine. The Maine's Power project aims to work with large energy users in the Mount Alexander Shire to contribute towards a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2010 from 2006 levels. It also aims to work towards zero net emissions by 2020 while increasing the security of energy supply in the Shire. The Maine's Power project was one of only 8 projects to be chosen as a case study for the final report of the Garnaut Review.

I would like the senate committee to consider the fact that communities such as ours are struggling to effect change at a rate far exceeding anything proposed by government. The best thing we can ask is for the government to support us nationally and internationally with policies that match our aims.

It is universally acknowledged now, that a target reduction of GHG emissions of 80% by 2050 is essential. It follows that 30% by 2020 is also mandatory. You may ask why:

1. Further evidence is seen where the summer ice cap in the Arctic has been reduced by 80% and looks set to disappear within 10 years. This will release enormous amounts of carbon from the melted permafrost of Alaska, Siberia and Greenland. The acceleration of the heating of the earth that will result makes the 2020 target the critical one. 2050 could well be too late.
2. We need look no further than South East Australia to see the evidence. Where once I was able to hike regularly through the alpine regions, I now find these are largely closed off due to the catastrophic fires of the last 6 years.

We should not get distracted by discussions as to whether man is the cause. It matters little. Man could not have survived in the conditions we are heading towards when last they had existed (prior to homo sapiens).

It may well be too late already. If India and China wish to live at the standard of living we enjoy, we would need 4 planets. But I'm not going to be the one to tell them they can't. There are two root causes of all this, the population explosion and the ever increasing affluence. Where in 1950 Australians consumed 50% of the land and water resources, we now consume 250%. We must limit our own growth. The much quoted phrase "One for mum, one of dad and one for the country", must be seen as the recipe for

disaster that it is. It would be better as “*one for mum, one for dad and then help for the world’s underprivileged*”.

The argument that says “why should we when the developing nations are not” also forgets a few simple facts.

- China has made significant effort to reduce emissions and has many projects underway.
- The biggest step forward any developing country can make is to have a population policy. Much as it has been criticised for it, China has an aggressive population control policy. Vietnam also introduced a similar policy.
- India is also investing in massive wind farms as I was able to see some on a recent visit. These are cost driven as local generation is very cost effective where no adequate national grids exist.
- The developing countries are looking for a lead from the developed countries, the historical polluters. Thus far they are not getting it.
- *Do we really want to cut our nose off to spite our face!*

If we don’t set a lead in Copenhagen then what can we ask of others. Per capita, our emissions are an embarrassment, especially because of our dependence of coal for power. Carbon sequestration may offer some salvation for the coal industry, and therefore our exports of this. However this will be too late to save the planet and must be considered a side show. There are many scientists that say the likelihood of it ever succeeding are slim indeed.

This is urgent. We need policies that:

1. Reduce *demand* for energy by *incentives and rewards* at the individual, community and industry level
2. Promote *renewable* non polluting *energy supply*
3. Promote *efficiency* in industry to reduce demand
4. Introduce a *population policy* and encourage the rest of the world to do likewise.

A Carbon Trading system is one tool that has been accepted globally to achieve this. Lets do get it right.