

Submission to Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy

Principles underpinning our views

1. Scientific evidence is mounting that we will need to keep greenhouse gas (ghg) concentrations well below 450ppm CO₂-equivalent, probably as low as 300ppm, to avoid dangerous climate change.
2. If we can't arrest the growth in concentrations of ghgs quickly, we face for example, losing our Great Barrier Reef, much of the Kakadu rainforest, the drying up of the Murray Darling River system, and we will have to adapt to lower rainfall and declining agricultural productivity in the south of the country, and higher rainfall and more weather instability in the north.
3. The costs to Australia of inaction will be far higher than the costs of action.
4. Australia does have the resources to reduce its emissions.

What should we be doing to reduce our carbon emissions through a cap and trade scheme?

1. The CPRS should reduce our carbon emissions by far more than 5-15% by 2020. If the scheme is put in place at any lower than 15% its trajectory for reduction over time will be disastrous. It needs to aim for 40-50% of 1990 levels by 2020
2. Australia should commit to a big reduction now. ETS should start by July 2010, with carbon emissions beginning to go down by 2011.
3. Australia should keep open the possibility of negotiating bigger reductions at Copenhagen.
4. We should commit to achieving these reductions within Australia, and we should support efforts by other countries to achieve emissions reductions in their countries.
5. As per Garnaut Report recommendations, no free emission permits; no special consideration to Trade Exposed Emission Intensive Industries; no exemptions for petrol/fuel.
6. We should not continue to subsidise coal-fired electricity and research into clean coal. We should instead use these resources to support development of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, demand management etc.
7. We should be careful of international offsets that would allow Australia to buy its way out of real emission reductions.
8. There should be no forest protection offsets that would allow companies to buy their way out of real emission reductions. Our forest should just be protected, and no burning of forest biomass as an energy source.
9. We should also put a charge on all coal exported from Australia that will also go into carbon reduction projects.

We look forward to seeing a scheme in place to impact on our big carbon emitters; one which also encourages the rest of the community to support the move to renewable energy and to live a life-style that reflects low carbon emission, and high carbon sequestration.

We will be doing our bit.

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