

The Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy  
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## **Re: Senate Enquiry into Climate Change Policies**

This very brief submission should not be interpreted as being unimportant due to its brevity. It is all that I can manage due to my caring for a sick family member.

I believe the following are some of the key issues:

### **1. Policy response if already way behind the science**

Climate change science is constantly delivering the bad news that events are moving faster and more severely than the forecasts of the IPCC. This is true of the scale of warming, the rate of change, the anticipated impacts and the continued increase in emissions of greenhouse gases.

The IPCC process due to the demands for consensus is intrinsically very conservative, and its predictions do not take into account tipping points incredibly hard to quantify or estimate but exceedingly serious in the consequences. The latest information on permafrost melting and methane release is one example.

The proposed CPRS utterly fails the test of providing cuts of the depth and rate that give any chance of achieving a safe climate. Cuts must be fast and deep if Australia can be seen to in any sense be a leader. A policy leading to 25 -40% cuts by 2020 is what we need. We are presently exceedingly heavy polluters per capita, for us a given percentage cut is far easier than for a nation with low per capita emissions.

### **2 Emissions trading is not the most appropriate mechanism**

Emissions trading has been shown to be a flawed mechanism as it will tend to shift the responsibility of emissions offshore in many cases. The emissions trading as practiced under Kyoto have largely failed.

Emissions trading acts as a floor as well as a cap. One issue of this is the way it makes the individual actions of citizens to altruistically reduce their emissions voluntarily quite pointless. The very people who have led the charge in highlighting the peril the Earth and its people are in are in effect disenfranchised and emasculated.

The 'free kicks' being handed out to heavy polluters makes a mockery of attacking the heart of the problem – coal fuelled power generation in particular. It is completely inappropriate to let these businesses off the hook so easily. They have known for years that carbon reduction was coming, they should not be rewarded for sitting on their hands.

Offsets are a frequently abused and inadequate measure for dealing with carbon emissions. Of course tree plantation and other carbon sinks are desirable, but their impacts will often be impossible to quantify, slow to work and constantly under threat from fire and death of trees (more likely in our heating drying world).

### **3 Carbon Taxation a better mechanism**

A carbon tax with a 100 percent dividend to citizens (as proposed by James Hanson of NASA) seems to make a lot more sense, carbon should be taxed when it is mined/extracted and the resultant funds redistributed to all citizens to help them pay for increased costs and for modifying their footprint patterns.

### **4 Exclusion of Agriculture**

While accepting that including agriculture will be difficult and painful, it must be implemented as soon as possible due to the very high contribution that it makes to our emissions. It also potentially can be part of the solution through planting of carbon sinks and hopefully agrichar.

### **5 Population and how we live**

It is clear to thinking people that constant growth in human population and consumption is incompatible with any sort of sustainable future. Although loath to admit to it governments must start to alert the public that it can not be business and growth as usual. Population growth will be forced on us by climate change refugees soon enough, but in the meantime Australia's population should be stabilised.

### **6 Renewable Energy Production**

Australia should be the world leader in solar (solar thermal and photovoltaic) and geothermal renewable energy given our natural resources. There are abundant opportunities coming to benefit from these resources and our skills in developing them in the carbon constrained world of the future. Thus renewable energy targets must be expanded.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the enquiry. In summary Australia needs policies to provide deep and rapid cuts in emissions, and to set an example to the world that one of the heaviest per capita polluters is serious about emission cuts. Our obligation to future generations and the very Earth that supports us demand that we face some pain now for a far better future.

Yours sincerely,

David Gill