

Dear Secretary of Senate Select Committee,

I am a young Australian who holds deep concerns about the urgent issue of Climate Change and its ensuing consequences I will see (and am currently seeing) unfold during my lifetime.

In particular, I am troubled by the injustice intrinsic to Climate Change, especially the fact that those who are least responsible for this issue are also the first and hardest hit by its devastating effects.

As Australians, we have benefited hugely from the emission of greenhouse gases, having one of the worst (and in many reports, the worst) per capita emission rates in the world.

Therefore, I believe that we have a huge responsibility to act decisively on climate change, taking a leading role to curb our greenhouse emissions and promoting a sustainable future.

Science tells us that we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emission levels by at least 40% on 1990 levels by 2020 in order to prevent dangerous climate change. However, we are already experiencing levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere that have never been seen before, we are already reaching points at which we cannot know what the consequences will be.

I am often infuriated by the lack of action being taken by our nation's politicians, especially when they seem to treat the environment as just another lobby group, to be balanced out against the interests of the big polluters. However, scientists are not simply putting forward their own interests, they are telling us in no uncertain terms what the future will hold if we do not act. This is a message that cannot be ignored, a message that cannot be underestimated.

Another frustration is the widely-held notion that making deep cuts to emissions will cost jobs, and that that would be a negative thing. Firstly, I believe that the future fate of the planet should be held of higher importance than job losses. Secondly, Australia can in fact turn its efforts fighting climate change into a job-creating opportunity. Think of all the employment that can be generated by retrofitting homes & businesses to improve energy efficiency, by nurturing a local solar industry, by installing water tanks and improving water irrigation. Such enormous periods of transition, such as during the World Wars when entire national economies were re-shaped overnight to support the war effort, are periods of full employment.

Referring specifically to the ERS, I have been disheartened by reports that individual actions will count for nothing under the new scheme. I find this extremely disempowering. Additionally, I feel that permits must be auctioned rather than being handed out for free, that there should be no price ceiling, and that revenue gained from these permits must be put towards restructuring our own economy and assisting other nations in battling climate change.

I appreciate the opportunity to have a say in the Senate Inquiry. I believe strongly that Australia has a moral obligation to do their fair share to avoid catastrophic climate change. I implore you to act strongly and decisively on this issue.

Yours sincerely,
Michael Loftus