

To Senators on the Senate Select Committee on Climate Policy,

Emissions trading is one of many important tools the government can use to reduce Australia's emissions. By setting a strong target and sending a price signal to the market, a well-designed scheme should help dramatically reduce Australia's emissions at the least cost to the economy and make sure Australia does its fair share to tackle climate change.

Don't think you can pull the wool over our eyes by using the excuse that we are such a small part of the problem and anything we do won't have much of an effect. I don't buy that as I understand that in the whole scheme of things, Australia is a great contributor to carbon emissions, both directly and indirectly, and we are responsible for both!

At least in this vital matter, do not let politics get the better of what could be fatal. Just because we won't be around to experience the devastation does not give us permission to destroy the planet. Do you really care so little, that you will risk losing so much, knowing what science predicts so far, for the sake of whatever it is that you think you would rather not lose?

Please don't give us half truths that make your viewpoint sound right or reasonable - be a worthy and moral committee that gives the whole picture, the full truth, all information simply expressed - even if it is hard to swallow. You will be respected for it. Your task is to protect and save and build, not destroy.

One of the key problems with setting a weak target is that the only certainty business has is that it will need to be changed. Business needs long-term investment horizons in order to make multi-billion dollar decisions. A target of 5% by 2020 set now is likely to lead to many bad investment decisions being made, as business invests in 'low pollution' infrastructure which, in only a few years, will need to be moth-balled, dropped as sunk costs and replaced with zero emissions alternatives. Setting an ambitious, science-based target now will avoid these costly mistakes by putting us on the right path from the outset.

If we are to have a reasonable chance of preventing runaway climate change, we must make every effort to avoid these tipping points. Surely the existing science is strong enough to make us decide to err on the side of caution and not recklessness. That means high-polluting countries like Australia moving towards carbon neutrality as fast as possible, with cuts of at least 40% by 2020.

Please - look closely at the science of this situation and not the politics. Listen to all the experts who offer their advice to you during this inquiry, and not only to those who tell you what you want to hear. The people of Australia are depending on you and voted you into government to do the right thing and make the right decision.

Climate Change Minister Penny Wong has described the CPRS as 'better than nothing'. Perhaps it was a slip of the tongue, because that comment sounds flippant to me. Sometimes 'better than nothing' is not.

Australia needs to be bold and do the right thing and if necessary, lead the way.

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