

FROM: **Bayside Climate Change Action Group, Melbourne May 6 2010**

[Sent to all ALP parliamentarians; an amended version was sent to a number of non-Labor members of the Senate]

Please Introduce a Quick Start Carbon Levy on Big Polluters Now!

Climate change is *still* "the great moral and economic challenge of our time". It seems voters increasingly agree - Mr Rudd and your government have both suffered huge losses in support after the Prime Minister's recent dumping of the idea of an ETS until at least 2013.

As concerned citizens and voters, we join the Climate Institute, the World Wildlife Fund and the Australian Council of Social Services, Australia Conservation Foundation, Greenpeace and the Victorian National Tertiary Education Union in urging the Rudd government to adopt the Greens interim proposal - lifted from the government's Garnaut climate change review report. It would tax greenhouse gases at modest \$23 a tonne for two years, and use the revenue raised to compensate households and trade-exposed industries for cost increases, and boost the research, development and operation of large scale clean renewable energy projects.

The levy could be a precursor to an emissions trading scheme that caps greenhouse gases emitted by industry and requires companies to buy permits for carbon discharged. Such a levy can easily be transformed into an ETS.

The benefits of such action will be substantial, and will include a competitive Australia joining in the already booming global clean energy economy. Immediate action will also provide increased certainty for businesses who want to invest in clean technologies and climate solutions, and are currently hesitant.

With your leadership, Australia can start the shift to a clean energy economy and help rebuild momentum for ambitious global action. We strongly urge you to discuss our concerns with your party colleagues now – then act!

We hear the government being told it failed to explain, or adequately promote, its CPRS. But that scheme was never credible; it would have effectively paid polluters to continue business as usual - and locked out the chance of Australia cutting emissions as firmly and as fast as the science

tells us is necessary. The Prime Minister is said to reject a carbon tax, and that the government would instead meet its pollution reduction targets by investing more in renewable energy and carbon sequestration. This is the Opposition's basic line, and would take many years to even start moving the private economy as a whole – or public behaviour - towards sustainability!

It's about time the rich countries in the world, like ours, faced the reality of our excessively high contribution to global warming compared to our combined 15% of the world's population. The U.N. reported in 2008 that we rich countries: "account for almost half of all CO2 emissions. If the entire world emitted like high -income OECD countries – an average of 13.2 tonnes of CO2 per person - we would be emitting six times our sustainable carbon budget." This UN statement is based on the world's temperature not increasing more than 2 C – a target supported by us in the 2010 Copenhagen accord. The UN says if we exceed this increase, "irreversible and dangerous climate change will become unavoidable"... Seas are rising, and so is the average maximum temperature – faster than all predictions.

Labor needs to have a credible climate policy going into the election this year. The target of a 5 per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 will not be met unless Mr. Rudd develops a new plan.

Yours faithfully

Ken Blackman

Secretary

for

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"...absolute political cowardice, absolute failure of leadership and absolute failure of logic."
P. M. Rudd 2009

