

## **Joint Letter by 66 Climate Action Groups**

**5 May 2009**

The Hon Kevin Rudd MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

### **RE: PROPOSED CHANGES TO AUSTRALIA'S TARGET AND CPRS**

Dear Prime Minister

The 66 Climate Action Groups signing this letter are completely shocked by your decision yesterday to further weaken Australia's position on climate change.

We believe that you have abandoned your duty of care to protect the Australian people as well as our species and habitats from dangerous climate change.

Groups strongly oppose your new 2020 emissions reduction target band of 5-25% below 2000 levels:

- We have consistently called for targets based on the best available climate science, which calls for reductions of at least 40 – 50% by developed countries by 2020.
- The 5% unconditional target would, according to the world's top scientists, commit us to catastrophic climate change and the IPCC's worst-case scenarios.
- The 25% upper target, if applied globally, would lead to at least 2°C of warming and the loss of the Great Barrier Reef. This is an untenable position and we cannot accept it.
- These targets also remain out of step with the unconditional targets agreed to by other developed nations (the UK, US and EU have agreed to cut emissions by 34-46%, 20% and 20-30% from 1990 levels respectively).

Groups also assert that a global agreement based on 450ppm CO<sub>2</sub>e will not protect the Great Barrier Reef, as you suggested yesterday. International scientists estimate that atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> needs to be no more than 350ppm, but preferably closer to 300ppm, to avoid dangerous climate change.

Your decision to further weaken the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) by increasing the number of free permits, delaying the Scheme by a year and introducing a \$10 price cap in the first year, completely flies in the face of the thousands of submissions that were lodged by concerned communities, scientists and individuals.

Groups, once again, recommend you urgently fix the fundamental flaws in the CPRS:

- Urgently exclude international permits from the CPRS so that actual emissions in Australia will begin to fall from 2010 onwards, rather than reductions only taking place from 2035 onwards (as forecast by the Federal Treasury).

- Remove the emission floor in the CPRS (which prevents emissions from falling below the 5% target), to ensure that individual action can contribute to additional emissions abatement over and above the 5-25% emissions reduction target band.
  - The proposed 'Australian Carbon Trust' does not address our concerns on the need for individual action to be additional to the 5% target. The Trust simply formalises what individuals were always able to do anyway. No matter what individuals do to reduce emissions we can never go beyond the 5% target.
- Exclude both reforestation and deforestation from the Scheme – Groups note the current treatment creates a market distortion in favour of increasing native forest logging. This requires urgent rectification.
- Replace ALL free-permits in the CPRS with a system of Border Adjustments, to ensure that these sectors transition to a lower emissions intensity without being unduly disadvantaged in the international market.
- Change the requirements for the \$3.9 billion of assistance to coal-fired generators under the CPRS to be conditional upon a phase-out plan for these generators.

Yesterday's announcement has confirmed to us that you have not been able to stand up to the immense pressure exerted upon you by industry.

Your election promises to the Australian people on climate change were clear and unequivocal. Despite all of this, you have chosen to put industry interests above the national interest.

We stand by our comments to the Senate last month – we believe that your climate change 'spin' is deceptive and misleading to both the Australian public and the international community.

The 66 Climate Action Groups signing this letter urge you to treat climate change as the emergency it is, and broker an ambitious new climate deal for Australia that truly addresses the needs of future generations, builds new jobs in ecologically sustainable industries and protects our precious species and habitats.

Contact for this letter: Tracey Tipping, Climate Action Pittwater, ph: 0411 861 269.

**Yours sincerely**

1. Aldinga Climate Action Group, SA
2. Alpine Riverkeepers, NSW
3. Ararat Greenhouse Action Group Inc, VIC
4. Australian Forest and Climate Alliance, National
5. Bathurst Community Climate Action Network (BCCAN), NSW
6. Bayside Climate Change Action Group (BCCAG), VIC
7. Bendigo Sustainability Group (BSG), VIC
8. Beyond Zero Emissions, VIC
9. Ballarat Renewable Energy and Zero Emissions (BREAZE), VIC
10. Boroondara Sustainability Network, VIC
11. Canberra and South East Region Environment Centre Inc, ACT
12. Carbon Equity, VIC
13. Citizens Climate Campaign, NSW

14. Clean Energy For Eternity - Jindabyne, NSW
15. Clean Energy For Eternity - Palerang, NSW
16. Climate Action Brisbane, QLD
17. Clean Energy For Eternity - Bega, NSW
18. Climate Action Canberra, ACT
19. Climate Action Hobart, TAS
20. Climate Action Newtown, NSW
21. Climate Action Pittwater, NSW
22. Climate Action Tomaree (WG of EcoNetwork Port Stephens), NSW
23. Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle, NSW
24. Climate Emergency Action Network (CLEAN), SA
25. Climate Emergency Action Network (CLEAN) West, SA
26. Climate Emergency Network, VIC
27. Dandenong Ranges Renewable Energy Association Inc, VIC
28. Darebin Climate Action Now, VIC
29. Drummoyne/Canada Bay/Lowe Climate Action Group, NSW
30. Emerald for Sustainability, VIC
31. Environment House, WA
32. Families Facing Climate Change, VIC
33. 450ppm, NSW
34. Green Coast Catalysts, NSW
35. Greenleap Strategic Institute, VIC
36. Greenlivingpedia – For A Sustainable Future ([greenlivingpedia.org](http://greenlivingpedia.org))
37. Jamberoo FutureCare, NSW
38. Katoomba Area Climate Action Now, NSW
39. Kyogle Climate Action Network, NSW
40. Lismore Climate Action Group, NSW
41. Locals into Victoria's Environment (LIVE), VIC
42. Lighter Footprints, VIC
43. Moonee Valley Climate Action, VIC
44. Moreland Climate Group, VIC
45. Mount Alexander Sustainability Group (MASG), VIC
46. Mums, Kids and Climate, SA
47. National Toxics Network, NSW
48. Otway Ranges Climate Action (ORCA), VIC
49. Our Future is the Natural World, NSW
50. ParraCAN, NSW
51. People for a Safe Climate (Inner City Sydney CAG), NSW
52. Plug-In Australia, NSW
53. Quest 2025, QLD
54. SEE-Change Inc, ACT
55. SEE-Change Inner South, ACT
56. South-East Region Conservation Alliance (SERCA), NSW
57. Southern Otway Landcare Network (SOLN), VIC
58. Surf Coast Energy Group, VIC
59. Sustainability in Stonnington, VIC
60. Sustainable Environment Education Development Inc (SEED), VIC
61. Sustainable Living Foundation, VIC

62. Sutherland Climate Action Network, NSW
63. UQ Climate for Change (Students and Staff at UQ), QLD
64. Victorian Climate Action Centre, VIC
65. Yarra Climate Action Now!, VIC
66. Zero Carbon Network, SA

## **More about Climate Action Groups**

Climate Action Groups are collectives of ordinary but highly concerned Australians who have come together in their local communities to act on climate change.

Climate Action Groups have experienced extraordinary growth over the past few years, with over 200 groups (representing thousands of people) currently operating in local communities across Australia.

The dedication and determination of these groups is testimony to a deeply felt community concern about the threat of climate change and increasing unease in the community about the direction of climate policy in Australia.

Groups generally have no political affiliations, and often represent the people and sentiments of a broad cross-section of Australian society.

In early February 2009, the first ever Climate Action Summit was held in Canberra, bringing together over 500 participants representing around 150 Climate Action Groups. The summit has led to greater organisation, communication and collaboration among groups.

Climate Action Groups are rapidly proving themselves to be a powerful force in the public climate debate in Australia.