



... a better life for all

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29<sup>th</sup> November 2013

### **Climate Change Authority - Caps & Target Review Submission**

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Animal Justice Party (AJP) welcomes the opportunity to put forward a submission to the Climate Change Authority (CCA) regarding the pending review on caps and target. Like many other organisations we endorse the CCA in calling for higher targets than currently exist.

As with the majority of Australians, the AJP wants stronger action on climate change in line with protecting our health, prosperity and sustainability as a nation. This support for action on climate change continues to be reaffirmed in polls across Australia. The ABC's vote compass recently showed 61 per cent of Australians thought the government should do more to tackle climate change.<sup>1</sup> More recently on 17 November, 60,000 people at 130 locations around Australia demonstrated their concern that they wanted the Federal Government to aim higher on climate change.

The AJP fundamentally supports climate change abatement action because of the deleterious impact on *all* living beings in Australia. Emissions must be reduced to zero by 2050 at the latest. We believe the CCA should make this explicit in its recommendations to the Australian Government.

The Climate Commission's 'Critical Decade' report of 2013 notes a number of key findings, including a very strong consensus that the climate is changing and that human activities are the primary cause. We have already begun to see erratic changes in our climate with a proliferation of storms, floods and fires with significant impact. The Commission's report of 2013 also notes that our best chance of staying below the two degree limit requires global emissions to decline as soon as possible with a target of zero to be reached by 2050. With the temperature already approaching one degree above pre-industrial levels we are nearly half way there. We therefore need to intensify our efforts this decade.

The Commission also reported on the social, economic and environmental consequences of a changing climate as well as the substantial risks for health, property, infrastructure, agriculture and natural ecosystems. Protecting our natural ecosystems is an important ecological mechanism in enhancing environmental sustainability.

Climate change is affecting many species which have shifted their spatial distribution and changed their behaviour in ways consistent with observed changes in climate. This has caused significant stress on our wildlife, through injury and loss due to habitat destruction, drought, fire, flood, high winds, warming of the oceans and other climatic destructive events.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-11-11/vote-compass-full-data-explorer/5016244>

Australia has also seen an overwhelmingly high rate of wildlife extinction compared to other nations. In our short time since settlement we have the worst record in the world for the rate of wildlife mammal extinction. This loss of wildlife also results in a loss of knowledge about environmental sustainability that wildlife can teach us. We continue to lose species as we continue to range further and further into the natural habitat of native flora and fauna, which are crucial to ecological sustainability. The loss of just one species in a food web has the potential to have far reaching effects throughout an entire eco-system, resulting in further extinctions and increased populations of other species, resulting in loss of environmental biodiversity.

The CCA should make clear and significant recommendations to the ongoing protection of our native flora and fauna, ensuring our biodiversity. The increase of National Parks space and their need for protection from damaging recreational and farming purposes needs to be a key objective. Increasing potential forest space allows for greater Co2 storage. We also know that the reduction of forests has been linked to rain patterns adding further urgency in protecting them from avoidable use.

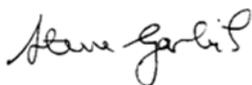
The impacts of climate change on food production and food security are a global issue already in many countries. With populations set to increase this is only going to become a greater problem. Given this future scenario it will be important for the CCA to make recommendations with regard to methane emissions as they pose a significant potential for fast abatement turnaround on climate change. Methane is 23 times more potent, has increased 500 per cent more and lasts less time in the atmosphere than does Co2.

Agriculture has the potential to play an important role in the reduction of methane, through the reduction of meat production. Addressing emissions from this industry will be significant as we seek to address global concerns of food security. An associated factor in addressing agriculture emissions relates to the health benefits of a plant-based diet. The economic benefits of a healthier population have the potential to offset financial impacts associated with climate change abatement. In addition, reducing the amount of land required for livestock farming will open up more land for carbon sequestration allowing us to further mitigate the effect of CO2 in our atmosphere.

It is becoming clear that if we continue to burn fossil fuels at the rate we are, we will not even come close to reaching our emissions budget by 2050, which will have significant detrimental effects to our economy, the environment and society as a whole, which may be irreversible and unliveable.

We thank the Commission for the opportunity to make this submission to the CCA on behalf of the animals of Australia.

Yours faithfully



Professor Steve Garlick PhD  
President  
Animal Justice Party

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