

03/06/2013

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To whom it may concern,

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Climate Change Authority (CCA) for the opportunity to submit to the first review of Australia's national caps and target. Climate change is an issue that affects everyone and I appreciate the opportunity to have my concerns heard.

As this submission will outline, my primary concerns are:

- The current global level of green house gas emissions and what portion of the emissions reduction is Australia's equitable share;
- The need for Australia to use a carbon budget to monitor our greenhouse gas emissions, instead of a simple carbon target; and
- The need for consistent and graded emissions targets, including short and medium term targets, as well as an indicative emissions reduction trajectory.

#### Current Global Emission and Australia's Equitable Share

This year the world's atmospheric carbon-dioxide concentration rose to 400ppm. This is significant because according to climate scientists the last time carbon-dioxide concentrations were this high was 4 million years ago and Canada was covered in jungle (!). Suffice to say the earth was a very different place then. Reaching this level of carbon-dioxide concentration in the atmosphere is also concerning because it indicates that the world is struggling to meet it's emissions reductions commitments and the risk of catastrophic climate change occurring is increasing.

Climate change is a global issue and as such, the international community must work together to address it. When considering national emissions targets and trajectories for Australia, it is important to consider what Australia's equitable share of the total global emissions budget is. This is a difficult and complicated question, however as the CCA Issues Paper states some factors to consider are:

- The current emissions generation rate of the nation, per capita;
- The capacity of the nation to act in terms of it's economic development and wealth;
- The capacity of a nation to act in terms of it's access to technology, particularly in terms of low emission energy generation;

- The nation's historical contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions levels;

As a developed, resource rich nation Australia is in the fortunate position of having a significant capacity to reduce its emission levels. Unlike many other nations, Australia has an abundance of renewable energy resources as well as the education level and economy required to implement the large-scale change needed. Given that the majority of Australia's emissions come from stationary energy, this alone would go a long way towards reducing our emissions levels.

In addition to this, as a nation with an economy that was developed on greenhouse gas emitting technologies, I believe that Australia has a moral obligation to take a leadership role in emissions reductions. With many developing nations attempting to raise their standards of living and help people rise out of poverty, Australia has an obligation to assist others to have the same opportunities we were fortunate enough to have.

In light of these considerations, I believe that Australia's national emissions budget must reflect the following:

- Australia's historic contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions levels;
- Australia's high per capita emissions levels;
- Australia's high capacity for emissions reductions through both its relative wealth and its abundance of renewable energy resources.

### Emissions Targets and Emissions Budgets

One of the primary roles of the CCA review is to determine what emissions reduction targets Australia should undertake going into the short and medium term future. At present, Australia has committed to an emissions reduction target of 5% on its 2000 level by 2020. A point that is commonly raised is that this is a reduction on its annual emissions level; that by 2020 Australia's annual total emissions will be 5% less than they were in 2000. This target does not take into account the total emissions Australia produces while reaching this target. It does not reflect the cumulative contribution Australia has made to climate change while trying to achieve this goal.

I believe this point is fundamentally important because, as outlined in the Climate Institute's policy brief<sup>ii</sup>, the impact greenhouse gas emissions have on the environment is related to the cumulative total emissions that have been released into the atmosphere, not the annual emissions of each country. Therefore in order to successfully manage climate change I believe it is the cumulative total, also known as the carbon budget, which needs to be managed. As with other budgets, a carbon budget encourages emissions saving upfront as a more effective way of reaching a target. As noted by the Climate Institute, "the more you delay action the more you pay to catch up"<sup>iii</sup>.

Given the high risks associated with catastrophic climate change, I also believe that a conservative approach to emissions management should be taken. All long term emissions targets should be designed to ensure an 80% chance of achieving a maximum global average warming of 2 degrees Celsius.

### Consistent Emissions Targets and an Indicative Trajectory

In relation to Australia's short and medium term emissions, I believe that targets for these time frames are needed in order to create greater accountability and encourage both the Government and private sector to act. As long as the targets seem far away people will be less likely to act on them. In line of this, and based on the recommendations of the Climate Institute's policy brief, I believe the following short and medium term emissions reduction targets should be adopted;

- An emissions reduction target of at least 25% (on 2000 levels) by 2020;
- An emissions reduction target of at least 50% (on 2000 levels) by 2030;
- Adopting an indicative national trajectory for 2020 to 2050, which would be in line with Australia's long term emissions reductions targets and outline the predicted rate at which this reduction would take place.

### Conclusion

I would again like to thank the CCA for allowing me to submit to this review. I understand that climate change is a complicated issue. It is the intersection of so many different problems; environmental and scientific, economic and political. But as much as the issue is the intersection of different problems, so too can the solutions to climate change bring a multitude of benefits to society. Transitioning world economies to more sustainable, less emission intensive technologies will bring a multitude of benefits to all those involved and I believe that setting clear, decisive emissions reduction targets will be an important part of making this happen.

Regards

Natalie Bragg

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.economist.com/news/science-and-technology/21577342-carbon-dioxide-concentrations-hit-their-highest-level-4m-years-measure>

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ii The Climate Institute Policy Brief: Defining an Australian Carbon Budget,  
<http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/articles/publications/operating-in-limits.html/section/478>

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