



Caps and Targets Review
Climate Change Authority
GPO Box 1944
Melbourne VIC 3001

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Dear Chairperson,

Re: Climate Change Authority Caps and Targets Review

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment upon the Caps and Targets Review being conducted by your Authority.

The South East Councils Climate Change Alliance (SECCCA) is a collaboration of 8 Councils to Melbourne's south and east. SECCCA develops and implements regional programs for climate change mitigation and adaptation. We work across many sectors within our communities, we have a range of innovative and successful projects underway and we are effective and efficient vehicles for regional action.

These comments are from SECCCA and do not necessarily represent the views of any member council. Our council members are diverse, with perhaps those having a strong manufacturing base holding different views on these matters to those with a strength in the commercial sector, for example.

The aim of policy regarding caps, targets, market mechanisms and voluntary actions should be to limit global warming to no more than 2 degrees celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. The broad range of climate change issues with which councils already deal become considerably more challenging as we approach this increase in average temperatures.

Leadership

The issues paper in section 1.2.3 recognises the high degree of Uncertainty and risk that characterises future global emissions, temperature increases and the costs and opportunities of mitigation. This degree of uncertainty and risk provides a compelling reason for the application of the precautionary principle in our responses. It also indicates that there is a need for high-level leadership such as that provided by the Climate Change Authority to develop and advocate for evidence-based policy such that mitigation responses are cost-effective and adaptation responses do not bring unintended consequences.

Section 3.2.1 refers to Global emissions budgets and comments that rapid emission reductions might '*require abrupt and disruptive economic and social change*'. If and when the science shows that rapid reductions are necessary, it will be too late to develop a context of constructive response as the change occurs. Leadership that allows such a response is long-term, credible and inclusive.

Intermediate targets needed

Section 2.2.3 discusses Emissions reduction targets for 2020 to 2050. SECCCA considers that setting intermediate targets within this timespan would be useful as a means of reframing emissions reduction as an ongoing process rather than as points in time at which progress

will be assessed. Without commenting on what targets for which years (strong evidence regarding what is needed to limit warming to no more than 2 degrees should assist here) intermediate targets allow more precise recalibration of effort.

Box 3 in the Issues paper prefers to the Commonwealth Government's 2020 target policy and suggests that the Government will not increase Australia's emissions reduction target 'until the level of global ambition becomes sufficiently clear.' While the realism of this position is understood it does make limiting warming to less than 2 degrees unlikely. Someone has to show leadership in staking out the moral position that the serious consequences attend upon us all if warming is more than 2 degrees must not be allowed to occur. If every government waits for someone else to prompt global ambition to strengthen, we're all in trouble. This suggests that along with setting strong targets, Australia should increase its advocacy and diplomacy to influence other countries to take simultaneous action. If the setting of strong targets is accompanied by support for research, development and commercialisation of the technologies that can support the achievement of strong targets, there is opportunity here for Australia rather than risk.

RET drives innovation

There is evidence that the Australia's renewable energy target has already prompted innovation and action to reduce emissions. For example, the Climate Institute finds that the renewable energy target '*will increase the share of Australia's electricity coming from renewable energy to 20 per cent and drive thousands of jobs and investments worth tens of billions of dollars in regional areas*' (Climate Institute **Media Release April 5, 2012**).

In an article on The Conversation last year (26 June 2012,) Ian Lowe of Griffith University commented '*A clean energy boom that continues to go from strength to strength saw \$260 billion invested last year in renewable energy. That's a new investment record. In fact, four of the last five years have seen the previous year's record surpassed.*

Last year was the first year global investment in clean energy outstripped investment in traditional fossil fuel energy. <https://theconversation.com/rethink-ret-and-the-clean-energy-finance-corp-could-kick-off-a-new-industrial-revolution-7769>

SECCCA is pleased to offer the above comments and would welcome the opportunity to expand upon them if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'GH' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Greg Hunt
Executive Officer
30 May, 2013