

Submission to the Climate Change Authority

Australia's Climate Policy Options

I am making a submission to the Climate Change Authority as an Australian individual who is very concerned about climate change and who wants the Australian government to take strong measures against global warming. I submit a number of brief responses to the key sections in the second draft report.

Principles for Assessing Policies

I agree with the three principles that are proposed as they address the main aspects that need to be considered.

Policy Options

My opinion is that a form of emissions trading scheme (ETS) with an emissions cap is the best policy option for reducing climate change. It is a method that is assured to reduce carbon emissions by a significant amount (provided the cap is set low enough). It is a cost effective method that follows the polluter-pays principle. A cap and trade ETS has the further advantage of being able to link to international schemes. In terms of equity, compensation should be provided to lower income households that might otherwise be disadvantaged.

I am opposed to the current government system of purchasing emission reductions because all taxpayers are paying for this approach. This is an aspect that the government does not highlight. I also believe that it is less cost-effective than an ETS and that it will prove to be limited in its effectiveness once the "easy" reductions are made.

In addition to an ETS, there is a need for some additional regulations. For example, it is very disappointing that Australia has not already tightened the emissions standard for vehicles in line with most European and US standards.

Australia has very significant emissions from agriculture and these need to be tackled, but an ETS is not easily applicable to an industry with many small emitters. In this case, voluntary carbon pricing seems a reasonable policy choice.

Final Remarks

I strongly encourage the government to adopt climate change policies that will quickly and substantially reduce Australia's carbon emissions. Australia needs to at least meet the targets proposed in the Paris Agreement, and preferably much stronger cuts. We are one of the largest per capita emitters in the developed world currently. However, as a country with technological skills and huge natural assets we should lead the world towards a low carbon future.

Stephen Miller