

The Australia Institute: Media release

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Delay is denial, it's time to act

The government's climate change announcement is a shameful attempt to cover-up a lack of leadership and policy, according to The Australia Institute.

Rather than 'moving forward', the government is delaying what the scientists and economists tells us is inevitable – the need to put a price on carbon.

Executive Director Dr Richard Denniss said the idea of a citizens' assembly is bizarre given the Australian people will elect 150 representatives on August 21.

"This is neither good politics nor good policy," said Dr Denniss.

"The majority of Australians will see this for what it is: a feeble attempt to defuse climate change as an election issue. But the time for talking is over; it's time for action.

"On issues as important as tackling climate change it is the Prime Minister's job to show conviction rather than seek consensus. The idea that we can delegate this to a citizens' assembly when the government already has expert advice from Professor Ross Garnaut and the Chief Scientist to name two is absurd.

"Imagine if Prime Minister Hawke had asked a citizens' assembly about floating the dollar or if Prime Minister Howard had asked such a group about the GST? Instead, they argued the case for reform and prosecuted their policy.

"The initiatives that were announced regarding renewable energy, new standards for the construction of power stations and rewarding 'early movers' are welcome but trivial.

"It's time to stop having complex conversations and start implementing some simple solutions. A carbon tax would discourage pollution, raise revenue and finally get us moving in the right direction," concluded Dr Denniss.

For media enquiries contact Serena Rogers on 0421 759 262.