



**Media Release
Sunday, March 8**

Back to the drawing board!

Environment and community groups unite to call on the PM to send the CPRS back for urgent redesign

This morning, 24 environmental, aid, development and community organisations released an open letter to the Prime Minister, urging him send the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) 'back to the drawing board' for urgent redesign.

Organisations signing on include community groups, as well as Greenpeace Australia Pacific, the Australian Conservation Foundation, World Vision Australia and Oxfam Australia. The letter was facilitated by the peak non-government body on climate change, Climate Action Network Australia.

“There is an urgent need to respond to climate change here in Australia”, said John Hepburn, Climate Change Team Leader of Greenpeace Australia Pacific. “But the Government's proposed CPRS in its current form is flawed, ineffective and counterproductive”.

The open letter expresses deep concern at the Australian Government’s proposed 5 – 15% emissions reduction target range for 2020.

“The adoption of such a low 2020 target by Australia will seriously weaken the prospect of a strong global agreement in Copenhagen in December” said Tony Mohr, Climate Change Manager of the Australian Conservation Foundation.

Next Tuesday, March 10, the Government will release its draft legislation to implement the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. However, the 24 environmental, development and community organisations say that the proposed scheme is significantly flawed.

“The flaws in the proposed CPRS include the excessive compensation that will be provided to the biggest polluters” said Jane Holden, Executive Director Climate Action Network Australia. “Another flaw is that, by including a price cap, the proposed scheme places an artificial limit on the cost of pollution”.

The complete letter and list of organisations that endorsed the letter can be viewed on the following page.

Contacts

- Climate Action Network Australia: Jane Holden, Executive Director, 0407 227 633
- Greenpeace Australia Pacific: John Hepburn, Climate Change Team Leader 0407 231 172
- Australian Conservation Foundation: Tony Mohr, Climate Change Manager 0408 806 206

An open letter to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd

March 8, 2009

Dear Prime Minister Rudd,

We, the undersigned, representing over 24 NGOs and community organisations, urge you to intervene and send the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) back to the drawing board for urgent redesign.

We strongly support the rapid introduction of an effective scheme which is based on the polluter pays principle, will deliver the emissions cuts necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change, will provide long term economic security for Australia and will send a signal to the rest of the world that Australia is ready to show the leadership needed to reach a global agreement in Copenhagen.

However, there are significant and fundamental problems with the CPRS in its current form which prevent it from achieving this.

We are deeply concerned about the Australian Government's proposed 5 – 15 per cent emissions reduction target range for 2020. The adoption of such a low 2020 target by Australia will seriously weaken the prospect of a strong global agreement in Copenhagen in December. If adopted globally, this target would not avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

We note that in 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicated that developed countries as a group need to reduce their emissions by between 25 per cent and 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 to help keep global greenhouse gas concentrations below 450ppm.

Leading climate scientists have recently indicated that the rate of emissions has increased in the past decade and cuts need to be deeper and faster if we are to avert catastrophic climate change and save areas such as the Great Barrier Reef and the Murray-Darling from permanent devastation.

There are significant design flaws in the CPRS which must be addressed, including:

1. Providing compensation to the biggest polluters which is excessive and grows rather than shrinks over time. Requiring big polluters to pay their fair share would mean that auctioning revenue can be directed to building for the future including assisting developing countries adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change;
2. Creating emissions permits as property rights and undertaking to pay big polluters for five years if a decision is needed to cut emissions more quickly than anticipated. This could require massive public payments;
3. The inclusion of a price cap which places an artificial limit on the cost of pollution;
4. Allowing unlimited trading of permits on the international market. This means that all emissions reductions can be outsourced to other countries, allowing business as usual in Australia;
5. Setting a limit on emissions reductions so that any voluntary action to cut emissions will simply free up permits and allow heavy industry to keep on polluting.

The proposed CPRS locks in failure for the next ten years. Half measures are not enough. The costs of inaction will be greater than the costs of action. We urge you to put the interests of current and future generations of Australians ahead of the interests of big polluters, and mandate strong emissions reductions now.

Signed:

1. Australian Conservation Foundation
2. World Vision
3. Greenpeace Australia Pacific
4. Climate Action Network Australia
5. Oxfam Australia
6. Environment Victoria
7. National Parks Association of NSW
8. Rising Tide
9. Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
10. OzGreen
11. Climate Change Balmain Rozelle
12. Locals Into Victoria's Environment
13. Moreland Climate Group
14. North Shore Climate Action
15. C4 Healesville
16. Upper Yarra & Dandenongs Environment Council
17. Women's Environment Network Australia
18. Tarrangower Branch Mount Alexander Sustainability Group
19. Dandenong Ranges Renewable Energy Association
20. Ballina Climate Action Network
21. Broadwater Community Dunecare group
22. Epping Beecroft CAG
23. Earthsharing Australia
24. Greenleap Strategic Institute