

An open letter to Kevin Rudd

We need a strong target to cut greenhouse emissions

3rd December 2008

Dear Mr Rudd,

There is growing and disturbing speculation that the Federal Government's soon-to-be announced interim target for emissions reductions will be in the range of 5 to 15 per cent by 2020.

The latest report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) identified emissions reduction pathways that are required if we are to maintain a reasonable chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change. Based on these IPCC scenarios and an equitable distribution of per capita emissions between countries, developed country emissions need to be 25 to 40 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020.

We, the undersigned, representing over 50 NGOs and community organisations, are concerned that even these targets (25 to 40 per cent) may be too low, with many scientific observations showing that climate change is happening faster than even the worst case IPCC models predicted.

Australia has a real opportunity to play a leadership role in the international climate negotiations, but the only way to do this is if we set a strong emissions reduction target at home.

If Australia announces a target of anything less than 25 to 40 per cent, it will send a negative signal to the world in the lead up to the crucial Copenhagen negotiations in December 2009, and will make a strong global agreement much more difficult to reach.

Australia's response to climate change, and the targets you set over the next 12 months, will be the defining test of your leadership and future generations will judge our actions.

As Garnaut said, *"On a balance of probabilities, the failure of our generation would lead to consequences that would haunt humanity until the end of time."*

A 5 to 15 per cent target would represent a profound failure.

We urge you to stand up to the pressure from the big polluters and adopt a strong emissions reduction target that will keep alive the possibility of a strong international agreement at Copenhagen in 2009.

Yours sincerely,

1. Steve Shalhorn, Executive Director, Greenpeace Australia Pacific
2. Greg Bourne, Executive Director, World Wide Fund for Nature
3. Don Henry, Executive Director, Australian Conservation Foundation
4. Nina Hall, Executive Director (Acting), Climate Action Network Australia
5. Jeff Angel, Executive Director, Total Environment Centre
6. Simon Sheikh, National Director, GetUp!
7. Virginia Young, The Wilderness Society
8. Cam Walker, Coordinator, Friends of the Earth Australia
9. Anna Rose, Co-Director, Australian Youth Climate Coalition
10. Cate Faehrmann, Executive Director, Nature Conservation Council of NSW
11. Piers Verstegen, Director, Conservation Council of Western Australia
12. Toby Hutcheon, Executive Director, Queensland Conservation Council
13. Julie Pettett, Chief Executive Officer, Conservation Council of South Australia

14. Kelly O'Shanessy, Executive Director, Environment Victoria
15. Dr Elaine K. Harding, Coordinator, Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
16. Emma King, Coordinator (Acting), Environment Centre of the NT
17. Andrew Cox, Executive Officer, National Parks Association of NSW
18. Margaret Steadman, Executive Officer, Tasmanian Environment Centre Inc
19. Georgina Woods, Rising Tide
20. Sue Mathews, Trustee, The Mullum Trust
21. Phil Glendenning, Director, Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education
22. Mary Tinney, Coordinator, Sisters of Mercy Earth Link
23. Sr Geraldine Kearney, Delegate for Social Responsibility, Sisters of the Good Samaritan
24. Jill Finnane, Coordinator, Pacific Calling Partnership
25. Thea Ormerod, President, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change
26. Keely Boom, Director, Australian Climate Justice Project
27. Teresa Capetola, Climate Change and public health research cluster, School of Health and Social Development, Deakin University
28. Julien Lacave, Projects Manager, Australia and New Zealand Solar Energy Society
29. Paul Murfitt, Chief Executive Officer, Moreland Energy Foundation Limited
30. Tessa Dowdell, Climate Convenor, Australian Student Environment Network
31. Janet Cavenagh, Clarence Branch of Climate Change Australia
32. Jacquie Svenson, Convenor, Climate Action Coogee
33. Lizette Salmon, WATCH, Wodonga & Albury Towards Climate Health (WATCH)
34. Annie Nielsen, Executive Member, Parramatta Climate Action Network
35. Bev Smiles, Central West Environment Council
36. Bob Phillips, President, Lake Macquarie Climate Action
37. Bradley Smith, University of Queensland Climate for Change
38. Jim Morrison, President, North Coast Environment Council
39. Carmel Flint, Co-ordinator, North East Forest Alliance
40. Carolyn Ingvarson, Convenor, Lighter Footprints Climate Change Action Group
41. Robin Knox, Project Manager, COOLmob
42. Dr Gabe Lomas, Association for Berowra Creek
43. Geoff Walker, Save Happy Valley Coalition Aotearoa
44. Janet Klein, Secretary, Adelaide Hills Climate Action Group
45. Tony Gleeson, Alstonville High School Community Sustainability Advisory Committee
46. Vanessa Morris, Executive Officer, SEE-Change
47. Shakti Burke, Kyogle Climate Action Network
48. Sheila Monahan, Convenor, South East Region Conservation Alliance
49. Sue Fielder, Ballina Climate Action Network
50. Tony Gleeson, Broadwater Community Dunecare
51. Sue Lewis, President, Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle.
52. Ben Henley and Vicki Brooke, Co-Convenors, Climate Action Newcastle
53. Erland Howden, Hills Against Global Warming
54. Roger Pye, President, Canberra Environment and Sustainability Resource Centre
55. Dr Mark Diesendorf, Deputy Director, Institute of Environmental Studies, UNSW
56. Dr Stewart Martin, Chair, South Australian Branch of the Australia and New Zealand Solar Energy Society (ANZSES)