



Media Statement 4 May 2009

Time to move on climate action and the low carbon economic recovery

Australia has given a vital and strategic boost to international efforts for an effective global climate agreement by committing to reduce Australia's carbon pollution 25% by 2020 if other countries join in, says the Southern Cross Climate Coalition of environment, union, welfare and research groups.

"This commitment unleashes Australia's negotiating effort on the difficult challenge of getting the commitments from developed and major developing countries necessary to achieve an agreement to stabilise greenhouse gas levels at 450 ppm or lower in Copenhagen later this year," the group said.

The Southern Cross Climate Coalition of Australian Council of Social Service, Australian Council of Trade Unions, The Climate Institute and Australian Conservation Foundation, with WWF (the Worldwide Fund for Nature), called on all parties to get behind the package of reforms announced today and pass appropriately amended legislation for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

"This internationally credible target, coming after COAG cleared the way for renewable energy legislation and further steps on energy efficiency, means the CPRS should be supported so business can get on with investing in the clean energy and other low carbon jobs that other competitor countries are investing in.

"It's crucial for the welfare and job security of Australians that Prime Minister Rudd has joined other world leaders in combining responses to the economic and climate crises so we can maximise sustainable jobs growth in the emerging global low carbon economic recovery.

"We acknowledge that the Government is now proposing a softer start to the emissions trading scheme but believe that the stronger 2020 target gives Australia the best chance of helping to achieve a good international climate agreement which will be an important step in tackling the climate crisis and giving sufficient certainty for business.

"With this significant step forward we now support passage of the legislation and will continue to urge that further action is taken to increase and support investment in clean energy and other low carbon jobs and industries.

“Extra investment in transformational renewable energy technologies like solar thermal, and extra incentives for retrofitting commercial buildings, are important next steps.”

The world’s leading climate scientists (the IPCC) have said that to achieve 450 ppm-e or lower, developed countries, alongside global efforts, will need to reduce emissions by at least 25% to 40%. Professor Garnaut recommended that Australia’s fair share of such an agreement would be a 25% reduction off 2000 levels by 2020.

Professor Garnaut has noted that it is very much in Australia’s national interest for such an agreement to avoid the dangerous impacts of climate change on Australia’s economy, environment and security.

“While our individual organisations have a range of positions on tackling the climate crisis and will continue to urge further improvement, together we believe that, on balance, the proposed climate legislation now takes Australia forward on credible action to tackle climate change and growing a low carbon economy and the legislation should be passed.

“It’s time for all sections of business, community and politics to move forward with climate action and a low carbon economic recovery,” the group said.

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