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Media Release

30 May 2011

Community leaders join call for carbon price

Over 140 Australian leaders and community groups have thrown their support behind Australia saying “yes” to cutting carbon pollution and “yes” to a clean energy economy.

The ‘We Say Yes’ statement launched in Canberra today and featured in a full page ad in The Australian, has been endorsed by prominent Australian scientists, doctors, writers, religious leaders, actors and community groups.

Signatories include Nobel Laureate Peter Doherty, Indigenous leader Professor Patrick Dodson, actor Rebecca Gibney, author Tim Winton, TV personality Suzie Wilks, Fr. Bob Maguire AM, artist Ken Done, entertainer Katie Noonan, Australian Rugby Union player David Pocock and former leaders of the Liberal Party, Dr John Hewson and Malcolm Fraser (former Prime Minister of Australia).

The Australian Youth Climate Coalition national director Ellen Sandell said, “Australia is now facing a big decision - are we going to say ‘yes’ to action on climate change and a price on pollution, or are we going to sit back and do nothing, to the detriment of our environment and to the economy in the long-term?”

“The signatories to this statement demonstrate the enormous community support for a price on pollution, despite the scaremongering being generated by a loud minority of big polluting companies who have self-interest at heart,” Ms Sandell said.

Australian Wallabies and Western Force Rugby union player David Pocock said he had a social responsibility to use his public profile to fight for action on climate change.

“It's my responsibility to speak for those who aren't given the opportunity to speak for themselves. Last year on a visit to a community development project in rural Zimbabwe one of the local workers said to me ‘we're just so worried about what you people in the west are doing polluting the atmosphere - our atmosphere’,” Mr Pocock said.

“So today, and everyday, I say yes to acting on climate change in meaningful ways on behalf of myself and my friends in Zimbabwe and all around the world who cannot speak here today.”

Former Leader of the Liberal Party, Dr John Hewson said, “Kevin Rudd was right, this is the moral imperative of this Century. We are at a tipping point. It calls for a substantive, urgent and apolitical transformation of our society. We can't afford to wimp on targets,



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pricing structures and other measures. The political failures of our generation will cost future generations dearly.”

Doctors for the Environment Australia and Remote Area Health Corps Medical Director Dr James Ross said his organisation was standing up for its communities and patients by supporting a price on carbon pollution.

“We believe that introducing a price on carbon pollution is a crucial step for Australia, and for the communities that we come from and represent. In the long run it will help to protect us all from the health impacts of climate change - the biggest challenge to human health in the 21st Century,” Dr Ross said.

Artist Ken Done reflected on the need to better protect our unique environment. “If we want to leave the environment in a better shape than we have enjoyed it we need to take some action now.”

Indigenous Leader Prof. Patrick Dodson expressed the need for Australia to act to help our poorer neighbors. “In Kiribati last year I saw the terrible impact climate change is having right now on vulnerable people. They did not cause the problems they are now facing. The cause lies in industrialized countries like Australia. It is simply unfair to ask people in places like Kiribati to take responsibility for a situation we helped to bring about. We have to take effective action here and now.”

Canberra farmer and representative of Environmental Farmers Network, John Ive said, “A carbon price will spark the innovation and adaptation needed to reduce increasing greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to ensuring a more accurate cost of environmental consequences is reflected in the market place. Australian agriculture needs to play its part. We need to encourage the mind set that a carbon price will open new opportunities rather than stifle current activity.”

“There will never be a better time than right now to kick-start Australia’s clean energy future – and that starts with putting a price tag on pollution. Today’s statement demonstrates that Australia is ready. As representatives from across the community, we say ‘yes’ to a price on pollution,” said Ms Sandell.

Today’s activities kick off a National Week of Action, which includes rallies in every capital city on Sunday, and builds on yesterday’s launch of a TV commercial.

For further information go to www.SayYesAustralia.org.au. TV footage and audio available on request.

To arrange an interview Monday:
Rebecca Tucker 0408 031 269 and Skye Laris on 0439 422 388

Full list of signatures will be released on Monday at the press conference in Parliament House, Senate Courtyard, Canberra 10.30am