

GREENHOUSE AND ENERGY



ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE
GREENHOUSE AND ENERGY
AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ISSUE SHEET

It is now widely accepted that emissions of greenhouse gases are having a significant impact on the earth's climate and that these changes are likely to become more acute in the next 100 years.



Australia's continental average temperature has increased by approximately 0.8°C since 1910, with the 1990s being the hottest decade in recorded history and 1998 being the warmest year. By 2030, scientists are predicting that Australia's average temperature will have risen by between 0.4°C and 2.0°C. By 2070, average temperatures are likely to have increased by 1.0°C – 6.0°C.

These temperature increases will have a profound impact on our society, economy and environment. We will experience more severe droughts, more fires and less water for irrigation, industrial and urban uses. Mean flows in the Murray-Darling Basin could decrease by 12-35% by 2050.

Coral reefs and alpine areas are also likely to be hit hard by climate change. In the Great Barrier Reef, severe coral bleaching events are predicted to become commonplace over

the next 20 years. Scientists are predicting that climate change is likely to narrow and eliminate the geographic ranges of many species and result in numerous extinctions.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has indicated that to stabilise the earth's climate, we need to cut emissions by between 50%-60% from "business as usual" by end of the century. Australia's Chief Scientist recommends Australia cut its greenhouse emissions by 80% by the end of this century, and the Democrats will work to achieve this long-term goal.

Democrats Senator Lyn Allison chaired the Senate Inquiry into Australia's response to greenhouse. The Inquiry's report recognises that Australia's per capita emissions are the highest in the world. Serious deficiencies were identified in Australia's efforts to reduce emissions.

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Democrat Action Agenda

International Cooperation and National Framework:

1. Ratify the Kyoto Protocol;

2. Ensure Australia plays an active role in developing a multilateral response to climate change through the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), including binding commitments and measures to enable all nations to adapt to the effects of climate change;

3. Amend the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000* (Cwlth) to increase the mandatory renewable energy target to an additional 10% of power supply by 2010, 20% by 2020 and 50% by 2050;

4. Amend the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act* to include triggers ensuring:

- all new and substantially redeveloped power stations require Commonwealth approval;

- national emission standards for all power stations; and
- all Commonwealth government grants are subject to an environmental assessment and approval;

5. Introduce legislation that incorporates Australia's obligations under the FCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, including:

- mandating specified emissions reduction targets;
- a national greenhouse strategy outlining how targets will be met;
- annual statements to the Parliament on emission levels; and,
- emission reduction targets for all Commonwealth agencies;

6. Phase out broad-scale land clearing of remnant and regrowth vegetation by 2005;

7. AusAid greenhouse program to provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries, particularly Pacific island states to assist with emission reduction and climate change adaptation;

8. A carbon levy, and an emissions trading marketplace framework;

9. Prohibit oil shale developments until emissions from these developments can be kept to an acceptable level;

10. Mandatory energy performance standards within the Building Code of Australia for all new and substantially refurbished commercial and residential buildings;

11. A national Voluntary Code of Practice on Building Efficiency to encourage "best practice" for all new and substantially refurbished commercial and residential buildings, backed by tax incentives;

12. Continue indefinitely the photovoltaic rebate scheme;

13. Re-fund renewable energy Cooperative Research Centres;

14. Greenpower targets for electricity retailers; and,

15. Industry assistance for Australian companies to capture at least 5% of the global renewable energy market by 2015.



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