

# Climate Change Action Update

Climate change continues to hit the headlines with new, fresh predictions about its impact on our livelihoods. Comments flow from heavily polluting industry bodies about how emissions trading will affect jobs. This document will help workers understand what is happening in Australia and around the world and give our Climate Heroes the 'inside edge' as we fight together to ensure effective and equitable climate action is delivered.

## Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme

In December last year the Australian Government announced its plans for an Emissions Trading Scheme. The draft legislation for this scheme was introduced into Parliament in March and on May 4 the Government announced further changes. The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme includes:

- Set a carbon reduction target of 5% by 2020 and 15% if a global agreement is reached. The recent announcement paved the way for 25% cuts provided criteria for an ambitious global deal are negotiated.
- Delay commencement of scheme from July 2010 until July 2011.
- Fixed permit price of \$10 for the first year of the scheme. Previous economic estimates suggested the likely price would be \$20-\$25.
- Free allocation of either 90% or 60% of permits for more emissions intensive trade-exposed activities. This has also been extended with a 'Global Recession Buffer' meaning eligible companies will receive an extra 5 or 10% of free permits.
- Free allocation of permits for coal-fired generators.
- Household assistance to help transition to low carbon economy. An estimated \$6 billion in 2011-2012.

<http://www.climatechange.gov.au/emissionstrading/legislation/index.html>

The Government's unconditional target of 5% remains well below the 25-40% reduction that IPCC scientists (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) say is necessary for wealthy countries to ensure dangerous climate change is avoided. QPSU Climate Policy is for a 30% reduction.

Another major concern about the scheme is the large amount of compensation for heavily polluting industries. Companies such as Rio Tinto stand to receive \$600 million in compensation. It's estimated taxpayers will fund the activities of heavily polluting companies to the tune of \$7.4 billion during the scheme's first 2 years.

Excessive handouts of this nature entrench a 'high' carbon economy and the longer the delay the more expensive the transition to a low carbon economy will be.

Rather than helping to create jobs, the danger is that these measures will mean Australia misses out on great opportunities to create green collar jobs now. It could also make it harder for workers to access the skills and training they need to make the transition to green collar employment and take up low-carbon jobs. The other problem with excessive handouts and delays to the scheme is that this shifts the burden from heavily polluting industries, who can make cuts at comparatively low cost, to other parts of society, thus making the achievement of any emissions reduction target more difficult.

## Federal Senate Inquiry into this Bill

A Senate committee is investigating whether the scheme will effectively reduce emissions. It is also assessing the scheme's impact on jobs. The committee's terms of reference state that it should examine the choice of an ETS as the central policy mechanism. Its work should also examine whether it reduces pollution at lowest economic cost. Further, it should determine whether it establishes long term incentives for clean energy investment and how it contributes to global climate change solutions. The Senate Report is due to be released any day. You can find out more about the Senate Inquiry's work here - [http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/climate\\_ctte/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/climate_ctte/index.htm)

## USA Carbon Reduction Plan

The Chairs of two important climate change committees in the USA House of Representatives released a draft plan for carbon reduction. 'The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009' has the potential to build momentum for a global deal. It's the first time the USA has adopted a national approach for emissions reductions. It follows years of climate change denial from George Bush. The draft USA Carbon Reduction Plan, released in April, proposes:

- Carbon reduction target of 17% of 2005 levels by 2020. 83% by 2050. A further 10% can be provided through international carbon sinks.
- Renewable energy requirement of 25% in 2025
- Supplemental reduction through international anti-deforestation agreements. Equivalent to 10% of 2005 levels by 2020.
- Provision for rebates to be provided to US emissions intensive industries. Fall back of 'border adjustment' program
- Draft includes provisions to establish and promote green jobs and skills.
- Worker transition & consumer assistance provisions still to be provided.

# Climate Change Action Update (continued)

---

This USA plan is in its infancy and it's facing many political difficulties. Still, these are positive steps that could help build momentum towards a global deal. It's great to see one of the heaviest polluting countries developing a plan for action.

You can see how the Australian and American schemes compare thanks to new ACF analysis which you can see here:

[http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news\\_id=2203](http://www.acfonline.org.au/articles/news.asp?news_id=2203)

[http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press\\_111/20090331/acesa\\_summary.pdf](http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press_111/20090331/acesa_summary.pdf)

## Global Meeting on Climate Change

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen will be held from December 7-December 18, 2009. This meeting will decide the global framework for reducing emissions- post Kyoto. Climate change is a world problem and there is broad acknowledgement that it will require global solutions. There's no doubt it's going to be challenging to reach a substantial international agreement, particularly in these difficult economic times. Yvo de Boer, of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change stated the essentials of an international agreement in Copenhagen are:

1. How much are the industrialised countries willing to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions?
2. How much are major developing countries such as China & India willing to do to limit the growth of their emissions?
3. How can developing countries be assisted so they can engage in reducing their emissions and how will these nations access climate change adaptation funding?
4. How is that money going to be managed?

Every Australian faces a serious question. Do we want our leaders at the global negotiations offering little? Or do we want them at the forefront of negotiations advocating for an ambitious, effective and fair global solution? Finally, and more importantly, how do we get involved to ensure Australian and international action on climate change?

## QPSU Climate Action

QPSU members have demonstrated already the importance of jobs by getting involved in the Fight 4 Jobs campaign. This is another opportunity for members to show why we want -

1. A 'just transition' for workers- training, skills for a low carbon economy.
2. To ensure that heavily polluting industries do not use the claims of job losses to protect their profits and hide their failure to reduce their emissions. Furthermore that emission reduction programs aren't used as an excuse to sack workers.
3. That an ambitious ETS can create jobs now to deal with the economic crisis through sustainable industries, rather than further skewing investment in favour of heavily polluting industries.

4. A global deal at Copenhagen with emissions cuts for developed countries like Australia of at least 25% by 2020.

The Southern Cross Climate Coalition (Australian Council of Trade Unions, Australian Conservation Foundation, World Wildlife Fund, Australian Council Of Social Services, Climate Institute) has offered cautious support for the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme to be passed as the 25% target. This boosts Australia's credibility, and improves the likelihood of a positive outcome at the UN climate negotiations later this year.

This shift is happening thanks to the hard work of community members who are getting involved in campaigns. Together, our community is telling our government loudly and clearly that we need to know the real, science based targets we need to meet to help stabilise CO2 levels at 450ppm. We don't want a government that is hindering a global climate change deal.

There is still much that needs to be improved in the proposed legislation. We can't afford further delays to the scheme's introduction and additional handouts to big polluters. As Climate Heroes we will continue to fight for improvements to this proposed legislation at every opportunity over the coming months.

## Take Action Right Now

Here is a list of things you can do right now to send a clear message:

1. Tell Queensland Senators that you want a strong, viable scheme that ensures workers are not disadvantaged and that creates incentives for green collar jobs now. <http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/senators/homepages/state.asp?state=qld>
2. Talk with your workmates about what is needed to deal with climate change and how we can ensure Australians have decent, well paying, sustainable jobs in the transition to a low carbon economy.
3. Get involved in other community groups, like the Australian Conservation Foundation, to push for greater action on climate change. - <http://www.acfonline.org.au/members/member.asp>
4. Hold a World Environment Day event on 5th of June at your workplace to talk about Climate Change and get your workplace playing a part in the United Nations Environment Programme initiative 'Climate Heroes'. This is to raise awareness for the simple idea: Your planet needs You! This is a chance to call on others to do more to address this issue. <http://www.unep.org/wed/2009/english/content/climateheroes.asp>

We'd love to hear your thoughts about what action needs to be taken to deal with climate change and how Climate Heroes can roll up their sleeves and ensure Australia does more to tackle climate change. You can email your ideas right now to [climate@qpsu.org.au](mailto:climate@qpsu.org.au)

