

Lighter Footprints Climate Action Group – Eastern suburbs Melbourne

Submission to Climate Change Authority (CCA) on its draft report recommendations and conclusions in *Reducing Australia's Greenhouse Gas Emissions – Targets and Progress Review*

In general -

The CCA is an important body with this report indicating the value it has to offer. We agree with the carbon budget approach, and that 5% target is inadequate for Australia's national interest. We think the 15% target pushes too much of the required effort to reduce emissions further into the future and the 2030 target range does not properly reflect what must be done to meet the carbon budget.

We believe that a target of at least 25% by 2020 is required, plus a tighter carbon budget, and we recommend that longer term targets should be based on the carbon budget - not a trajectory to 80% by 2050.

Rationale -

- Australia will be one of the developed countries most affected by climate change – including the increased water stress which would have major knock-on effects for agriculture, as well as other drastic impacts on biodiversity and ecosystems in Australia
- There will also be flow-on effects from the adverse impact of climate change on Australia's neighbours in the Pacific and Asia which is not only a problem for them but or us.
- We have international obligations whereby Australia will be expected to consider increasing the ambition of our target to 2020 as part of UNFCCC processes from April 2014 and for targets beyond 2020 in time for the Ban Ki Moon Leaders Summit in September 2014.

So - We need to increase our targets and set a carbon budget that is appropriate to the risks we face

- We agree with CCA assessment that current 5% unconditional target is inadequate
- Australia's economy is more emissions-intensive than many of our trade partners and comparable countries – which means we have more to do to make our industries ready for a carbon-limited future. Every year of slow, insufficient action means more missed opportunities to spur innovation, and transform Australia into a dynamic leader in the rapidly growing clean technology sector
- The costs of inaction are substantial. Garnaut's review found that at the global level unmitigated climate change would probably cause global economic output to fall by around 8 per cent by the end of the twenty-first century
- The Climate Change Authority's modelling is impressive – It shows that the cost to the economy of choosing a 25% target over a 15% target is equivalent to 0.02% of economic growth. **This makes the economic case against acting strongly extremely weak because moving to a stronger target has very low additional macroeconomic costs.**

- The environmental case for a stronger target is compelling. The risks of loss of species, degradation of productive habitats, high levels of ecological disruption and impacts to infrastructure increase as effort is weakened.
- Our most important trading partners will expect Australia to do our fair share of a successful effort to tackle climate change. It is therefore in Australia's interest to send a clear signal to the world that we will act strongly on pollution reduction.
- It is in our national interest to galvanise international action, not inhibit it – showing leadership by **increasing our target to at least 25% by 2020** will help encourage more ambitious targets and action by other countries. Even if our contribution to global emissions is not as high as those of China and the US, we can help strengthen global emissions reductions, which will reduce the impacts we face in the future.

Powerful driver to act now:-

If action is not increased we are on a path to global warming of 3.5-6°C with devastating social, environmental and economic consequences.

Australians care deeply about climate change and want their Government to do more

- The majority of Australians are in favour of stronger action on climate – 61% according to VoteCompass which polled 1.2 million people. Whilst support varied by voting patterns, there is a strong bipartisan element.

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We ran a forum on climate change during the election (August 13) in the Kooyong electorate (a very safe Liberal seat) and the hall was packed out with over 300 people. Josh Frydenberg and Anna Burke and Janet Rice were speakers and they were all impressed with this crowd's strong support for climate change action.

Our suggested recommendations

Please take courage from the support that is out there quietly expecting strong action from the CCA, and press for the strongest targets that you can.

- Australia should move to an unconditional target of **at least 25% by 2020**. This would help avoid more dramatic and costly emission reductions at a later date to avoid dangerous climate impacts.
- The carbon budget proposed should consider ensure that Australia is doing its fair share within a global carbon budget that gives at least a 75% certainty of limiting climate change and using the more stringent limit of 1.5°C of warming by 2100 from pre-industrial levels.
- The CCA should set **2025 and 2030** targets based on the carbon budget selected and **not a trajectory to 80% by 2050**. It is the carbon budget which reflects the impact of our emissions on the climate – rather than a spot target for pollution reduction.

Carolyn Ingvarson
 Convenor
 Lighter Footprints

