

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

I write this submission as a concerned citizen of Australia.

I live in a rural setting where observing nature with one's own senses is a daily business activity.

During the last decade, changes in weather and nature here are noticeable: specifically, strong or extreme events seem to be becoming more common.

These are not "proof" of climate change, but they are certainly consistent with its predicted effects.

And it is not just where I live; similar statements can be made all around the planet.

I do not question the predictions of scientific experts, because they are in almost universal agreement.

I have read IPCC scientific reports in 2007 [1] and recently [2] that are written for the general public. The recent report [2] has again made clear that the planet is warming, that human activity is the cause, and that urgent action is required.

I am greatly concerned about food supply security, and ocean acidification.

I am greatly concerned that simple calculations [3] show that catastrophic climate change can only be avoided by leaving most fossil fuel reserves unburned, and yet the world economy still expects that they will all be mined and burned. Everyone needs to wake up to this reality.

Because of this I am greatly concerned that policy makers continue to promote fossil fuel mining and export in Australia. This is extremely short-sighted and harmful policy.

Unfortunately our policy makers seem unable to differentiate science from opinion and vested interest. Also, they fail to appreciate the dangerous combination of crucial aspects: the scale of the problem; the time lag between release of greenhouse gases and their consequences; and the positive feedback effects such as ice melting. Without the insight to appreciate how these aspects can combine to create a catastrophe, our policy makers are too slow to act. They fail to realise that once the catastrophe is upon us and unquestionably apparent, by that time it will be impossible to reverse because of these aspects.

I believe that each generation has a moral obligation to its children: to not squander important resources, and to not create environmental damage or pollution that the next generation has to live amongst.

Australia's climate is extremely vulnerable; we should aim for less than 2 degrees of warming, even with this amount our natural environment and economy will be adversely affected and people's quality of life will be reduced.

The above considerations are far more significant and unmanageable than short-term economic costs incurred by moving away from large-scale fossil fuel use.

Greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced urgently. They must be reduced to zero by 2050 at the latest. The recommendation of 25% emission reduction target by 2020 is a minimum short-term target.

The above is what I think, it is what informed people think, and so I expect it is what my government should do.

[1] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPCC_report

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPCC_Fifth_Assessment_Report

[3] <http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/global-warmings-terrifying-new-math-20120719>