



Queensland  
Conservation

**PROTECT  
CONSERVE  
SUSTAIN**

**Climate Change Authority**

**Collins St**

**Melbourne**

**30 May 2013**

## **Submission Caps and Targets Review**

Queensland Conservation (QCC) is the peak environment organisation of Queensland. Our membership is made up of over 60 environment and community organisations. Together, our network of organisations, represent the interests of over 100,000 Queenslanders.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our perspectives on the Caps and Targets review paper.

### **What should Australia's 2020 emissions reduction target be?**

Australia must adopt a greenhouse reduction target that equitably contributes to stabilising global atmospheric greenhouse gas emissions and then reduces these to pre-industrial levels (280-300 ppm) as soon as possible.

The Australian government has set a pathway to increase emission reductions in line with the commitments of other nations. QCC believes that these conditions have now been met. The current 5% reduction target should now be increased, in line with our equitable contribution to stabilising global emissions.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), industrialised countries (the Annex 1 Parties to the UNFCCC), including Australia, must collectively reduce their emissions by 25% to 40% below their 1990 levels by 2020 to have any chance of limiting global warming to 2°C.

Australia should be considering an emissions reduction target of at least 25% by 2020.

## **What should annual caps for carbon pricing be 2015-2020?**

Caps must support the trajectory towards achieving the target. Given the short time frame provided, it is difficult, without creating a high degree of conflict, to allocate annual emission caps. Ideally caps should be assigned well in advance and over a longer term period. In response to the question, no sector should be allowed to exceed their current annual emissions and any individual company or entity, which does increase emissions, should be subject to a financial penalty.

We would propose that a lowest cost abatement approach be considered to 2020 (in line with the trajectory). In addition, the Authority should recommend that pilot market-based strategies be trialed to demonstrate effective strategies for the future and promote innovation. We stress that these pilots should be additional to actions that meet the target and not be used as an alternative to these actions. It is important that any targeted activities are measurable, verifiable and permanent emission reduction targets.

The Authority should now be urgently considering the proposed emission caps for all sectors post 2020. This would allow debate on the effectiveness of those caps and provide plenty of lead up time for sectors to adjust and prepare.

Currently there are a number of uncovered sectors with respect to carbon pricing, notably land use and agriculture. There are increasing concerns about the emission profile of new and existing coal and gas extraction activities. These need to be brought into consideration or risk a blow out in the national accounts.

By example, the recent decision by the Queensland Government to allow further broadscale land clearing has opened up the prospect of-by some estimates- an increase in emissions of 370 MT CO<sub>2</sub>-e. This prospect is currently unaccounted for.

## **What guidance should the authority provide the government on emissions?**

### **International Negotiations.**

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the global carbon budget will be full in 2017. This means that no additional emissions can be generated, if International Agreements to limit temperature rise to 2°C, are to be met.

This effectively means that Australia should be phasing out (and certainly not increasing its fossil fuel use) post 2017. Australia should also be taking a position at International negotiations, for the global phasing out of fossil fuel use and the subsidies that underpins their use. It should also be withdrawing from the trade in fossil fuels and investing in alternative, clean technologies.

Australia needs to adopt and act upon these policies domestically; to build its credentials in international negotiations. Australia has little authority in these negotiations if it remains amongst the highest per capita generators of greenhouse gases and continues to expand its fossil fuel exports.

## **Opportunity of a Clean, low-emission Economy.**

The Chinese have two meanings for the word crisis; one is problem and the other opportunity. The Authority needs to provide further guidance to the government on the need to take the opportunities presented by the climate crisis.

QCC notes that the German government has already achieved a 20% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions (based on 1990 levels). It has now increased its ambitions on both emission reductions and clean energy alternatives.

The Germans have based their climate and energy policies on the need for energy security, the need to reduce environmental harm and the opportunity to build a clean economy and global expertise in renewables. Already this has resulted in significant investment in the clean energy sector, in employment and in German technology and expertise being exported to global markets.

To assist the public policy debate of clean and low emission economies, QCC recommends that the government, in the next term of Parliament, introduces a public discussion Paper on Australia: Beyond Fossil Fuels.

## **Developing a Pathway to Emission Reductions.**

80% emissions reductions by 2050 should be considered a minimum for Australia. In that context, a clear pathway towards those goals should be established. This will result in a more effective and manageable process.

Governments need to be mindful of the impacts of climate change on their people, their economy and their environment. The later they act, the greater the consequences on their citizens. The later they act, the greater the urgency for change by future generations.

## **Clean Energy.**

Emission reductions, the development of clean alternative technologies, processes and behaviour are all part of the same agenda. They must be considered together for emission reductions to succeed.

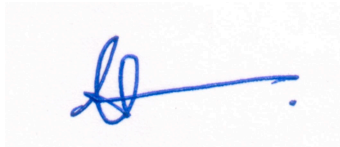
Australia needs to derive all of its energy requirements from renewable sources in the future. Given the Authority is choosing to focus on the electricity sector, QCC recommends that this goal should set the context for renewables uptake. Our view is that the renewable energy target for the LRET must be maintained at the current level for 2020 and progressive targets set for 2030, 2040 and 2050. The target for 2030 should be set at a minimum 50% renewable energy for electricity.

Energy efficiency is essential and should be planned to reduce energy use by at least 30% of by 2020 across all sectors of society including industry, business, government, communities and households. All new residential dwellings and commercial properties should be zero emission through

requirements on best practice building, climate sensitive design and use of renewable energies and green energy offsetting. Existing dwellings should be supported in improving housing envelope efficiency, replacing high-energy equipment with clean/lower energy alternatives and fitting on-site energy generation (IE. solar PV)

### **Key Recommendations.**

- 1. Increase the National Emission Reduction target**
- 2. Advocate an International phase out of fossil fuels and the subsidies that support their use**
- 3. Adopt strong domestic policies (IE. Increased emission reductions, fossil fuel subsidy phase out and clean energy expansion) to build Australia's credibility in international negotiations**
- 4. Introduce a Beyond fossil Fuels public policy discussion paper**
- 5. Increase the National Renewable Energy Target to at least 50% by 2030**
- 6. Set National Energy Efficiency targets**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'T' followed by a horizontal line and a small dot.

Toby Hutcheon  
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