



## Australian Government action on climate change

Climate change is one of the greatest social, economic and environmental challenges of our time. Expert scientific evidence confirms that human activity is altering the climate and this is likely to lead to impacts on rainfall, water availability, temperatures, bushfire frequency, health, heritage and biodiversity for current and future generations.

The Australian Government is committed to ensuring Australia meets its responsibilities in facing this global challenge. This includes a comprehensive approach to:

- reduce emissions in Australia in the short and long term
- work with the international community to develop a global response that is effective and fair
- prepare for the inevitable impacts of climate change.

### Action in Australia

The Australian Government has embraced a comprehensive plan of action to reduce our national emissions. Key elements include:

- **A commitment to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by 60 per cent on 2000 levels by 2050**

A major study on reducing emissions, the Garnaut Review, will report in mid-2008.

Along with Treasury modelling and other analysis, this will support the Government in determining short-term and medium-term targets to get us to our 2050 goal, while ensuring continued prosperity for Australians.

- **Implementing a comprehensive emissions trading scheme by 2010 to deliver these targets**

An emissions trading scheme is a market mechanism that provides incentives to reduce emissions in a cost-effective way.

- **Setting a 20 per cent target for renewable energy by 2020 to dramatically expand the use of renewable energy**

Renewable energy sources such as wind and solar will be a key part of the global solution, and Australia has vast potential in these key areas.

- **Investing in research and development on low emissions technologies**

Tackling climate change will require a wide range of appropriate technologies, including clean fossil fuels, biofuels, hydrogen and energy efficiency.

The Government is investing \$500 million in a Renewable Energy Fund; \$500 million for a National Clean Coal Fund; \$500 million for the Green Car Innovation fund; \$150 million for solar and clean energy research and \$240 million to establish Clean Business Australia, tackling climate change through projects with a focus on productivity and innovation.

- **Helping households and businesses to use energy more wisely**

Through direct financial incentives, strengthened energy efficiency regulations and targeted information, households will be helped to use less energy while saving money. Key measures include \$10,000 low interest loans for Australian households to implement energy and water savings, rebates for energy-efficient insulation for 300,000 rental homes, \$8000 rebates for rooftop solar power panels, \$1000 rebates for solar hot water systems, \$500 rebates for rainwater tanks and grey water recycling, improved cost-saving energy and water efficiency standards for new homes and appliances, and making every school a 'solar school' within eight years.

- **Managing our land to reduce emissions**

The Government will work with farmers to encourage sustainable farming practices that reduce emissions and develop carbon sinks.

## International Cooperation

Climate change is a global problem requiring a global solution.

Ratifying the Kyoto Protocol was the first official act of the Government. With this step, Australia has committed to ensuring its greenhouse emissions over 2008 to 2012 are no more than 8 per cent above 1990 levels. This was an important first step in bringing emissions under control, and links Australia into the main international discussion on future international approaches.

But more action is needed. Australia is a leading player in international negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, an international treaty for addressing climate change.

Australia was instrumental in securing agreement at the December 2007 Bali negotiations on the roadmap for post-2012 international action on climate change.

In these negotiations, Australia is working to find international approaches that are:

- effective, with all major emitters involved
- fair, by recognising the legitimate development needs of all countries
- economically sensible, allowing for continued global and domestic prosperity.

Australia is working with many countries to take practical steps to reduce emissions. Engagement with China, soon to be the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, and a key trading partner for Australia, will be a major focus.

## Dealing with the Impacts of Climate Change

Even a strong and comprehensive approach to emissions will not avoid some level of climate change. The National Climate Change Adaptation Plan will support enhanced research into climate change science and potential impacts.

The Government will also work with the agriculture and forestry sectors to identify and respond to potential impacts of climate change, including through the \$130 million Australia's Farming Future plan. In addition, the Great Barrier Reef Rescue Plan will provide \$200 million to promote farming practices that will reduce impacts on this threatened national icon.