



# MEDIA RELEASE

**Senator the Hon Penny Wong**

*Minister for Climate Change and Water*

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## **AUSTRALIA'S SUBMISSION TO COPENHAGEN ACCORD**

Minister for Climate Change and Water, Senator Penny Wong, today announced Australia would formally submit its existing 2020 target range for reducing emissions to the Copenhagen Accord.

The Rudd Government is committed to tackling climate change both nationally and internationally because it is in Australia's national interest and critical for our future.

“Consistent with our commitment to do no more and no less than the rest of the world, we are today submitting our existing target range: 5 per cent unconditional, with up to 15 per cent and 25 per cent both conditional on the extent of action by others, as set out in May last year,” Senator Wong said.

Senator Wong said the decision to maintain the Government's target range was consistent with the approach we expect to be taken by other nations.

The Government will not increase Australia's emissions reduction target above 5 per cent until:

- the level of global ambition becomes sufficiently clear, including both the specific targets of advanced economies and the verifiable emissions reduction actions of China and India;
- the credibility of those commitments and actions is established, for example, by way of a robust global agreement at the next United Nations Climate Change Conference in Mexico, or commitment to verifiable domestic action on the part of major emitters including the United States, India and China; and
- there is clarity on the assumptions for emissions accounting and access to markets

The Government's aim and intention is to reach conclusion on these matters as soon as possible, as an ambitious and comprehensive global agreement is squarely in Australia's national interest. That is why the Government is keeping the existing range, including the 25 per cent target, on the table.

If these matters are not resolved in 2011, the Government will then set scheme caps consistent with the five per cent target to provide business certainty for the commencement of the first year of full trading under the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme from July 2012.

“Targets are only worthwhile if they are backed by a credible plan to meet them,” Senator Wong said.

The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is a fully costed plan that will allow Australia to meet the full target range that is endorsed by the Federal Opposition.

The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme puts a limit on Australia's carbon pollution and makes polluters pay.

It is the approach to tackling climate change that is endorsed by mainstream conservative leaders like the former Prime Minister, John Howard, former Opposition Leader, Malcolm Turnbull and former Treasurer, Peter Costello.

It is also the approach Tony Abbott supported when in Government and as recently as late last year despite his view that climate change is ‘absolute crap’.

Alternative policies that don’t cap pollution levels and don’t make polluters pay cost far more and cannot guarantee targets are delivered. That is why the rest of the world is taking the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme approach.

“The world is acting on climate change, with over thirty countries including the major nations of the European Union and Japan operating or implementing emissions trading schemes like Australia’s Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme,” Senator Wong said.

The Copenhagen Accord, strongly supported by both developed and developing countries, is the first time there has been agreement to:

- specify emissions reduction targets or actions by both major developed and developing nations;
- limit global warming to less than 2 degrees;
- provide the finance necessary to support mitigation and adaptation action in developing countries; and
- measurement, reporting and verification by both developed and developing countries.