

## **Submission to the Victorian Government's "A Climate of Opportunity" Summit Paper**

### **To:**

Climate Change Summit  
Office of Climate Change - Department of Premier and Cabinet  
1 Treasury Place  
Melbourne Victoria 3000

### **From:**

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To whom it may concern,

I make the following submission regarding the Victorian Government's "A Climate of Opportunity" Summit Paper.

### **Background to climate change**

Australia's environment and economy is at great risk due to climate change. In particular, reduced rainfall levels and water supplies and sea level rises are very serious concerns.

Most of rural Victoria has severally depleted water supplies, and Melbourne itself has greatly reduced supplies with water storages at very low levels compared to previous years.

Hotter temperatures have also increased the incidence and severity of bushfires, which in turn can affect water supplies and rural production.

### **Setting goals for emissions reduction and target temperatures**

The Victorian Government should specify goal of its climate change policy in the Green paper in terms of emissions reduction and target temperatures for stabilisation.

The goal of climate change policy should be defined as avoiding dangerous climate change and returning to a safe climate.

Recently emerging scientific literature indicates that a 450 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>-e target is now inadequate to avoid dangerous climate change. A revised target for stabilisation should be set at 350 ppm CO<sub>2</sub>-e.

A maximum target temperate increase limit should be specified as 2 degrees Celsius, and the desirable maximum increase to be 1.5 degrees Celsius.

## **Setting targets for emissions reduction**

The Green Paper should recommend targets for Victoria's contribution towards avoiding dangerous climate change. The latest climate science indicates that these targets should be:

- Ensure that greenhouse emissions commence falling by 2010
- A legislated target to cut emissions by 60% by 2020 from 1990 levels, and that this be reviewed periodically to ensure it is consistent with the science

## **Encouraging new zero carbon emission industries**

The Victorian Government has a good opportunity to attract zero and low carbon industries through policy mechanisms that drive uptake and deployment of clean and low carbon industries in Victoria.

This will require additional mechanisms to supplement the existing Renewable Energy Target (VRET) and the upcoming Emissions Trading Scheme (CPRS).

The Victorian Government should develop a 'Green Industries' strategy that identifies target industries for establishment and development in Victoria and also identifies the necessary policy support and workforce skill-base to attract these zero emissions clean energy industries to Victoria.

A 'Green Energy Institute' should be established to focus on, promote and facilitate these opportunities.

## **Ensuring the effectiveness of emissions trading**

Public money should not be preferentially allocated to ongoing subsidies for fossil fuel energy industries. Exemptions from and compensation for the emissions trading scheme should not be granted to fossil fuel energy industries as this will distort and compromise the effectiveness of the scheme.

## **Establishing energy policies to complement emissions trading**

The following policies to should be set to complement emissions trading:

- Effective renewable energy targets
- Effective feed-in tariffs
- Stringent energy efficiency standards and planning controls
- Strong residential and commercial building standards
- Vehicle fuel efficiency standards
- Reduced number of freight trips through improved efficiency and a shift to rail, and public transport investment will all be needed to complement emissions trading and reduce emissions.

## **Improved building regulations**

The Victorian Government should develop a clear policy agenda to dramatically improve the energy and water efficiency of Victoria's entire existing and future building stock. This will:

- Require regulations and programs that will cover new and existing buildings of all types
- Mandate 7 star efficiency for new residential and commercial buildings
- Require regulations for fittings and appliances used within these buildings
- Apply to both rental and freehold properties.
- Require mandatory disclosure and performance standards for energy and water efficiency could be applied to all types of buildings at the point of sale or leasing.

### **Immediate emission reduction initiatives**

To achieve a decrease in emission reductions from 2010 onwards, the Victorian government should introduce:

- Mandatory capture of methane gas from Victorian landfills
- An effective solar feed-in tariff (60 c/KWh paid on gross generation)
- New energy efficiency targets for the commercial and industrial sectors preferably matching the household target of 10% emissions reductions by 2010).

### **Biodiversity conservation and catchment protection**

In developing complementary measures for the agriculture, land use and forestry sectors, priority should be given to measures which have additional environmental benefits like biodiversity conservation or catchment protection.

### **A moratorium on new coal fired power stations**

New coal fired power stations will increase carbon emissions significantly, therefore a 10 year moratorium on there construction is required, until near zero emissions technology is available for them.

### **Support for near zero emissions energy production**

The Victorian Government should provide additional support and measures to provide adequate incentive for new generation to replace conventional brown coal generation such as additional support for gas or renewable energy projects that directly substitute for coal-fired generation.

## **Removal of subsidies for fossil fuel use**

The Victorian Government should complete an inventory of State and Federal subsidies that exist for fossil fuel use and immediately remove State subsidies for fossil fuel use and redirect this public spending towards emissions reductions and adaptation programs.

## **Include transport in emissions trading and increase investment in public transport.**

The Victorian Government should support the inclusion of the transport sector in an emissions trading scheme, and should also greatly increase its investment in public transport.

In particular, the rail public transport system needs to be extended to new and outer suburbs which have poor services. Limiting public transport fare prices rises to less than CPI price increases would reduce the impact of rising fuel prices on households though may not assist households in areas that are not well serviced by public transport.

Cycling and walking infrastructure will also need significant investment. Commuter quality safe cycle routes are urgently required across Melbourne to facilitate the uptake of cycling.

Additionally the Victorian Government should actively pressure the Federal Government to introduce mandatory vehicle efficiency standards for all new vehicles sold in Australia to green our car fleet.

## **Use emissions trading revenue to shield low income households**

The Victorian Government should ensure that a substantial proportion of revenue from emissions trading permit auctions is used to buffer the impact of rising energy costs for low income households.

This could include:

- A major energy efficiency program in low income households,
- Increasing energy concessions
- Introducing alternative pricing mechanisms for low income households.

New energy efficiency programs should be more targeted, focusing on geographic or demographic communities. With existing rebate programs participants are self-selecting which means that it is difficult to target resources to where they are most needed. For example, the Warm Homes program in the UK worked at a local level to progressively improve the energy efficiency of every house in target neighbourhoods which meant that Government funds were spent where they were going to have most impact in easing the burden of rising fuel prices.

## **Improved information on emissions and resource use**

Providing better real-time data about emissions and energy usage will assist efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Real time reporting on carbon emission and domestic household energy usage will focus energy efficiency opportunities and activities

## **Focus climate change adaptation on communities at risk**

The State Government's climate change adaptation strategy should identify communities and regions at risk both from climate change and from policy responses to climate change. These communities should be targeted for 'Just Transitions' programs; that is development of new industries and workforce training to ease the pain of transitioning out of polluting or unsustainable industries.

## **Allocate appropriate environmental flows to rivers**

All Victorian rivers should receive their full environmental flow allocations every year from 2009 to ensure their health, most of which have been greatly compromised by very low water flows to date. We need to reverse our management regimes so that we recognise that economic and community well-being is a product of healthy river systems and therefore that environmental water allocations should have priority over other uses so that our rivers continue to survive and in time thrive.

## **Protect biodiversity and habitat**

A 10-fold increase in funding levels should be allocated to:

- Help protect and restore Victoria's habitat for future generations
- Protection of existing native vegetation
- Reconnection of fragmented bushland across the state through very large wildlife corridors
- Increase resources for control of pests and weeds and for landholders to protect and enhance their wildlife habitat
- Conduct strong science with publicly reported systematic long-term monitoring of the State's biodiversity.
- Protection of remaining high conservation value native forests and water catchments

## **Support local climate change action groups**

The State Government should use existing networks and peak bodies to provide support for local community climate action groups by funding organizations and local government to support climate action groups across the state.

## **Victorian Climate Change Bill**

The Victorian Climate Change Bill should:

- Include annual emissions targets for Victoria to 2020
- Drive greenhouse pollution reduction including extended energy efficiency targets across the commercial and industrial sectors
- Set feed-in tariffs for renewable energy
- Mandate methane gas capture at landfill sites.
- Provide a mechanism by which all new major projects and all state government policy and investments are assessed for their impact on the State's emissions with the assumption that new major projects will be required to demonstrate that they will reduce greenhouse pollution.
- Ban new conventional coal-fired power stations
- Set a standard for new fossil fuel generation of less than 0.4kg CO<sub>2</sub>-e/kW