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

31 July 2008

To whom it may concern,

Re: Victorian Government's 'A Climate of Opportunity' Summit Paper

Wodonga and Albury Towards Climate Health (WATCH) is an apolitical climate action group that formed in June 2007. We have read your Summit Paper with interest and would like to make the following recommendations for your proposed Green and White papers:

1. Specify a target temperature &/or atmospheric greenhouse gas concentration level

At present you have not specified the goal of your climate change policy. WATCH suggests your goal to avoid dangerous climate change should be set in accordance with current best scientific evidence i.e. an atmospheric concentration of 350 ppm CO₂-e.

2. Specify a target emission reduction

At present you have not specified emission reduction goals for Victoria. You have a government goal and a household goal, but not a state-wide goal. WATCH suggests that emissions should decline from 2010 and specific targets should be set at least every two to five years eg 2010, 2012, 2014 etc. To avoid dangerous climate change Victoria should aim for zero emissions by 2020.

3. Fully engage the community on climate change

At present the community remains largely unaware of the rate and severity of climate change. We recommend you conduct a campaign that fully informs the population of the current, peer-reviewed science on climate change so they will fully engage with the necessary actions.

4. Introduce an effective solar feed-in tariff

The Victorian Government should develop an effective solar feed-in tariff of 60 c/KWh paid on gross generation, for systems of up to 10KW.

5. Remove subsidies for fossil fuel industries

The Victorian Government should remove and redirect public spending on fossil fuel industries and redirect these subsidies towards emissions reductions programs.

6. Ban new coal-fired power stations

The Victorian Government should ban all new coal-fired power stations and begin decommissioning older coal-fired power stations. Renewable energy alternatives should be introduced including solar, solar-thermal, bioenergy and wind power.

7. Introduce financial incentives for renewable energy producers

The Victorian Government should provide financial support for renewable energy projects that substitute for coal-fired power.

8. Support regional carbon sequestration

The Victorian Government should investigate the potential of pyrolysis and soil sequestration as viable carbon sequestration initiatives for landholders.

9. Support regional climate action groups

Finally, the Victorian Government should provide support for rural and regional community climate action groups, by either funding outreach programs through organisations like Environment Victoria, the Australian Conservation Foundation and Friends of the Earth, or earmarking specific funds through local governments.

Thank you for considering these recommendations.

Yours sincerely

Lizette Salmon
On behalf of WATCH