

350 Day climate action

By Lois Levy

On the 10th October, 2010 (10.10.10) people around the world will be taking action to raise awareness about the reality of climate change and the urgency for all governments and people to take effective action to reduce the level of greenhouse gases in the planet's atmosphere.

The 350.org organisation is coordinating global events for 10.10.10 and to date 4174 events are happening in 171 countries. The 350 organisation is based on the scientific statement that 350 parts per million (ppm) of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) in the atmosphere is the safe limit for humanity. However we are currently at 390 ppm and rising. These 350 events are testimony to recognition by ordinary people around the world that climate change is real and it is about time governments stopped avoiding the issue, confronted the reality that action must be taken now.

Gecko is organising a community photo event at 10am for Sunday 10th October at the Miami Organic Markets. People can take action by being in the photo, signing a letter or petition to the Australian parliament to take action now not in some distant future.

10.10.10 is an opportunity for us all to send a very important message to the Australian parliament that we expect, demand, they take action to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Even corporate Australia is calling for action now and not later, as evidenced by Marius Kloppers', CEO of BHP call for some type of carbon tax or trading system for Australia and his belief that Australia will lose economic advantages if we do not act now. Ofcourse Mr Kloppers also wanted the tax to be returned to the emitters in some way so that it was tax neutral for big business.

Scientists recommend caps on emissions which can be adjusted as needed. To hold global warming to a rise of 2Co global emissions must peak between 2015 and 2020 and fall rapidly.

Most economists say that an ETS (Emissions Trading Scheme) could be best as it will mean the lowest cost carbon cutting actions are done first and fewer costs can be passed on to the consumer. The Greens and two Independents want to revisit Garnaut's

proposition of an ETS with little compensation to big emitters and the revenue generated passed back to household to buffer rising costs.

Nicholas Stern, former adviser to the Labor UK government, believes that countries who do not reduce their emissions will face trade barriers and lose export market share. Opposers to a carbon reduction scheme frequently state that Australia doesn't need to lead the world. However the truth is we are behind many countries in the world as the European Union introduced an ETS in 2005 and were now being joined by China, Japan and South Korea and India has a carbon tax on coal since July this year. These countries are our major trading partners. As the recent article in the Courier Mail says "*As Europe and Asia lead the race to combat climate change, create green industries and make their exports less carbon intensive, Australia is being left behind.*" (25.9.10)

Surely with pressure from business, the community and Treasury the Government bipartisan think tank will realise that action now is good economic and environmental sense and one day in the not too distant future our fears for the fate of our children and grandchildren will be reduced.

Policy Options: *Courier Mail 25.9.10 "Putting a penalty on carbon emissions.*

A Tax: The Federal Government sets a fixed cost for every tonne of carbon from major emitters.

A Price: The market sets the price by trading in emission rights. European nations have had an emissions trading scheme or TES since 2005.

A Combo: BHP boss Marius Kloppers has urged the Government to adopt a combination of a tax and ETS.

A Cap: setting a cap on annual carbon emission is part of an ETS and can be part of a tax, but is more politically fraught in a tax regime.