

Dear Prof. Garnaut,

Please accept this submission (text below) to the Garnaut Climate Change Review.

I am disturbed that the debate is missing the point by concentrating on reducing emissions rather than on the actual levels of CO₂ in the atmosphere. One is rate of change the other is actual levels. Surely the danger is with actual levels, not the rate.

I think we should try to get the discussion onto burying large amounts of carbon, in particular organic material, in order to reduce CO₂ levels.

To my engineers mind there is an equation: X billion tons of carbon has been released from deforestation, Y billion tons from mining of fossil fuels, we need to put something approaching X+Y back into the ground in order to bring atmospheric CO₂ levels back down. The vegetation could be anything, even weeds would work. We (Australia and in particular Queensland) are probably better placed than almost anywhere else in the world to do it, we have large areas of marginal agricultural land, much of it already overrun with woody weed, and we have abundant mining expertise. We also tend to be able to pull off large infrastructure projects.

The obvious drawback is that microbial action would create methane which is a worse greenhouse gas than CO₂. The answer is that methane recovery from landfill is a (largely) solved problem. Also methane is a fuel which can be used for fossil fuel replacement, generating electricity or being converted to a liquid fuel (see recent breakthrough by Munich University of Technology <http://www.technologyreview.com/Energy/18234/>).

The side benefits could include:

- * Reinvigoration of rural communities (jobs in the bush).
- * Removing the negative impact on farmers of land clearing restrictions, by permitting some land clearing if the carbon is "harvested" properly.
- * Export Income, exporting carbon credits when a global trading scheme comes on line.
- * A replacement of income and transfer of labour from mining, for a soft landing from the current resources boom.
- * Soaking up of the huge amount of money which will be looking for a home from "green" investments and carbon offset schemes.
- * Laying down "renewable" fuel for future generations.

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