

Personal Submission to
The Garnaut Review

Submitted by Alex Schlotzer, Victoria

I would like to start by welcoming this review into the most serious global issue facing our collective futures and this opportunity to make my own personal submission. In making this submission I will focus on my personal experiences and the responses I believe are essential for Australia to make to combat climate change.

I have lived in many parts of Australia and have been fortunate enough to see many of the unique, special and truly beautiful places around this island continent. I have also witnessed first hand the gradual deforestation of native forests through the Daintree, around Wide Bay, Central Queensland, and Victoria's Gippsland region. I have also witnessed increases in traffic, cars, light and heavy trucks, 4WDs, and the always expanding city limits and suburbs.

Climate change is going to have a dramatic effect on Australia, and the rest of the world. We are already experiencing significantly altered weather patterns and extremes in weather. I remember speaking with 'old-timers' while living throughout tropical Queensland about the frequency and severity of cyclones and rainy seasons; and recall their dismay in the weather's changes.

I too have experienced these dramatic changes in weather and its impacts on Australia's great icons like the Great Barrier Reef, the old growth forests of Gippsland and the tropical rainforests of the Daintree in Far North Queensland. It saddens me to witness these changes knowing that they are the result of human activity and the acceleration of consumption, land clearing and greenhouse gas emissions. We are on the brink of committing ourselves to dangerous climate change. But I also believe that if we make the right decisions, use Australia's ingenuity in a tight spot and take action now, we can slow, if not reverse, the globally deadly impacts of climate change.

I believe we must set strong, science-based targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 30% by 2020 and at least 80% by 2050. These targets must be established along side a carbon trading scheme which puts a price on carbon, which will provide clarity for commerce and industry. Implementing these things will open up new opportunities, and help restore Australia's competitive advantage in clean, renewable energy, such as solar energy. It will produce substantial growth in new job areas requiring significant skilled and unskilled labour and investment in skills, research and development.

We have profound natural advantages of sun, surf and wind for our energy sources, and it is essential that we redirect massive subsidies for fossil fuels to renewable energy and energy efficiencies. Furthermore, a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas pollution by 2020, and by at least 80% by 2050, is affordable and achievable. I also believe that it is absolutely essential to ensure great energy efficiency in residential, commercial and industrial developments. It is just as important to ensure that there is an end to logging old growth and native forests.

The ground breaking research by global economists, McKinsey, showed Australia can achieve such targets the cost of just 80 cents per day for each Australian. This is hardly budget-breaking when our future depends on drastically cutting our greenhouse gas pollution. And it's a very small price to pay for a cleaner, healthier environment for our future and for future generations.

I strongly urge you to recommend that Australia sets strong, science-based targets to reduce greenhouse gas pollutions by 30% by 2020, and by at least 80% by 2050.

Alex Schlotzer