

11 April 2008

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Submission Cover Sheet

**RE: GARNAUT CLIMATE CHANGE REVIEW**

Deforestation makes up 20% of the global carbon emissions, making it one of the most critical factors when considering Australia's position in the fight against global warming.

I believe that Australia must not only take urgent and strong action to reduce deforestation rates, but it must be active in the promotion of re-forestation projects in rainforests around the world, especially in our local region of South East Asia. And both these actions must be taken now, before the post-Kyoto protocol discussions in 2012, in order to deal effectively with the current enormous and growing deforestation problems.

The federal government could seek advice from a number of sources. The United Nations released the 2007 UNEP report *The Last Stand of the Orangutan* which offers advice and recommendations on ways to fight deforestation in South East Asia. Also, many experienced NGO's exist on the ground in these rainforest environments, working tirelessly to fight deforestation. Some of these projects have been very successful in the fight and the government could seek them out to support and fund as well as potentially duplicating efforts in other affected regions.

Deforestation is the critical factor in the fight against climate change and I believe the federal government should be putting significant resources into exploring this option and, more importantly, taking appropriate action today.

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My comments relate to the 20% of carbon emissions that are currently due to deforestation.

Although the recent UN climate change meeting in Bali agreed to include discussion on forest protection mechanisms in a new post-2012 agreement, this will have no direct bearing on deforestation from 2008-2012. If the current rate of deforestation continues in Indonesia, at around 300 football fields an hour, the next four years will see wide scale destruction of the Indonesian rainforest and leave very little left to save.

Similarly, if deforestation rates in the Amazon continue at the current rate, or indeed rise, as many predict they will, the implications for carbon emissions are enormous.

I believe Australia needs to join the global fight to reduce deforestation rates around the world as a major strategy to combat climate change. As forests are currently worth more to local communities and multinational logging, grazing and agricultural companies when the trees are down, an incentive must be placed on leaving the trees in place. Wealthy countries such as Australia must simply pay to keep the forests standing.

If nothing is done to put a financial value on the forests of Indonesia, for example, illegal logging operations and the palm oil industry could view the remaining four years between the Kyoto Protocol and post-Kyoto Protocol as a window of opportunity to get in and grab what forest they can, double time. And as shown in the 2007 UNEP report *The Last Stand of the Orangutan*, being a National Park in Indonesia offers little protection from these twin forces. Rainforests will continue to be targeted for deforestation all over Indonesia, regardless of any implied regulatory protection.

In addition, I believe Australia needs to support re-forestation projects and initiatives as another important mechanism to reverse the damage done by past deforestation. This will have a positive effect on reducing climate change.

I feel it is important that biodiversity is brought into the equation when talking about deforestation to strengthen the argument. Vulnerable species such as the iconic orangutan, our wild cousin that shares 97% of our DNA, will be driven to extinction if nothing is done soon to reduce the rate of deforestation in Indonesia. Similarly, species such as the Asian elephant, Sumatran tiger, Sumatran rhino, many species of primates, sunbears and leopards will be driven to the edge of extinction with continued deforestation. Indeed, over 50% of the planet's biodiversity exists in rainforests, which deforestation endangers. Tackling climate change by reducing deforestation and funding reforestation will have the vital positive side effect of protecting our biodiversity.

It is also important to mention that the previous federal government started the 'Global Initiative on Forests and Climate / Global Rainforest Recovery Plan' for the simple reason that

protecting rainforests is one of the best ways to mitigate climate change. This initiative is surely being considered in one form or another by the government of every developed country in the world. I implore our government to proceed with this initiative or to develop others like it which provide funds and support to projects addressing the effective protection of our last remaining rainforests now, before the next 2012 agreement.

The report *The Last Stand of the Orangutan*, recommended a number of actions for governments to take to stop deforestation. They found that illegal logging operations were often run by multinational companies using ex foreign military personnel with machine guns as security guards. No Indonesian park ranger is going to be equipped to deal with this kind of force. Only governments with their access to highly technical equipment, trained staff and adequate funding can hope to grapple with this variable.

To protect these rainforests, rangers need satellite imagery to warn and highlight illegal activity 'hot spots' and then they need the personnel and equipment to deal with these illegal activities.

Organisations like The Australian Orangutan Project (AOP) have funded the placement of special patrol units into National Parks in Sumatra, Indonesia which have been successful in discouraging much illegal behaviour in the park.

With the help of Greenpeace and some portable saw mills, some progressive Papua New Guinea locals have chosen to log their own forests instead of selling the rights to multinational logging companies and their work has recently come to fruition. Whereas a multinational company would destroy the entire forest and pay the locals only a tiny percentage of their profits, local operations only take five mature trees per hectare and then leave that section for many years to regenerate. The locals see a far greater share of the logging profits and are still able to rely on a largely intact forest for their daily living needs. In this way, additional climate change emissions are averted, biodiversity is spared and the locals prosper. <http://www.theage.com.au/news/World/Portable-sawmill-helps-PNG-forest-tribes/2006/03/16/1142098586804.html>

It is clear that we need strong and assertive action on deforestation now but this does not have to involve 'reinventing the wheel'. As part of the Australian government's response to climate change mitigation in the critical area of deforestation, they could work with experienced NGOs such as AOP in Indonesia and Greenpeace in PNG, at the local level, with support for the various ongoing projects which demonstrate cheap, proven and effective ways to stop forest destruction now. Similarly, the federal government could refer to the 2007 UNEP report *The Last Stand of the Orangutan*, which offers comprehensive and extensively researched information and advice by the United Nations on dealing with the issue of deforestation in South East Asia.

However the federal government ultimately chooses to deal with deforestation, it must be a crucial component in the fight against climate change.

Yours sincerely,  
Amanda Enright