

Don't we get it? The Uni must go solar!

There is a growing consensus that global warming was one of the major factors in Australia's extreme climate features and drought conditions. Apart from the tragedy of the bushfires this month, the extreme heat during late January caused hundreds of premature deaths according to a Monash University analysis reported in The Age on 22 February.

The heat is now on governments to deliver on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, politicians are only good at showing how they can avoid the key tasks. While the Liberals are now attacking the ALP's CPRS (Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme) which is the federal government's proposed carbon trading scheme to reduce emissions, they have no credible alternative and are still playing catch-up.

Yet the government's scheme is full of holes. Firstly, it is designed to reduce emissions by just five per cent when, by the year 2030, we need 60 per cent reduction in emissions.

Secondly, the scheme may allow the fossil fuel industry to increase its pollution and make more profit. The CPRS relies on trading a fixed number of carbon pollution permits. It's a trading market within a closed system – if one company emits less, then other companies can emit more.

This means that if any of us (whether individuals, local or state governments, community groups) successfully reduce our emissions, then other organisations can increase their emissions. Many people are installing solar panels. As their emissions reduce, the amount of coal-fired power can reduce. But the fossil fuel companies would be free to INCREASE their production; so they could sell more coal overseas, produce more electricity for industry or sell the permits to the aluminium industry.

Overall, under this scheme, our society would not reduce its emissions more than the five per cent.

Thirdly, the government will try to "offset" emissions by paying developing countries to reduce emissions for us. In an article entitled "Third World to do our dirty work", The Age (31 October 2008) discussed Treasury's modelling for the CPRS: "The modelling assumes a heavy trade in permits, with China, India, Indonesia and other developing countries selling surplus emission permits to rich countries. The poorer countries would gain their permits largely by conserving forests from large-scale clearing."

So the CPRS is just like rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic. Many people are asking why this has happened – for years governments have encouraged individuals to reduce our emissions. But, if the CPRS passes, all this will be undermined.

The Climate Emergency Network is now so concerned they are planning to oppose the CPRS legislation at a rally on 27 March. **The Enviro Collective meets Mondays at 1pm in Joe Nap Room, 2nd Floor Union House.**

We need to be supporting the rally on 27 March and demanding the university support alternative energy NOT coal. Sign the petition to get the uni to go solar and become a centre for alternative energy.



"The heat is on... to change the world of war and economic crisis"

Come along to our afternoon of talks and discussions about how capitalism works and the whens, whys and hows of change.

2pm Saturday 4 April