



AUSTRALIA

STATEMENT TO THE FOURTH CONFERENCE
OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC
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Madam President, Honourable Delegates:

The adoption of the Kyoto Protocol last December represented a watershed in the world's response to climate change. Before Kyoto, Australia signaled its strong commitment to effective global action when the Prime Minister announced an extensive package of measures to address the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across a wide range of sectors in our economy. At Kyoto, we accepted a challenging target that represents for Australia a reduction in projected emissions of some 30 per cent from 1990 levels by 2010, as compared to business as usual projections.

Since we accepted that target, we have been working on the domestic front to implement the measures that will make it possible for us to meet our commitments.

We have established the world's first dedicated greenhouse office - the Australian Greenhouse Office - which co-ordinates and delivers policies and programs relating to greenhouse.

We are designing the means of implementing the target we have announced for electricity suppliers and large users to source an extra 2% of electricity from renewable sources by 2010. This will take us from our current level of 10% renewables in our energy mix, to 12%. We are also implementing best practice standards for power generation based on fossil fuel classes.

We announced a package of some \$60 million to support the commercialization of solar, wind and other renewable technologies.

We are also taking action on the energy efficiency front, advancing minimum energy standards and energy labeling for appliances, and we will be requiring improved energy performance in the commercial and domestic building sectors.

In transport, our goal is to achieve at least an extra 15% fuel efficiency in new vehicles by 2010, and to improve fuel efficiency labeling on a model specific basis. We are also extending the existing compressed natural gas infrastructure in some of our major cities.

We have a highly successful voluntary industry program, the Greenhouse Challenge, which now involves some 270 companies across Australia that between them are committed to delivering savings of over 20 megatonnes off projected emissions growth by the year 2000. The program has now been expanded to include small and medium enterprises.

In partnership with local governments, the Australian government is providing substantial support for the Cities for Climate Protection Program. By 2003, we anticipate that 200 local governments will be participating in the Program and contributing substantial gains at the local level.

In the land use change and forestry sector, which has particular significance for Australia, as it constitutes one quarter of our national emissions, we are reducing the rate of land clearing and have major revegetation initiatives underway through our Natural Heritage Trust. As part of our greenhouse initiatives, we are developing a National Carbon Accounting System which will provide us with an accurate and verifiable measurement of emissions and removals from vegetation and soils.

We are preparing to take even further action. A new National Greenhouse Strategy will be released in two weeks' time. It is a joint commitment by State and national governments to enhance our capacity to meet our Kyoto target.

Just as we are taking action domestically, we are looking for international action to bring the Kyoto Protocol into early effect, to maintain the Kyoto momentum.

At this Conference, we need to settle a work program for the flexibility mechanisms under the Kyoto Protocol. We want the most cost-efficient outcomes and rules, underpinned by robust monitoring and reporting requirements. We need to work toward a strong and effective compliance framework.

Consistent with these objectives we support international emissions trading as a crucial means to reduce the cost of emissions abatement. We are exploring options for domestic emissions trading to mesh with an international regime and we oppose redundant measures such as supplementarity restrictions which would frustrate least cost solutions.

Finally, the scientific evidence is clear. Even with the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol, action by Annex I Parties alone will not be sufficient to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention. To address this, the Parties must be able to explore pathways for broader participation and commitments in the future. These pathways must allow for approaches appropriate to individual circumstances and development aspirations. They must also be determined in accordance with our common but differentiated responsibilities.

Madam President, because of our high costs of abatement, adequately responding to the greenhouse issue has not been easy for Australia but we have accepted the challenge and responsibility of making an equivalent effort to others, are proud to have signed the Kyoto Protocol and are committed to work co-operatively towards its early and effective implementation. It is time to turn process into action, to achieve a better global outcome.