



7 October 2008

The Hon. Kevin Rudd, MP  
Prime Minister  
Australian Parliament  
Canberra, ACT 2600

**Re: Climate Change**

Dear Prime Minister,

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) strongly agrees with and endorses the views expressed to you by sixteen climate scientists in their open letter of Monday 29 September 2008. PHAA is particularly concerned about the health impacts of climate change. We believe that without serious immediate action to curb increases in greenhouse gas emissions any hope of containing global warming to less than 2 degrees will be lost. On current trends it seems we are likely to exceed this limit.

There is now ample evidence that unless greenhouse gas reductions are in the order of 25% of 1990 levels by 2020, the likelihood of achieving the estimated 50% or more reduction needed by 2050 is low. Without this level of reduction, based on the scientific evidence and current trends in warming which exceed IPCC models, the risks to human health and wellbeing dramatically rise. Although we understand the pressure of lobbying by sectional interests, we urge your government to focus emissions reduction targets on the scientific evidence.

It is essential for human health and well-being that we contain warming to less than two to three degrees. To do this CO<sup>2</sup> equivalent greenhouse gas concentrations ideally need to be less than 450ppm. Greenhouse gas concentrations are already nearly there. Professor Garnaut's report argues for a low initial reduction target which can be scaled up later. He accepts a greenhouse gas level of 550ppm.

However his report makes it clear that urgent, strong action to protect human health and well-being is necessary. Garnaut warns that when society suffers a "large shock to its established patterns of life, the outcome is unpredictable in detail but generally problematic. Things fall apart."

Ratifying Kyoto and going to Bali were important first steps and we congratulate you on those. However, at this critical juncture in Australia, we urge you to show further leadership in the world and to take even stronger action on climate change. We believe that this provides a vital opportunity to protect the future wellbeing, health and prosperity of all Australians.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Daube". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Professor Mike Daube  
President PHAA

Cc: Senator Penny Wong, Minister for Climate and Water  
The Hon. Peter Garrett, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts.