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CALLS FOR STRONGER TARGETS FOR CARBON POLLUTION REDUCTION SCHEME

The Public Health Association of Australia (PHAA) is calling for strong effective action from the Government, the Opposition and crossbenches ahead of tomorrow's Senate debate on the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. The PHAA supports the Government's action towards introducing a carbon emission reduction scheme, but considers the currently proposed targets to be ineffective in reducing Australia's global contribution to climate change.

"The PHAA supports all measures that reduce the production of greenhouse gases, promote energy saving, and minimise the health impacts of global warming. An equitable carbon reduction scheme will require Australia to act quickly and decisively to protect human health from widely accepted health consequences and risks of climate change," said Dr Peter Tait, Spokesperson for the PHAA's Environmental Health Special Interest Group.

"To achieve the levels of carbon dioxide (CO₂) necessary to stop the temperature rising by over 2 degrees, emissions will need to fall globally by 50% per head by 2050. 2020 emission targets for Australia need to be unconditionally in the order of 20 to 25%. The lower the temperature increases, the less disruption there will be to human society and health.

"If we keep going the way we are now, scenarios for future emissions lead to likely global temperature increases of up to six degrees above present temperatures by 2100. These are dramatic temperature increases, which would be accompanied by major disruptions to food supplies, river flows and water availability and significant and ongoing rises in sea level (of about a metre or more by 2100). Changes of this magnitude would have seriously harmful effects on human health, wellbeing and complex industrialised society.

"Even if CO₂ and other greenhouse gas concentrations were stabilised today at their present levels, a further warming of at least 0.6 degrees would inevitably follow.

"Strong leadership and bi-partisan support is required if we are to effectively address climate change," said Dr Tait.

For further information/comment:

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