

## WARNING! NEW YEAR AHEAD!

Recent climate change news has been dominated by policy developments in Australia and abroad. In Europe the world's attention has been focused on the UN negotiations at Poznan and the EU's commitment to a 20% emissions reduction by 2020.

In Australia the release of the Federal Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme is drawing attention.

However, with all the focus on policy developments it is important to remember that the task at hand is to achieve measureable, reportable and verifiable emissions reductions that will meaningfully tackle the global warming and climate change problem. As such we should always seek to learn more about the science of future risk and new examples of low carbon innovation. This edition of the Kinesis Climate Change Monitor covers some recent scientific findings on the current impacts of climate change as well as the latest global and national policy developments.

contact us with comments, news and feedback by email to [monitor@kinesis.org](mailto:monitor@kinesis.org)

### PUBLIC POLICY

## Australian Government's 'Credibility Deficit' CPRS White Paper

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS RELEASED A WHITE PAPER for its Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS). This paper sets out the framework under which the Australian Federal Government will address greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. The Federal Government has committed to reducing emissions by 5% by 2020, unconditionally, while it will agree to reducing emissions by 15% if an international climate change agreement 'where major economies agree to substantially restrain carbon pollution and advanced economies take on reductions comparable to Australia' is reached.

Revenue raised from the auctioning of emissions permits will be used to assist households and industry adapt to the impact of the scheme. Households will receive \$6 billion a year, ongoing, in financial assistance while \$2.15 billion will be invested over five years in a Climate Change Action Fund to 'help business, community sector organisations, workers, regions and communities adjust to a low pollution future'. The Government's modelling has indicated that with a price of carbon set at \$25 per tonne the cost of electricity will rise by 18% and the cost of gas will rise by 12%. Certain industries will be assisted through the allocation of free permits. The Sydney Morning Herald has reported that by 2020 almost half of the emissions permits created by the CPRS will have been allocated to industry for free rather than auctioned.

The release of the White Paper has received a mixed response from industry and environmental groups. The Business Council of Australia (BCA) and Australian Industry Group (AIG) have both given qualified support to the white paper. AIG has called the plan 'a positive compromise but a stretch nonetheless'. The Climate Institute, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), however, were scathing in their assessment. The Climate Institute stated that the Federal Government has slipped into a 'credibility deficit' by stating that it is in the national interest to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations at 450ppm 'yet crippled Australia's ability to achieve this with a polluter-friendly package'.



#### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Read the Federal Government's White Paper at: <http://www.climatechange.gov.au/whitepaper/index.html>

Press release from BCA

Press release from AIG

Press release from Climate Institute

Press releases from ACF and WWF

Lenore Taylor writing in *The Australian* labelled the proposed CPRS an emissions trading scheme you have 'when you want your industries to change how they do things, but accept that during a global financial crisis you can't make them change overnight':  
Read here.

Robyn Eckersley, writing for *The Age* writes that hopes of the Rudd Government shifting Australia's position on climate change to that of international leader appears to have been misplaced. Read here.

### Business Innovation

## ROCK DOWN TO ELECTRIC AVENUE...

Start up electric car company *Better Place* has recently announced a deal with the Victorian Government, AGL and Macquarie Bank to develop a car recharging network in Australia. Founded in October 2007, *Better Place* has already entered into partnerships with the Japanese, Israeli and Danish Governments as well as the state of Hawaii, the City of San Francisco and car makers Renault and Nissan to develop new transport infrastructure based on electric cars and renewable energy.



*Better Place's* approach is to sell transportation to consumers in much the same way that mobile phone networks operate: charging consumers for access to its network of recharge stations and battery exchanges, powered by renewable energy, and selling or lease electric vehicles for a comparatively small price. *Better Place* has unveiled its first charging stations in Israel as part of a pilot trial. It plans to establish infrastructure for electric cars in Australia by 2012.

 **WANT TO KNOW MORE?** See the *Better Place* website and articles in *Wired Magazine* and *TIME* (with *Better Place* Founder appearing as one of *TIME's* 'Heroes of the Environment').


Read about *Better Place's* recent Australian venture in the *NY Times*.

### PUBLIC ATTITUDES

## Climate Confidence Monitor

*The HSBC Climate Confidence Monitor, surveyed 12,000 people in 12 markets worldwide, revealing that consumer expectations are proving resilient to the current economic crisis despite the survey taking place in the midst of the financial market turmoil in September/October 2008.*

HSBC HAS RELEASED THE 2008 EDITION OF ITS *Climate Confidence Monitor*. The Monitor surveyed 12,000 people in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Malaysia, Mexico, UK and the US on their attitudes towards climate change. The survey found that 43% of respondents ranked climate change ahead of the global financial crisis when asked to rank their three most pressing concerns. However, only 36% of respondents stated that they had 'heard a lot about climate change' down from 74% in 2007. People's willingness to spend money to address climate change has also fallen from 28% to 20% and people's willingness to make changes to their lifestyle has also fallen from 58% to 47%. The survey found that people want governments to lead in taking direct action to tackle climate change with 48% of respondents wanting Government to lead on action to address climate change, but only 25% believing that they are doing so. Respondents want government to focus on direct action such as building more renewable energy capacity rather than indirect action such as establishing carbon markets.

 **WANT TO KNOW MORE?** Click to read a full PDF copy of the *HSBC survey*.

### Environment & Science

## ARCTIC TEMPERATURES AT RECORD HIGHS

Over the last two northern summers the level of Arctic ice melt has been at record levels. Autumn temperatures are at a record 5°C above normal and there has been a significant reduction in the extent of the summer sea ice cover. Meanwhile in the Southern Hemisphere recent satellite photos show new cracks in the Wilkins ice shelf, some of which already collapsed in February this year. The shelf is now being held by an ice bridge which has shrunk from 6 km in width to just 2.7 km.

 **WANT TO KNOW MORE?** Visit the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Administration at <http://www.arctic.noaa.gov/reportcard/index.html>. **CLICK HERE** to see the latest NASA satellite photos of the Wilkins ice shelf.

## Year of the Ox may increase methane emissions

A new study by NASA has found that the amount of methane in the atmosphere rose in 2007 after a decade of stability. The recent stability in methane levels had suggested that methane was being destroyed in the atmosphere at the same rate it was being emitted. Although the recent rise has only been recorded over one year it may indicate a dangerous trend. Methane is a 25% more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide.

 **WANT TO KNOW MORE?** See the *NASA press release* here.



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