



Save the Nature of the Kimberley

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Media Release

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Australian environment groups: Climate change is the overwhelming issue

On World Environment Day, Australian environment groups have united to call for strong action and commitments to avoid dangerous climate change ahead of this year's federal election.

National environment groups and conservation councils across the country are calling for major parties to commit to legislating for substantial cuts to greenhouse gas emissions within 15 years.

The groups have agreed a joint [Policy Agenda](#) with twelve priority actions required to avoid dangerous climate change. The top priority is for Australia to legislate for a national greenhouse gas reduction target of at least 30% below 1990 levels by 2020, and to set a long term reduction target of at least 80% by 2050.

All the groups will be actively campaigning to secure commitments to the targets from major parties in the lead up to the federal election. ACF executive director Don Henry said "Action to tackle climate change would be a key issue for Australians.

"The science and the economics are clear – there is no excuse for Australian political parties not to set 2020 targets to substantially cut Australia's greenhouse pollution. These early reduction targets are the absolute minimum we need to achieve to protect Australia from dangerous climate change, said Don Henry.

"The Howard government says it won't take action on climate change if it hurts the economy. The reality is global warming is already damaging the economy, and Sir Nicholas Stern has told us that the price of doing nothing will be much higher than the cost of taking action." said Greenpeace Australia-Pacific CEO, Steve Shallhorn.

"Australia can reduce greenhouse emissions by 30% by 2020 by implementing solutions that are already available including support for an ambitious energy efficiency program, setting a decent renewable energy generation target and curtailing logging and landclearing", said Climate Action Network Australia Coordinator, Julieanne Richards. "As well as reducing our domestic greenhouse pollution, Australia needs to show international leadership by ratifying the Kyoto Protocol and working to stabilize global greenhouse emissions".

"We are also calling on major parties to reject dangerous and costly nuclear power in Australia. Nuclear reactors are too slow, too dirty, too dangerous and too costly to play a role in Australia's energy future and to constitute any kind of credible response to climate change, said The Wilderness Society Acting National Director, Virginia Young.

"Climate change is an unprecedented threat and the need to secure commitments from politicians to act immediately makes this election crucial. A healthy environment is vital for the ongoing economic and social well-being of our communities, said ACT Conservation Council Director, Trish Harrup.

"Collectively our groups represent over a million people across Australia and we will be assessing the major parties' policies against these initiatives in the lead up to the election to inform our supporters where all the parties stand on tackling climate change, the biggest environmental threat to Australia, concluded Trish Harrup.

Signatories to the joint policy agenda: AidWatch; Australian Conservation Foundation; Australian Marine Conservation Society; Cairns and Far North Environment Centre; Climate Action Network Australia; Conservation Council of SA; Conservation Council of SE Region & Canberra; Environment Centre of NT; Environment Tasmania; Environment Victoria; EnviroNS Kimberley; Friends of the Earth; Greenpeace; Mineral Policy Institute; National Toxics Network; Nature Conservation Council of NSW; Queensland Conservation; The Wilderness Society; Total Environment Centre; Victorian National Parks Association