

CLIMATE PROTECTION BILL 2008

First Reading

Mr WINDSOR (New England) (8.45 p.m.)—The [Climate Protection Bill 2008](#) is essentially the people's climate protection bill. I say 'the people's climate protection bill' because many people and organisations right across Australia are very committed to doing something about climate change and protecting not only the Australian climate but the global climate, and many people are concerned that the government and the opposition, although paying lip-service to this particular issue, do not seem to be inclined to pursue the issue to the full extent.

This particular bill before the House has certain objects, which I will read to the House. The objects of the bill are: to ensure that Australia meets its obligations under the Kyoto convention and the Kyoto protocol; to ensure a substantial reduction in human derived greenhouse gas from Australia; to set mandatory targets for reducing human derived greenhouse gas emissions from Australia, with the first being a reduction by at least 30 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020 and the second being a reduction by at least 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050; and to ensure that Australia meets these targets.

The bill substantially increases the percentage of Australia's energy being sourced from renewable energy sources. It also assists with global efforts to stabilise and reduce human derived greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere. It assists developing nations to adjust to a carbon constrained world and to mitigate the impacts of climate change. It also implements ecologically sustainable development and contributes to the conservation of materials used in the manufacture of goods within Australia. It also assists with the avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions from landfills and facilitates the utilisation of the energy embodied in manufactured goods through material recycling.

The bill also embraces a number of other issues, particularly ones to do with the soil carbon debate that many in this House have heard me talk about in the past. The soil carbon issue raises an interesting point. There are many things that will not necessarily fit within an emissions trading scheme. Even though this legislation calls for either a carbon tax or an emissions trading scheme, there are many things that will not necessarily fit in a priced market but could, and would in my view, be part of reducing the problem that we are talking about. Vegetation sinks, soil sinks, soil carbon and recycling would in fact make a contribution to the overall problem of emissions reduction.

As I said earlier on, this bill is the people's bill. I particularly thank the 65 environmental groups that have gone to a lot of trouble to assist with the drafting of this legislation. I also thank the many other individuals right across Australia who have highlighted the importance of this and Australia's leadership role in relation to climate change and climate protection. What this bill does, irrespective of whether it passes through the parliament—and I sincerely hope that it receives the endorsement of both sides of the parliament—is bring to the parliament the people's voice on this issue. Australians are concerned about the legacy that they will leave in terms of climate, given the substantial scientific evidence before us that there are problems looming and problems currently in the world in relation to emissions, not only of carbon dioxide but nitrous oxide, methane and other global warming gasses. I would encourage all members of parliament to take notice of this legislation and, very importantly, take notice of what the Australian people are saying in relation to it.

Bill read a first time.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. DGH Adams)—In accordance with standing order 41(d), the second reading will be made an order of the day for the next sitting.