



Climate Change and Energy

Policy Category: C. Climate Change and Energy

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Principles

The Australian Greens believe that:

1. climate change poses the greatest threat to our world in human history and requires urgent local, national and global action.
2. we have only 10-15 years to use our collective human intelligence to address the crisis of climate change and to prevent catastrophe.
3. no other country is better placed than Australia to lead the world in this challenge and the Greens are committed to Australia taking that lead.
4. Australia needs to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, actively support international mitigation measures to reduce global emissions, and plan to adapt to climate change impacts which are now inevitable.
5. early action to reduce pollution is cheaper and fairer than delaying action.
6. the equity principle must be at the core of climate change negotiations and measures.
7. the cost of reducing greenhouse emissions and adapting to climate change must be distributed fairly, both domestically and between nations.
8. climate change will result in the displacement of people, creating environmental refugees and intensifying the threat of regional and global conflict.
9. Australia must use its diplomatic and economic influence to promote the development of alternatives to greenhouse gas intensive sources of energy.
10. energy prices should reflect the environmental and social costs of production and use.
11. renewable energy projects should be ecologically sustainable and governed by the same development guidelines as other investments of a similar scale.
12. the refurbishment of existing coal fired power stations undermines the effort to increase end-use energy efficiency, demand management and renewable energy.

Goals

The Australian Greens want:

13. Australia to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 30% below 1990 levels by 2020 and to 80% below by 2050, ensuring that emissions are reduced across the energy, transport, industrial, waste and land management sectors.
14. the reversal of Australia's growing demand for energy through demand management and increased efficiency of supply and end-use.
15. future energy needs to be met using sustainable, renewable energy sources.
16. all countries to develop and meet greenhouse gas emission targets.
17. actions to adapt Australia to the impacts of climate change.
18. Australia to be prepared for peak oil without resorting to the heavily greenhouse polluting options of shale oil or coal-to-oil.

19. the development and ratification of a global oil depletion protocol..

Measures

The Australian Greens will:

20. support Australian ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, and taking a leading role in negotiating a 'post-Kyoto' multilateral emission abatement treaty which includes binding emission targets for all countries.
21. establish binding national emission targets for 2010, 2020 and 2050 supported by a detailed strategy to reduce emissions from the energy, transport, industry, waste and land management sectors
22. drive the equitable transition to a low carbon economy through a range of market-based and regulatory mechanisms reflecting the real costs of greenhouse gas emissions.
23. address the social impacts of the transition to a low carbon economy.
24. create a new ministerial position, Minister for Climate Change and Energy, to oversee the national response to climate change and the implementation of energy efficiency programs and standards.
25. establish a low greenhouse trigger in the Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC), ensuring Federal oversight of developments which are liable to have a significant impact on domestic or global greenhouse emissions.
26. establish a national system of energy efficiency targets.
27. significantly increase the stringency of Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) for products, buildings and infrastructure.
28. ensure that renewable electricity contributes at least 15% of national demand by 2012 and 25% by 2020, by increasing the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET) and by introducing measures such as feed-in tariffs and regulations to support a range of prospective new renewable energy technologies.
29. reform MRET to exclude non-renewable sources including greenfields coal-bed methane, and new hydroelectric and native forest fuelled power stations.
30. reform the National Electricity Market to remove the bias towards centralised coal-fired generation, and encourage demand management and the development of distributed generation and renewable energy.
31. transfer subsidies and government support, including funding for research and development, from the fossil fuel sectors to energy efficiency and renewable energy.
32. provide incentives, including any revenue raised from the above measures, to promote public transport, and to encourage research, development, and commercialisation of energy efficiency and renewable energy.
33. ensure that energy price subsidies are not used to attract or retain energy intensive industries.

AUSTRALIAN GREENS POLICY: Climate Change and Energy (cont'd)

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34. oppose the establishment of new coal-fired power stations, new coal mines and the expansion of existing mines. The technology to capture and store greenhouse gas emissions remains unproven and has not been shown to be commercially viable or environmentally safe and has not been implemented at a commercial scale.
35. work to ban public funding to refurbish any existing coal fired power stations.
36. develop a plan within three years to assist affected communities in the transition from dependence on coal mining and coal-fired power stations.
37. take an approach based upon the precautionary principle in relation to carbon capture and storage (geosequestration) by opposing public funding, and ensuring that companies are financially responsible for the risks of CO2 leakage.
38. phase in stringent fuel efficiency standards.
39. remove the GST on public transport.
40. reduce vehicle dependence and improve fuel efficiency by redesigning Australian cities and investing in public transport.
41. use Government procurement policies to promote efficient passenger vehicles.
42. amend the Fringe Benefits Tax to remove the incentive to increase vehicle use.
43. phase out diesel fuel subsidies by removing energy credits.
44. support research, development and commercialisation of sustainable alternative fuels.
45. support the development and expansion of robust distribution networks for transitional and sustainable alternative fuels.
46. increase community awareness about the urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, about simple and cost-effective emission mitigation options, and about the need to plan for future climate change impacts.
47. help countries in our region to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and adapt to climate change through appropriate technology transfer and other forms of assistance.