

Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)



National Office: PO Box 1379, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia
Level 2, 161 Barry St, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia
p: +61 (0)3 8344 1637 f: +61 (0)3 8344 1638
e: mapw@mapw.org.au w: www.mapw.org.au
ABN: 15 779 883 661

10 December, 2008

Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Minister for Climate Change and Water
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Minister

Re: Climate change action

The Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia) works for the abolition of all nuclear weapons and for a reduction in armed conflict and its impact on civilian populations. To achieve these goals, it is necessary to examine those factors that increase tensions between populations. Environmental degradation, dwindling resources (especially water) and climate change are all playing an increasingly significant role in aggravating current tensions and setting the scene for major conflicts in coming years.

The London-based conflict resolution group International Alert has identified 46 countries where it says the effects of climate change would create a high risk of violent conflict. The group predicts also a risk of political instability in another 56 states. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon wrote in *The Washington Post* in June 2007, in relation to the crisis in Darfur, "Amid the diverse social and political causes, the Darfur conflict began as an ecological crisis, arising at least in part from climate change".

The call of scientists throughout the world to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions is loud, unequivocal and increasingly alarming. Carbon emissions must be reduced dramatically and quickly if runaway climate change is to be averted. Carbon reduction targets must match the science.

At this critical juncture in world history, as humanity decides whether or not to take the action that is needed, MAPW urges you to ensure that Australia plays its part. It is deeply regrettable that measures announced by your government to date fall far short of what is needed. A reduction of only 5-15 % in carbon emissions is simply not good enough. It represents a continuation of the short-sighted and dangerous policies that many Australians thought they were voting out last November.

MAPW urges you to act. Specifically, we join millions of other Australians in calling for:

- Responsible carbon reduction targets of 25-40% by 2020;
- Massive investment in renewable energies and energy efficiencies, including public transport;
- An effective emissions trading scheme that greatly reduces carbon pollution, avoids loopholes and does not allow the big polluters to continue "business-as-usual";
- An end to deforestation.



Global security hinges on the actions taken by Australia and other countries right now. Any delay diminishes our chances of success. As our neighbours in the Pacific wait for their homes to disappear under the sea forever, and our children's future hangs in the balance, our moral course is clear. There can be no excuses.

We thank you in anticipation of the decisive action promised by your government.

Yours sincerely



Dr Sue Wareham OAM
President,
Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)

CC

The Hon Kevin Rudd, MP
Prime Minister of Australia

The Hon Joel Fitzgibbon, MP
Minister for Defence

The Hon Peter Garrett AM, MP
Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

The Hon Stephen Smith, MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs

