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Media release

Government out of step with Australians on the CPRS

The Rudd Government is at odds with a majority of Australians in prioritising the needs of business in its climate-change policy, according to a new paper by The Australia Institute.

The paper, *Zero-Sum Game? The human dimensions of emissions trading*, reveals that less than one per cent of those surveyed believe that the views of the business community should be the most important factor for government in choosing an emissions reduction target.

The survey also found that the government's generous assistance to polluters under the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) does not reflect public sentiment.

When asked who should take primary responsibility for the economic costs associated with lowering greenhouse gas emissions, most respondents (51%) said that heavy-polluting companies and industries should be responsible. A third (34%) said that government should take primary responsibility, while six per cent (6%) thought that households and individuals should.

"Our survey findings throw into question the priorities of the Rudd Government. Its decision to give away up to 95 per cent of permits to the largest polluters seems at odds with the wishes of the broader community," said Executive Director, Dr Richard Denniss.

"There is a real risk that this will reduce the credibility of the CPRS in the minds of the public."

Given the community's willingness to 'do their bit' to fight climate change, *Zero-Sum Game?* argues that voluntary action needs to be accounted for in setting greenhouse gas reduction targets.

"The government's response to the community's desire to contribute to tackling climate change has been woefully inadequate. Its latest initiative, the Australian Carbon Trust, will force some members of the community to pay twice to lower their carbon impact. As well, it will incorporate only a small proportion of all the voluntary action that is currently taking place," said Research Fellow Josh Fear.

"The current debate is framed around which approach works better – emissions trading or a completely voluntary approach. Today's debate in the Senate should move away from this zero-sum game to a CPRS that harnesses both price and cooperation," concluded Mr Fear.

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Notes for Editors

- Additional survey results are available in *Zero-Sum Game? The human dimensions of emissions trading*

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