

12th November 2004

Media release

Contact Alan Tate 0412 551 451 +61 412 551 451 alan.tate@cambiar.com.au

International Climate Change Taskforce Meets in Sydney

The International Climate Change Taskforce will meet in Sydney, Australia, next Monday and Tuesday to finalise its recommendations on how to move global climate change policy beyond the Kyoto Protocol.

With the Kyoto Protocol due to enter into force early next year, the Taskforce has been examining how to advance international action to prevent catastrophic climate damage from occurring. The Kyoto Protocol currently provides obligations only through to 2012.

The Taskforce's recommendations will be set forth in a report to be handed to leaders of governments worldwide early next year. Special emphasis will be placed on British Prime Minister Tony Blair who will hold the Presidency of the G8 and the European Union in 2005. Mr Blair has signalled he intends making climate change a focus of his activities.

The Taskforce was initiated by three leading think tanks – The Australia Institute in Canberra, the Institute for Public Policy Research in London, and the Center for American Progress in Washington DC.

In a unique international cross-party collaboration, the Taskforce is co-chaired by British Labour MP Stephen Byers and US Republican Senator Olympia Snowe. Mr Byers and Senator Snowe said "Our aim is to build on existing global achievements in tackling climate change by identifying new ways of securing international cooperation and support on this issue, to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions".

Integral to the Taskforce's deliberations, is how ambitious targets for reductions in greenhouse gasses can gain support from governments and communities representing both the developed and developing world. The Taskforce is clear that progress will only be effective if all governments are involved, and it will work hard on an agreement that it believes all governments can commit to.

The 16 members of the taskforce are drawn from the developed and the developing world and represent eminent leaders in politics, business, the environment, and science.

The geographic representation of the Taskforce reflects the desire to bring the two countries that have rejected the Kyoto Protocol, the US and Australia, back into the multilateral process. It also reflects the need for full engagement and support from developing and continental European countries.

The Sydney meeting is to be hosted by New South Wales Premier Bob Carr – one of three Australian members of the Taskforce.