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Media release

New Plan Confronts Climate Change Stalemate

A new and far-reaching global plan to fight climate change is being released in London, Washington and Canberra today by a unique collaboration of British, US and Australian leaders in politics, environment, business and science.

The report of the International Climate Change Taskforce would see Australia join the G8 group of nations in a new global grouping to develop innovative ways to confront climate change.

NSW Premier and Australian Taskforce member, Mr Bob Carr, said the plan builds on existing international treaties to provide a way for Australia and the US to rejoin the global efforts to tackle climate change. They are the only two industrialised nations that remain outside of the Kyoto Protocol.

The Taskforce is the initiative of three leading public policy institutes – the Institute for Public Policy Research in London, the Center for American Progress in Washington DC, and the Australia Institute in Canberra. Its aim has been to chart an economically and politically feasible path that will break through the current impasse in climate negotiations.

“The Taskforce’s plan provides an opportunity for Australia to rejoin the global effort against climate change in a way that is environmentally effective and economically responsible,” said Dr Clive Hamilton, Executive Director of the Australia Institute.

“The fact that Australians have played a leading role in developing the new plan shows that Australia’s voice remains important in global negotiations over climate change. The Taskforce urges the Howard Government to take up the baton.”

It is expected that UK Prime Minister Tony Blair will take the report’s recommendations to the G8 this year in his role as president. The Bush White House will also be asked to consider the plan by the co-chair of the Taskforce, senior Republican Senator Olympia Snowe.

Key recommendations of the Taskforce include:

- an agreement by all nations to prevent global average temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels

- a long-term post-Kyoto treaty that provides a way for Australia and the US to be part of concerted global action to reduce greenhouse emissions, one that involves developing nations
- a call for governments of all industrialised nations – including Australia – to introduce national greenhouse gas emissions trading systems capable of integration into a single global market by 2012
- formation of a G8+ group of major economies – including Australia and key developing nations – to pursue technology agreements that lead to large emissions reductions
- removal of barriers to investment in renewable energy and energy efficient technologies.

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The report may be read under What's New on the Australia Institute's website.

www.tai.org.au