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Media release

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New Plan to Resolve Climate Change Stalemate

A new global plan designed to unite the world in fighting the unprecedented and long-term challenge posed by climate change has been released internationally today by The Australia Institute, one of the nation's leading public policy research organisations.

Going beyond the Kyoto Protocol, it proposes a framework that would enable Australia and the US to rejoin international efforts to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions over the next decades and, if adopted, would forestall the most serious impacts predicted from the warming of the planet.

Recognising concerns about the Kyoto Protocol expressed by the Howard Government and Bush Administration, it proposes a framework that provides a way for both nations to overcome their reservations about joining a multi-lateral effort.

The release of the plan coincides with the historic entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

"The Protocol is an enormous achievement. But it is only be a first step and does not include either Australia or the USA", said Dr Clive Hamilton, executive director of The Australia Institute.

"We urge all governments – but especially those in Australia and the United States – to transcend the rancour that now bedevils this issue and consider the new plan seriously," said Dr Hamilton. "The world needs a breakthrough. This is a plan that blends the need for action with economic reality and political feasibility."

Key elements of the plan were adopted by the International Climate Change Taskforce in its report, *Meeting the Climate Challenge*, released earlier this year.

The path for Australia and the USA to rejoin global efforts builds on the recommended introduction of domestic emissions trading systems that could be linked with the European emissions trading system that began this year. Many observers expect the US Senate to adopt a national emissions trading system in the next few years following the narrow loss of the McCain-Lieberman Bill which aimed to introduce a 'cap-and-trade' system for major polluters.

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