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Media release

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New climate pact a charade

The Federal Government's new climate change treaty is nothing more than a device to cover up its refusal to reduce Australia's burgeoning greenhouse gas emissions and the abject failure of its policies, according to Australia Institute Executive Director Clive Hamilton.

"By claiming that the new pact is an alternative to the Kyoto Protocol, Environment Minister Campbell is verballing China, India and South Korea all of which have ratified Kyoto and are committed to it", said Dr Hamilton.

"And to suggest that Kyoto 'exempts' developing countries while the new agreement includes three of them is grossly misleading as the new treaty will not commit any party to emission reductions."

Dr Hamilton noted that the new treaty will be no more than a technology exchange agreement without any obligation on parties to cut their emissions. The main beneficiaries will be Australian coal companies, some of the world's biggest greenhouse polluters.

"It's a Machiavellian pact", he said.

"Study after study has shown that voluntary agreements such as those foreshadowed in this treaty do not work. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol in which parties take on mandatory emission reduction targets, the new treaty will do virtually nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in participating countries", he said.

"Senator Campbell's wall of blather seems designed to confuse. While claiming that the world needs to cut emissions by 50 per cent, he refuses to cut emissions by the first one per cent.

"While saying that Kyoto would damage Australia's economic interests, he says Australia will meet its target anyway.

"And while saying we need more renewable energy, his Government has repeatedly cut support for renewables in favour of coal.

"The Senator seems to live in a parallel universe in which the normal laws of logic do not apply."