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## Media release

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# Doubts about Greenhouse Figures: New report

A new report published today by the Australia Institute questions official figures on Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, which form the basis for the Federal Government's claims that Australia 'remains on track' to meet its Kyoto target.

The report, titled *The National Greenhouse Accounts and Land Clearing: Do the numbers stack up?*, by the Institute's Deputy Director, Andrew Macintosh, argues that official figures on emissions from land clearing are contradicted by data published by the Queensland government.

"Queensland government estimates of land clearing in Queensland between 1990 and 2001 are approximately 50 per cent higher than the Federal Government's estimates. If the Queensland government figures are correct, Australia's total greenhouse emissions may be well above the Kyoto target.

"Without the decline in land clearing claimed by the Federal Government, total emissions would have increased by over 20 per cent between 1990 and 2004, well above Australia's Kyoto target of an 8 per cent increase between 1990 and 2008/2012", Mr Macintosh said.

The Government's estimates of land clearing have also fluctuated wildly over the past three to four years. The estimated rate of land clearing in 1990 (the Kyoto base year) in the latest report published in 2006 is 33 per cent higher than the 2002 estimate.

"Curiously, almost all of the changes in the baseline figures published by the Government have made it easier for Australia to meet its Kyoto target", said Mr Macintosh.

"The problems with the Federal Government's land clearing data cannot be explained by any publicly available information. Due to these issues, there are doubts about the accuracy of the National Greenhouse Accounts and the Government's claims that emissions have only increased by around 2.3 per cent since 1990.

"There is an urgent need for an independent review of the National Carbon Accounting System (NCAS), which is responsible for generating the land clearing figures. Until an independent review has certified the accuracy of NCAS, the Federal Government's claims about Australia's performance against its Kyoto target should be treated with skepticism", Mr Macintosh said.