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Media release

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Government shifts greenhouse responsibility - once more

The Howard Government's plans to set up a global fund to reduce logging in the Third World is yet another attempt to shift the blame for climate change, according to Australia Institute Executive Director Dr Clive Hamilton.

"The Government seems desperate to distract attention from the unconstrained growth of Australia's emissions. Along with the failed AP6 initiative, the Third World logging announcement is another attempt to avoid facing up to our responsibilities to cut our own greenhouse gases now", said Dr Hamilton.

"The Howard Government's approach to climate change is to shift responsibility onto other countries or onto future generations with pie-in-the-sky solutions such as geosequestration. Anything other than to do what the climate scientists say must be done".

The announcement comes after the Government's embarrassing admission that Australia will not meet its Kyoto target of 108 per cent above 1990 levels by 2010, despite years of promises. Australia's emissions are expected to reach 127 per cent of 1990 levels by 2020. The admission was buried in the pre-Christmas shut-down. (See <http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/projections/pubs/tracking2006.pdf>).

"For decades enormous effort has been put into controlling logging in developing countries by a range of international institutions. To imagine that Australia can solve the problem with \$200 million is an idea that could be swallowed only by the ignorant", said Dr Hamilton.

"If, as is suggested, the fund will be directed mainly at Indonesia, it will be an extra \$200 million into the pockets of the corrupt businessmen and the army generals who hold the logging concessions across the archipelago."

"Whenever the Howard Government says it wants an international approach to climate change, it is really saying it wants to absolve Australia of responsibility. We already have an international approach - the Kyoto Protocol, negotiated by the nations of the world and agreed to in 1997, including by the Howard Government.

"Along with the USA, Australia's repudiation of Kyoto has done more to destroy international cooperation than any other act. The hypocrisy in Canberra is rancid."