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Media release

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Air travellers rightly concerned about greenhouse emissions

British and German consumers are right to be concerned about the greenhouse gas emissions from aircraft, according to the Australia Institute.

The Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources is commissioning a study into how British and German residents feel about the effects of air travel on climate change. The Australian tourism industry, which supports the study, is concerned that European travellers are unduly concerned about aviation's impact on global warming.

A recent study by the Australia Institute titled *A Flight Risk? Aviation and climate change in Australia*, found that, although aviation emissions currently account for between 2% and 5% of Australia's total emissions, they are expected to increase by over 250% by 2050.

If nothing is done to curb aviation emissions they are expected to account for at least half of Australia's total emissions by the middle of the century.

"If we don't deal with aviation we won't be able to prevent dangerous climate change", said Christian Downie, co-author of the Institute's report.

"Anyone who suggests that air travellers should not be concerned about aviation's impact on global warming is ignoring the evidence to the contrary", Mr Downie said.

The contribution of aviation to climate change is a hot political issue in Europe with politicians and concerned celebrities frequently challenged to justify their air travel.

The British Government has just introduced a small greenhouse tax on all domestic flights, and by 2011 all flights within Europe will be subject to the EU's Emissions Trading Scheme, significantly increasing the cost of air travel.

"The Government is still in denial", said Dr Clive Hamilton, Executive Director of the Institute.

"Instead of acknowledging that aviation emissions are a growing threat to the climate, the Government is hiring consultants to tell it how to persuade Europeans that aviation emissions are not a problem."