

## **Truss Attacks on Premier Beattie Threaten to Derail Government's Greenhouse Plans**

Environment Minister Senator Hill's carefully laid plans to capitalise on his victory at Kyoto are being undermined by Agriculture Minister Warren Truss. Ending land clearing in Queensland is the key to meeting Australia's international greenhouse gas target, yet Mr Truss' criticisms of Premier Beattie's legislation are undermining Queensland's attempts to eliminate tree clearing.

The political stoush between Premier Beattie and Federal Ministers conceals a more important split within the Federal Cabinet. Senator Hill was congratulated by Mr Howard for winning last-minute inclusion of the 'Australia clause' in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The clause allows Australia to count reductions in land clearing towards achieving its 108% greenhouse gas emissions target. More than 90% of land clearing occurs in Queensland.

"Cutting emissions from land clearing will cost around one tenth of emission reductions from fossil fuel sectors", said Institute Executive Director Dr Clive Hamilton. "The biggest beneficiaries of the Queensland Government's actions will be the electricity and aluminium industries.

"It's fair for Premier Beattie to be asking the Federal Government for greenhouse money to compensate some land-holders. Senator Hill will sooner or later pay up because he knows how important it is to the Government's agenda."

According to calculations by the Australia Institute recently published in *Environmental Science and Policy*, an international refereed journal, ending land clearing will allow Australia's fossil emissions to grow by up to 30% above 1990 levels by 2010, instead of the 8% laid down in the Kyoto Protocol. The Institute also estimates that cutting fossil emissions would cost around \$20 per tonne of carbon dioxide while cutting emissions from land clearing would cost less than \$2 per tonne.

"Premier Beattie is doing the Federal Government a huge favour, but Minister Truss has not caught on. By intervening in this issue he is jeopardising a windfall gain for Queensland landholders and embarrassing his Cabinet colleagues," said Dr Hamilton.

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