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## **Government's Climate Change Position a 'Policy Disaster'**

Australia will become the world's outstanding emitter of greenhouse gases and suffer severe economic costs if the Government's international climate change policy is adopted.

This is one of the key conclusions from an analysis of the Australian Government's 'differentiation' position to be taken to the Climate Change Convention in Kyoto this December. The analysis, released today by The Australia Institute, has been prepared by experts who have a close knowledge of the development of Australia's climate change position and its implications.

Among the conclusions of the analysis are:

- far from Australia being almost uniquely *disadvantaged* by greenhouse gas targets, we are almost uniquely *advantaged*;
- while the Australian Government claims that differentiation policies by other countries vindicate its position, in every case the alternative differentiation policies would be *worse* for Australia than uniform targets;
- the Government's own estimates show that the costs to Australia of greenhouse gas abatement measures would be extremely small;
- whilst Australia uses high population and economic growth rates in developing countries as reasons for insisting that those countries be required to *reduce* their emissions, the same factors are used to argue that Australia should be given *more lenient* targets;
- if the Government's position were adopted it would lock Australia into a high-emissions economic structure which would be all the more costly to change in a decade or two when more demanding targets are inevitably agreed; and
- the Government's position is unworkable and inequitable, and since it has no chance of being accepted we must ask whether the Government is set on sabotaging agreement.

Releasing the report Australia Institute Executive Director Dr Clive Hamilton said: 'The bureaucracy is subject to total client capture. Indeed ABARE's advice to the Government has been directly funded by the coal industry. Ministers have been snowed by officials who are unable to separate the public interest from the commercial interests of the coal industry.'

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