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EDO Alert! Climate change news

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This Alert gives you all the latest climate change news, including our climate change case against Xstrata coal mine starting in court on 31 January 2007, a South Australian Bill which sets the first Australian greenhouse gas reduction and significant renewable energy targets, a European Commission initiative to introduce binding greenhouse gas reduction targets of 20% by 2020, Queensland's weak policy developments, and a climate change teleconference lecture (phone in to listen and email today to book) by Dr Mark Diesendorf on January 17 2007.

1. Climate change case – Qld Conservation Council at Xstrata

As we told you in our November-December 2006 Bulletin, EDO Qld and barristers Chris McGrath and Stephen Keim SC are acting for Qld Conservation Council (QCC) in the first climate change case in a Queensland Court. The case objects to Xstrata Coal Qld's mining lease expansion at an open cut coal mine west of Mackay, because of the 72-96 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (15% of Australia's annual emissions) which will be produced from the mining, transport and use of the coal from the mine over its 15 year lifespan.

The case aims to have the true costs of greenhouse emissions recognised and conditions imposed to avoid, reduce or offset the emissions, such as by planting carbon sinks.

EDO Qld and QCC have now secured top experts to give evidence to the Land and Resources Tribunal when the case is heard from 31 January – 2 February 2007. We have engaged Emeritus Professor Ian Lowe on climate change science, Dr Hugh Saddler on calculation of greenhouse gas emissions, Ben Keogh on the range of offset measures available, Jon Norling on the economic impacts of climate change, Professor Ove Hoegh-Guldberg on the impacts of climate change on the Great Barrier Reef and Dr Stephen Williams on the broader ecological impacts of climate change.

You are encouraged to attend this crucial hearing from 10am Wednesday 31 January at the Land and Resources Tribunal at Level 9, 259 Queen St. The case is an important step towards reducing the climate change impacts from Queensland's coal industry!

2. Greenhouse targets set in South Australia!

The first Australian climate change legislation with binding greenhouse reduction targets was tabled in South Australian Parliament on 6 December 2006. The *Climate Change and Greenhouse Emissions Reduction Bill 2006* introduced by the South Australian Labor Premier sets targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the state by at least 60% of 1990 levels by the end of 2050, and to ensure at least 20% of all electricity generated and consumed in SA by 2014 to come from renewable sources like wind and solar power.

The Bill also sets up a Climate Change Council to provide the government with independent advice on the impact of climate change on business and the wider community. The Council would work with industry and Government to develop strategies combating climate change and would also

encourage the adoption of leading-edge practices by business and identify chances to reduce or eliminate the effects of climate change.

South Australia are also taking other climate change initiatives including:

- i) buying green power to meet 20% of the government's energy needs,
- ii) introducing Australia's first feed-in laws, which will reward owners of solar panels for the surplus energy they return to the energy grid,
- iii) trialing a new generation of mini-wind turbines on government buildings, and
- iv) leading a national investigation into impediments to the take-up of renewable and low emission technologies.

EDO calls on the federal and state governments to follow South Australia's example and introduce binding emissions and renewable targets.

3. European Commission recommends greenhouse reduction targets

On 10 January 2007 the European Commission set out proposals and options for keeping climate change to manageable levels in its Communication "Limiting Global Climate Change to 2° Celsius: The way ahead for 2020 and beyond." The Communication is a major contribution to the ongoing discussions at international level on a future global agreement to combat climate change after 2012, when the Kyoto Protocol's emissions targets expire.

The Commission believes that when an international agreement is reached on the post-2012 framework this should lead to a 30% cut in emissions from developed countries by 2020. To further underline its commitment the Commission proposes that the **European Union commits now to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020.**

The Communication is part of a package of measures to establish a new Energy Policy for Europe that proposes amongst others a binding target of 20% of the EU's overall energy mix to be sourced from renewable energy by 2020 and to enhance energy efficiency with the objective of saving 20% of total primary energy consumption by 2020. If successful, this would mean that by 2020 the EU would use approximately 13% less energy than today, saving 100 billion euro and around 780 tonnes of CO₂ each year.

The proposals will be considered by EU leaders at their Spring summit in Brussels on 8-9 March 2007.

This compares with Australia with no binding targets for reducing greenhouse emissions and only a 2% renewable energy target. Australia remains the highest per capita greenhouse polluter in the developed world.

4. Queensland to conduct more study into climate change

While other states like South Australia are introducing binding targets, this coal state lags behind.

Premier Beattie's latest climate change policy is \$9 million to establish a Qld Climate Change Centre of Excellence, to provide policy advice and scientific information on climate change and its impacts, with advice on measures to reduce and offset Queensland's greenhouse gas emissions. The Centre was a 2006 election commitment and will be a specialist unit within the Department of Natural Resources and Water with annual recurrent funding of \$7.5million.

5. Climate change lecture by Dr Mark Diesendorf, Wednesday 17 January 2007

Tune in to an inspiring Climate Study/Action Telephone Conference with Dr Mark Diesendorf on Wednesday, January 17th 2007, 7pm – 8:30pm on “A Sustainable Energy Future for Australia”.

Dr Mark Diesendorf is a well known lecturer and Director of Sustainability Centre Pty Ltd who co-authored the national energy scenario study, "A Clean Energy Future for Australia", and authored the forthcoming book, "Greenhouse Solutions with Sustainable Energy".

This teleconference is sponsored by the Rainforest Information Centre to bring perspectives on climate change to a wide audience without requiring people to travel in a carbon intensive way. Taking part requires making a telephone call to the USA, using your current telephone service or by purchasing an international calling card from any newsagency. With the right phonecard, the 90 minute session should only cost you about 4 dollars.

To book, email rainforestinfo@ozemail.com.au and they will send you the telephone number, pin and powerpoint presentation that Mark Diesendorf will speak to.

Turn over for information on EDO Qld's Planning Litigation
Information Sessions in January and February 2007.