

Conference Communiqué

From Melbourne, 25 August 2009

The Australian and New Zealand Climate Change Ministers, Hon Senator Penny Wong and Hon Dr Nick Smith, talked about the need for the two countries to work closely together to combat the threat of global climate change when they presented at the conference this morning.

Convenor of the Conference, Gary Taylor, noted that there was a high degree of common interest and a clear expression of intention to work together.

“The two governments are working to create emissions trading regimes that will be broadly compatible in the future, whilst acknowledging that getting legislation in place for the foundation policies is the first step,” said Gary Taylor.

“There is also a firmly expressed view that both countries need to settle their emissions trading regimes prior to the Copenhagen COP in December. The review of the New Zealand emissions trading scheme and the passage into law of the Australian carbon pollution reduction scheme are seen as establishing baseline credibility for Copenhagen, so the pressure is on.

“Senator Wong cited calls from both the Business Council of Australia and the Australian Industry Group for certainty in climate change policy while Hon Dr Nick Smith highlighted the forestry sector in New Zealand as wanting a stable policy platform so that new investments in afforestation and carbon sinks can proceed.

“In an interesting intervention for New Zealanders at the conference, the Opposition Climate Change Spokesperson, Charles Chauvel, indicated from the floor that Labour was committed to trying to reach an agreement on the New Zealand ETS with National so as to establish broad cross-party support.

“From the perspective of us as conference convenors, this was a very welcome statement of intent and is the strongest indication yet that there is some hope that National and Labour will reach an accord.

“The situation in Australia is more volatile but negotiations are ongoing and one can only hope that agreement is reached before the next vote in the Senate in November. As Senator Wong observed, emissions trading is the policy preference in a growing number of countries and further delay is only going to increase eventual compliance costs.

“By the time of our 2010 event we would hope that the domestic policy settings in both countries will be settled and business can move forward with certainty about the cost of carbon” Mr Taylor concluded.

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