

21st February 2000

Contact: Clive Hamilton 02 6249 6221 or 0413 993 223 (mob).

Coal Decision Confirms Queensland's Greenhouse Pariah Status

The Beattie Government's decision to approve a new coal-fired power station at Kogan Creek will reinforce the status of Queenslanders as the worst greenhouse polluters in Australia and the world.

In 1995 – the latest year for which official figures are available – Queenslanders were responsible for 25.6 tonnes of greenhouse gases each, compared to the national average of 22.3 tonnes. Including emissions from land clearing makes Queensland's figures much worse.

Between 1990 and 1995, greenhouse pollution from all energy sources increased 23.4% in Queensland compared to the national average of 8.7%.

The Kogan Creek decision underscores the urgent need for a greenhouse trigger to be inserted in Commonwealth environment legislation.

The Federal Government is actively considering amending last year's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act to require the Federal Environment Minister to intervene in projects with high greenhouse gas emissions, especially coal-fired power stations.

The Kogan Creek project, along with the Millmerran coal-fired power station also recently approved by the Beattie Government, would increase Australia's annual emissions by more than four million tonnes, and jeopardise the flow of huge natural gas reserves along the proposed PNG-Queensland pipeline.

"This is Australia's Federal system of government at its worst. Any new coal-fired power stations will make it extremely difficult for Australia to meet its obligation to limit greenhouse gases under the Kyoto Protocol", said Dr Clive Hamilton, Executive Director of The Australia Institute.

"The Queensland Government's decision will lock in very high emissions for decades, and the costs will be imposed on Australians in other states as they will be required to cut their greenhouse emissions by more to accommodate Queensland."

"Mr Beattie is demanding that the Commonwealth provide \$103 million to help Queensland compensate land-holders for tree-clearing restrictions aimed in part at cutting greenhouse gas emissions. But the Kogan Creek decision suggests that the Queensland Government is not fair dinkum about reducing greenhouse gas emissions", said Dr Hamilton.

The Australia Institute www.tai.org.au