

AUSTRALIA

1. Official Position

On 11 October 1990 the Commonwealth Government of Australia adopted an interim planning target to stabilize emissions of greenhouse gases by the year 2000 (based on 1988 levels) and to reduce those emissions by 20 per cent by the year 2005. The interim target covers all greenhouse gases — namely, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide — not controlled by the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer. Australia has an existing policy of phasing out CFCs and halons by 1997.

In implementing the interim planning target, Australia will not proceed with the adoption of response measures which have net adverse economic impacts nationally or on Australia's trade competitiveness in the absence of similar action by major greenhouse gas producing countries. The appropriateness of the level of the interim planning target will be kept under review by the Commonwealth Cabinet, with the first review by October 1991, pursuant to additional scientific information and in the context of any international agreements.

In the context of finalising the Government's Ecologically Sustainable Development Strategy, a working group will report on options to stabilize and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with the terms outlined above, and on the most cost-effective combination of measures available to reduce emissions. A National Greenhouse Response Strategy was also initiated as part of the 11 October decision. The Strategy will include as its first stage:

- placement of the greenhouse issue on the agenda of the Special Premier's Conference for urgent consideration by the States and Territories of Australia; this Conference has subsequently been held, and all the States and Territories have adopted the Commonwealth's targets;