

# CLIMATE JUSTICE **FAST!**



## Media Release

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For Immediate Release

### World Hunger Strikers declare CPRS “dangerous”

Canberra 18 November 2009: On his twelfth day outside of Parliament House without food, Paul Connor did not appear overly enthusiastic about the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) debate.

"The Labor government wants to appear to be acting on climate change, but this is fostering a dangerous delusion. Their CPRS simply does not go far enough, and such half-measures on climate change are actually incredibly dangerous, because they risk lulling our society into a false sense of security."

"If you're tied to the tracks with a train bearing down on you at 200 kph, do you try to slow it to 100, or do you cut the ropes and save your life?"

Mr Connor is an organiser of Climate Justice Fast. The worldwide hunger strike, initiated by Australians frustrated with political inaction, is currently under way to draw attention to the climate change crisis as world leaders prepare to meet at the Copenhagen climate summit in December.

Climate Justice Fast co-organiser Anna Keenan, an Australian currently fasting with a group of international activists in Copenhagen, agreed.

"Between Labor and the Liberals the CPRS is like a choice between bad and worse. This debate is a joke," she said.

"Is the CPRS going to achieve massive reductions in carbon dioxide on the scale that we need? Not at all. Instead it delivers windfall handouts in compensation to our nation's worst polluters. It is an injustice."

Climate Justice Fast (CJF) has joined a number of organisations in decrying the CPRS targets, which are universally regarded as being inadequate to effectively mitigate climate change and an impending global catastrophe.

The 2007 UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report states that industrialised countries such as Australia should aim for a 25-40% emission reduction, from 1990 levels, by 2020. This target would give the world a 50/50 chance of avoiding a two degree temperature rise. Two degrees is considered to be the tipping point for environmental disaster.

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CJF members worldwide are calling for measures that are in line with the demands of the world's most climate-vulnerable nations, who stand by more recent science stating that a reduction of greater than 40% is necessary.

"A paltry commitment to a 5% cut in emissions by 2020 will bring shame upon our nation," Mr Connor said. "It is now well established that the minimum commitment required by developed nations is 40%. So our nation has a choice. We can choose to join the rest of humanity in confronting this very real threat to our collective survival, or we can choose to turn our back upon the rest of the world, and to yield to the financial interests of a short-sighted but well-heeled corporate minority.

"When the government's very own climate advisor, Ross Garnaut, calls this scheme 'one of the worst examples of policy making in our nation's history', we know something is wrong."

On climate finance, the hunger strikers were similarly adamant.

"We want every cent of the \$20 billion in compensation to polluters under the CPRS to be wholly redirected to renewable energy and to international climate finance. Renewable energy in this country has never seen that sort of investment. Just imagine what we could do," Ms Keenan said.

"Labor is throwing money about for coal like it was nothing, but when it comes to spending money on renewable energy or climate finance, the treasury's walls go up immediately. But coal is the past, and the renewable energy economy is our future. Science says that in the next 40 years we need to phase out fossil fuels completely, or see the Murray-Darling Basin dry out entirely. We have the sunshine and the technology, so it's really a no-brainer."

"Now is the time for the Australian people to raise their voice, and demand government actions that will secure a safe future for our children."

Climate Justice Fast now has over 100 participants in some 14 countries worldwide, and will maintain a presence inside the Copenhagen climate summit. Both Mr Connor and Ms Keenan encouraged people to visit the [climatejusticefast.com](http://climatejusticefast.com) website to learn more.

## **Ends**

**Images available on request**

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