

An exploratory study of a sample of key stakeholders' views of the business implications and politics accompanying Australian Climate Policy reform.

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Abstract

This research sets out to examine how key stakeholders view climate change and climate policy reform in Australia. The study presents a survey of the existing literature detailing various aspects of the topic, including; business preparedness for policy reform, perspectives of climate change, the efficacy of proposed mitigation strategies, employment ramifications and the authority of the sovereign nation to pursue climate policy reform autonomously. This survey demonstrates a situation where consensus is far from reached. Divergent opinions exist as to the nature, cause and impacts of climate change and arguments abound as to the most appropriate response to mitigate against further climate change. The literature does, however, present two areas of agreement. Firstly, the discourse presents a situation where business and individuals are poorly informed as to the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. Secondly, the literature argues forcefully that vested interests are holding sway in the design and implementation of new climate policies.

The literature survey is complemented through data generated by a survey questionnaire administered on two groups of individuals. The first of these groups constitutes those employed in the Financial Services Sector, the second those employed in the Resource Sector. These employment sectors were selected as they constitute those that will be directly impacted upon by the policy reform. Results suggest that support for legislative action to reduce carbon emissions is strong, as is support for Australia to lead the way in reducing carbon emissions. Despite this, the majority of respondents believe that the CPRS will precipitate a net decrease in employment in Australia. Respondents are of the view that non-state actors, such as environmentalists, energy producers and the resource sector have had a disproportionate influence in Australian Climate Policy reform. In addition, respondents predict that the carbon market will be marred by volatility. This leads to concerns as to the efficacy of the proposed scheme to actually reduce carbon emissions. Despite these criticisms 42 percent of respondents believe that Australia's carbon emissions will be lower in 2030 than today. Given that this is the overriding

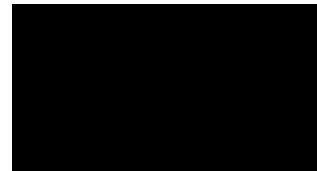
objective of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme this finding adds legitimacy to the Government's efforts.

Contrary to the researcher's initial assumption, a statistical analysis of this data demonstrates that a respondent's belief that the introduction of the CPRS will be personally beneficial/detrimental overrides the nature of their employment in informing their response to statements relevant to climate policy reform in Australia. This finding adds impetus for further enquiry into the variables that influence stakeholder's attitudes toward this, most pivotal, of issues.

Candidate's Certification

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.



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