

Climate action statement draws broad support

Thursday 1 May 2008, by [NICHOLS Dick](#) (Date first published: 30 April 2008).

The April 11-13 Climate Change-Social Change conference ended with the production of a statement that tries to specify the elements of a strategy against global warming that would actually have a chance of success.

It is an attempt to find a common language which would enable people from different social and political backgrounds to express agreement and to help lay some basis for continuing dialogue and collaboration among the tens of thousands who are engaged in the climate change struggle. People sign on an individual basis, and not in the name of any organisation they may represent.

The statement has already drawn support from key conference speakers, including US Marxist ecologist John Bellamy Foster, South African social movement activist Patrick Bond and Cuban biologist and permaculturalist Roberto Perez.

Early Australian signatories include Cam Walker and Jim Green of Friends of the Earth, Adrian Whitehead of Beyond Zero Emissions, as well as permaculture educator Robyn Francis and university teachers and writers Genevieve Kelly, Stuart Rosewarne, Tim Anderson and Hans Baer. Indigenous activists Sam Watson and Pat Eatock have also indicated their support.

The statement has just been made available internationally, and was already gained the support of Ian Angus, editor of the Climate and Capitalism website, Grant Morgan of New Zealand's Residents Action Movement and US scientists Merrill Singer and Mark Madsen.

The statement is in the form of an 11-point argument that begins with the present scientific message about global warming and specifies that "the central challenge is to speed up the replacement of carbon-intensive infrastructure and forms of economic and social organisation, setting in place the measures supporting climate sustainability at a pace that meets the timetable for the greenhouse gas emission cuts the Earth needs".

It ends by identifying five indispensable elements of a successful strategy. These are "properly resourced public agencies to drive the sustainability effort, an international framework where the First World pays the vast bulk of the price of reversing global warming, an end to rampant consumerism, vastly strengthened campaigns for climate sustainability, and building a powerful political alliance for climate sustainability with social justice".

While there was vigorous debate at the conference over immediate burning issues in global warming politics like carbon trading and carbon rationing, the statement avoids taking a position on such questions. Instead, it stresses the approach needed to cement the alliance between the movement against global warming and movements for social justice.

In the words of the statement: "Whatever the mechanisms used to reduce the use of carbon-intensive products and processes and to harvest the income to help fund the replacement of carbon-intensive infrastructure, the burden must fall primarily on the corporate world and the rich.

“The history of eco-taxation has already seen too many failed attempts at making ordinary consumers pay, leading to working-class and popular alienation from the environment movement, and providing dangerous openings for right-wing anti-environmental demagogues. If those opposed to radical action for climate sustainability succeed in turning the mass of working people against the global warming struggle there simply will not be a sustainability transition...”

The full statement can be found at <http://greenleft.org.au> and on ESSF website: [Climate crisis—urgent action needed now!](#) . Everyone is encouraged to read the statement and sign up if they agree. Signatures can be sent to climatechange.socialchange@gmail.com.

P.S.

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