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## **Governments in greenhouse pacts shouldn't throw reductions**

Ben McNeil  
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FAR FROM being "an historic agreement for the cause of reducing greenhouse gas emissions" as the Prime Minister claims, the "new" climate pact announced at the Association of South-East Asian Nations regional forum will serve only to undermine international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The aim of the "Asia-Pacific Partnership for Clean Development and Climate" is supposedly to promote the use of clean technology between Australia, the United States and developing nations like India and China. But the agreement is merely a weaker version of a mechanism that already exists with the Kyoto protocol.

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The "Clean Development Mechanism" (CDM) within Kyoto specifically allows developed nations to exchange and invest in clean development technologies within the developing world. Both developed and developing nations have taken huge steps towards implementing and investing in the CDM. The Indian government for example has published a 187-page national strategy for the implementation of the CDM. The report specifically identifies clean development projects for India that developed nations can invest in, such as renewable energy initiatives.

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China has similarly highlighted some key projects within the CDM like wind energy, biomass gasification and technology efficiencies that would involve investment and technology transfer with the developed world.

For climate change, it will be very important to entrain China and India into cutting emissions along with other developing nations. The benefit of the CDM is that it incorporates all developing nations rather than just a select few. Within the United Nations framework convention on climate change, delegates from nearly 200 nations will meet in November to specifically discuss how to engage more specific national emission

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reduction commitments for all developing nations beyond Kyoto.

If Kyoto already promotes the exchange and transfer of clean development to China or India, then what is the benefit of this new climate pact? Australia and the US are extremely isolated on the international stage by not ratifying Kyoto. Its international ratification earlier in the year was a blow to their anti-Kyoto position. With this new climate pact they can be seen as at least "doing" something on climate change, despite the rest of the developed world doing much more.

The new climate pact sets no targets and is therefore a weak commitment to climate change. Setting no targets means there is no benchmark for success or failure.

As the business world knows, setting targets are important for ensuring commitment. The US-based Pew Centre on Global Climate Change has set up a program known as the Businesses Leading the Way Program, which has enlisted about 40 of the world's largest corporations such as Rio Tinto, BP, General Electric and Dupont. Each company has set various emission reduction targets to be achieved by 2010. For example, Dupont committed a massive emission reduction of 65 per cent of 1990 levels by 2010. When the company achieves this target, a little tick is put next to their name. By 2002, eight years before needing to, Dupont had a big tick next to its name.

The Howard Government should follow the lead of the business community and set emission reduction targets - whether the targets are set within the new climate pact or whether it's achieved by ratifying Kyoto. Not setting targets keeps the Government unaccountable and the end result is a big cross next to their name when it comes to climate change.

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