

*Southern Pride July 2008*  
**We've got to get it right**

Ask most people in the street about Kyoto and emissions trading and they will say they are sick of hearing about it, feel powerless and worried as to what the government may do negatively, to affect their jobs, cost of living, and life styles.

At the recently compiled 'Energy Challenges' conference held at S.I.T, Professor Arthur Williamson claimed that "it is the end of life as we know it, but it is not the end of life." While it would be tempting by some to say that he may have been watching too many reruns of Star Trek, depending on what you apply that statement to, there is a great deal of truth in it.

Believe in 'global warming' or not, one thing for sure is that the ideas surrounding it have become the biggest unilateral global inter-governmental football of all time.

By the year 2000 the term global warming had been replaced by 'climate change' and from that date and on going, there is debate among scientists as to whether the temperature is rising or not, and to what extent human intervention versus natural events has as a part to play in it. The debate continues, but most governments have accepted the findings of "The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change" (IPCC) who maintain climate change is a real issue requiring international action and co-operation. We have all heard what impact 'Global Warming' will have, and if the predictions of these scientists should be correct; there is reason for concern.

The S.I.T conference did not draw any conclusion on this or anything else, it was not there to do so. It was well balanced and well run with arguments and valuable information presented by a diverse range of persons specialising in their subjects. I found the only disappointing aspect was that the audience was proportionally typically over represented by academics, government and quasi government people, and under represented by the citizens that will end up paying for any inflicted legislative restrictions, and that the valuable information and views from the event were not given enough news time.

The New Zealand government is moving fast, too fast, in endeavoring to get its climate change legislation in place before the elections. There is very strong political will and reason to do this. The Labour lead government has made much noise on the international stage about their intentions, and it is no secret that they want to be seen as a world leader in making and putting legislation in place. Time maybe running out for them if one was to believe that there maybe a change in government in November and if there is, they will have to have this bill passed very soon.

The select committee on the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) has completed its submissions process. The bill had 237 pages and from this, the submitters, which consisted of small to medium sizes business, corporate companies, individuals and business groups presented over 1000 amendments. All this and only 3 days prior to its final deliberation, the select committee

gave only 16 hours of consideration before reporting back its findings for the bills second reading. The report on the bill lists a number of changes, but most of them are only technical in nature. From the Labour lead government point of view this bill could be in danger of lapsing and this is not in its interest. If it is not passed within the allowable timeframe prior to the election, the bill lapses with the danger of showing them and the leader in poor light. If this bill lapses and there is a change of government the new government may not pick up the bill but if they do they can adapt it. This might not be such a bad thing because this bill represents the most significant economic reform since the deregulation of the economy in the late 1980s. The importance of getting this legislation right cannot be overstated, it will affect jobs, cost of living, and life styles.

Richard Hay