

United States Climate Report does not bode well for Australia

business executive calls the political parties into direct action

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United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report shows that snow cover, glaciers and sea ice have significantly decreased

Temperature over land and ocean heat content have increased

More than 90% of the warming that has occurred in the last 50 years has been absorbed by Earth's oceans

59% of Australian business is already implementing direct carbon reduction programs

Matthew Tukaki, CEO of business sustainability and green jobs practice, SansGov, has said the release overnight of the report of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration annual State of the Climate Report re-affirms that the world is already significant climate change impacts thanks to a rise in temperatures associated with greenhouse gas.

Recently, SansGov released a report showing the business and industry response to climate change was reasonably high compared to pre-existing anecdotal evidence (59% of 692 respondents indicated they were implementing carbon reduction programs irrespective of Government climate change policy while the bulk of the remainder indicated a wait and see approach).

The report is comprehensive and we have a cross section of data from 300 scientists around the world. In fact 48 countries, including Australia, were involved in compiling the data and conducting the analysis. The report clearly shows that the temperature has been greater in each year from 1990 and, in some cases, has hit record levels as is the case in some States of Australia. Mr Tukaki said.

Even when you look at the 10 key indicators in the report you will see that are declines in things such as glaciers, snow cover and sea ice. If you have a look at other reports and align those with the data coming from NOAA, you cannot miss the realisation that global warming is already impacting the planet and the indicators do not bode well for the future Mr Tukaki said

Mr Tukaki did, however, caution Government policy makers

who may be tempted to rush into action based on the data coming from the NOAA report:

I have no doubt we will probably see a price on carbon and a global carbon trading system put in place over the coming 2-5 years. The challenge for economies both developed and developing is ensuring we have the infrastructure, skills and supporting frameworks in place to ensure that if an ETS is one of the silver bullets, that it becomes real and measurable with tangible outcomes, and not just another tax or levy. Mr Tukaki said.

The reality we are dealing with is very serious and so you need a serious and well mapped out approach. In the Australian election campaign it would be good to see announcements on specific investments into green skills development, particularly for vocational and tertiary education institutions, and incentives for business to act more directly and more quickly this could be the ability to back date carbon credits providing the business is able to show and prove audited data. Mr Tukaki said.

When it comes to households, I am generally finding that people are, and have been acting, for some time to modify habits, recycle more and reduce energy consumption that said, when it comes to housing construction, offering more incentives to builders and developers to build more energy efficient homes while at the same time installing smart water systems. Mr Tukaki said.

The policies of the major political parties are targeted towards the same goal, reduction of carbon emissions some people may not like the concept of a community consensus, but the concept of consensus itself is important. What would work even better is if we established not only a group of eminent scientists, but business leaders, academics and community leaders to work alongside the body politic to come up with a tangible plan that covers a carbon tax, direct action, investment in technology, investment in green skills and jobs development. Mr Tukaki said

The NOAA report, released overnight, can be found here:

<http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/bams-state-of-the-climate/>

Things business can do now:

1.
Heavy industry: being to look at how you can re-engineer business process to create more energy efficient techniques. Set yourself an annual carbon reduction target and include things such as energy consumption and reduction of waste

2.
Construction and infrastructure:
it takes 40-60% less energy to produce secondary steel versus virgin steel increase the amount of secondary steel in the construction of buildings and

infrastructure thereby lowering the carbon emissions created by producing primary steel.

3.

Government: could consider mandating a certain % of recyclable products be included when it comes to tenders. Because a number of small businesses are normally innovators in this area, it could be the case that there is flow on effects to increase the amount of Government business going to small business. Government could also provide a mandated requirement for Tenderers to have a sustainability program in place and, importantly, audit it

4.

Transportation: increase the incentives for care users to adopt public transport. Bus and rail prices have been increasing across the States maybe a financial incentive is the right way to go.

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Extracted directly from the report: Extreme Weather in 2009

In Brazil, extreme rainfall in the Amazon basin caused the worst flood in a century. Forty people were killed and 376,000 were left homeless.

In southeastern South America, the wettest November in 30 years displaced thousands of people.

In northwest England, heavy rainfall flooded the Lake District, setting new records for river flows and damaging 1,500 properties.

In northern Iberia and southern France, a North Atlantic storm raked the land with record winds, downed power lines, closed airports and blocked railroads.

Three intense heat waves broke temperature records in Australia. One of them was accompanied by high winds that fanned bushfires, killing 173 people.

The central north Pacific, which includes Hawaii, experienced several tropical cyclones after years of relative calm.

About SansGov:

SansGov was formed in 2001 as a knowledge and information management consultancy. In 2003 it added business transformation and change management to its scope of services and in 2009 the business introduced a sustainability practice. SansGov has been behind a range of significant reviews including the review of information management at the Joint House Department of the Parliament of Australia and the Australian Communications Authority. Matthew Tukaki is the CEO of SansGov.

About Matthew Tukaki:

Matthew Tukaki is CEO of SansGov and is the former Head of Drake Australia, the nations oldest and largest employment company. In addition to leading Drake in Australia, Matthew was also responsible for the business in Asia and was the companies power of attorney. Matthew is also the former Chairman of the WorkWise groups executive committee and on the 1st of July 2010 assumed the role as Australias representative to the United Nations Global Compact (www.unglobalcompact.com). The UNGC is the worlds largest business and industry led corporate social responsibility program with some 7,000 members worldwide.

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