

## CHOICE submission to 2020 summit

### Topic: Population, sustainability, climate change, water and the future of our cities

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), Choice and the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) are working together to advocate action to prevent dangerous climate change and promote measures that reduce the impact of climate change on households. The impacts of climate change will be particularly harsh on low income households and disadvantaged communities.

If governments introduce well-supported policies to improve energy efficiency in conjunction with a carbon price, appropriate tariffs and a safety net, quality of life need not be compromised and greenhouse emissions should fall.

Our report *“Energy and Equity - Preparing households for climate change: efficiency, equity and immediacy”* details measures that need to be well underway before an emissions trading system commences, so that vulnerable groups in our society are not further disadvantaged in the shift to a low carbon economy. The report is available in full at [www.choice.com.au/climatechange](http://www.choice.com.au/climatechange)

### Recommendations

#### A

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Improve energy efficiency for households by addressing awareness and behaviour, home modifications, standards for buildings and appliances, and upgrades for equipment and appliances.

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A massive new national program could leverage significant private sector investment to retrofit all Australian homes within a generation. Such a program should aim to retrofit five per cent of existing homes a year and should include:

1. Effective and regularly evaluated **education** campaigns on the most effective means to achieving, and subsequent benefits of, energy and water efficiency.
2. Home **audits** of energy and water use that result in recommendations for behaviour change and physical improvements and referral to sources of assistance.
3. **Financial and other assistance** for low income households to implement measures that improve water and energy efficiency.
4. Improved **labelling** on products and appliances so that initial and second hand purchasers can make informed decisions about energy efficiency at the point of purchase.
5. Financial and taxation **incentives to encourage landlords** to retrofit properties to improve energy and water efficiency.
6. Improving energy and water efficiency in **public housing**.
7. **Mandatory** energy efficiency **standards** in all new buildings.

## **B**

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Implement an equitable and efficient emissions trading scheme that drives emission reduction. A well designed emissions trading scheme should have environmental integrity, provide business certainty and guarantee social equity.

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An emissions trading scheme should be designed and have regard to complementary measures that:

1. Improve energy efficiency for households that account for awareness and behaviour, home modifications, standards for buildings and appliances, and upgrades for equipment and appliances.
2. Develop tariff structures that appropriately recognise the essential nature of energy and water while pricing to encourage efficient consumption.
3. Establish safety net provisions to ensure that low income households have the opportunity to improve efficiency but are not burdened with price increases for essential services. One way to do this would be through the recycling of revenue from permit auctioning from a well designed emissions trading scheme. The revenue could be used to provide assistance and incentives to adjust, compensate those low income households who are adversely affected, encourage research and economic development.