

## EDITORIAL

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The November 2007 Australian federal election has been described as the first election in this country, if not the world, in which climate change became a pivotal voting issue. In the 12 months since, which has brought the Bali Climate Change Conference, Australia's ratification of the *Kyoto Protocol*, and 50 million Earth Hour participants globally, the issue has well and truly remained a live topic.

Nationally, the Garnaut Climate Change Review has released its reports on the impacts, challenges and opportunities of climate change. The Federal Government is committed to implementing a comprehensive emissions trading scheme by 2010 in order to achieve its targets for the reduction of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions. Following Senator Penny Wong's July 2008 release of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme Green Paper, a draft legislative package is due to be unveiled in December of this year. Abroad, we have seen a victory of climate over complacency, with scientist James Hansen aiming to enlist one million students to vote for the US presidential candidate with the greenest energy record.

This *Forum* is not intended to provide a detailed analysis of these multifaceted developments. Rather, it aims to enhance awareness of Australia's current position, reflect upon proposed action and present the legal issues surrounding climate change as integrally connected to scientific, economic, social and political imperatives.

As the articles in this *Forum* reveal, climate change regulation is inherently contentious, as it cuts across all levels of society. The issues are complex and important and the potential economic and human impact is extensive. Accordingly, reasoned examination of the legal frameworks in which our environmental practices operate is crucial. Change in society is impossible without change in the law

I would like to thank the contributors who have generously brought their expertise and diverse perspectives to this edition and who each provide a unique insight into climate change law – both existing and projected – in this country.

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