

## **Climate change - Pacific looks to Rudd to do the right thing**

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Cairns, Australia -- Greenpeace says Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd can either do the right thing for the climate, his country, the Pacific and beyond or do the dirty and keep investing in coal production.

The environmental campaign organisation has just completed its month-long Pacific ship tour in anticipation of the 40th Pacific Islands Leader's Forum being held in Cairns, Australia this week. Greenpeace is calling on Australia and New Zealand to cut their emissions by more than 40 percent by 2020. It is calling Rudd's current pledges to tackle climate change - one of the largest threats to Pacific survival - an underhanded and underground approach. Greenpeace said Mr Rudd has a real climate change agenda and is keeping the public in the dark about what's really going on. Mr Rudd aspires to be the broker of a climate change agreement on an international level - an audacious move from the country that is the world's largest carbon dealer said Greenpeace. "Australia too is on the frontline of climate change, but unlike the Pacific Island leaders, Kevin Rudd has a choice. He can choose to stand up for Australia and our neighbours, or continue expanding the coal industry," said Greenpeace.

Pacific Islands leaders are expected to call for strong action on climate change this week, urging Australia to be one of the developed countries to take action and reduce its carbon emissions. But Greenpeace says so far Rudd's direction is clear. "In two years since taking office, the Rudd Government has chosen to back the coal industry instead of implementing policies and programmes that would benefit our neighbors, the environment and the economy.

"Despite pledges to tackle climate change, Rudd has presided over a rapid expansion of the export coal industry and the building of new coal-fired power stations across the country." Greenpeace says with just five months from the world leaders meet in Copenhagen, Rudd needs to heed the call of the Pacific Island countries of the Forum who are demanding change. Australia is the world's biggest coal exporter, responsible for 252 million tonnes or 30 percent of the global export trade. By 2020 its coal exports will generate two billion tonnes of greenhouse pollution every year. "At home Kevin Rudd is posing as a climate hero. By flaunting a 5-25 percent emissions reduction target by 2020 as part of his 'carbon pollution reduction scheme', he is trying to pull the wool over our eyes." Greenpeace said any reduction pales in significance to the dramatic expansion of Australia's coal export industry.

The Pacific countries, like the Cook Islands, where the Greenpeace ship tour began, are all looking to Australia to make some real commitments this year. "The survival of the Pacific Islands and millions more of the world's most vulnerable people hinge on it," said Greenpeace. Greenpeace head of delegation in Cairns, Seini Nabou said Pacific leaders

need to stand united on climate change issues. “All that is needed is the unyielding political will and the summoning of our brave, resilient and proud warrior spirit to see it through,” she said “This must be the year the Pacific takes a strong stand and calls for numbers and commitments from developed countries. The time for sentiment is over.” This week Greenpeace has held public presentations, an 'alternate forum' on climate change with other NGOs in Cairns and has briefed Pacific media attending the Forum on issues they want to see action on at the Forum.