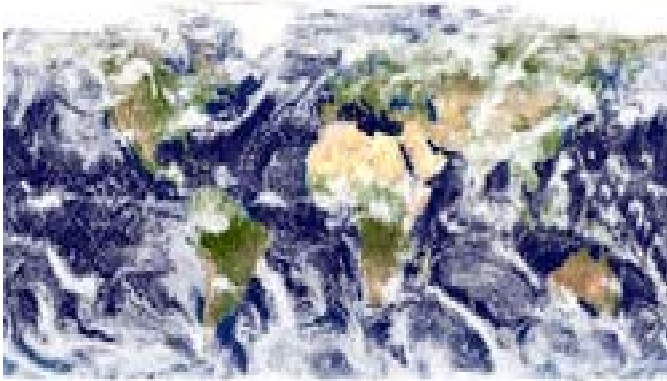


Energy and Resources Group Fall 2007 Colloquium Series (ER295)

September 5, 2007



Satis Arnold

Director, Policy & Planning
Murdoch University - Australia

Australia Confronts Climate Change

110 Barrows Hall / 4:00 p.m.

The Australian government has finally, a year ago, begun to respond positively to climate change. Previously, particularly in the preceding ten years, the Government resisted international efforts to address the issue. It sought and extracted huge concessions from the Kyoto process and then proceeded to work against further international efforts to constrain and reduce emissions. This was in large measure the result of the extraordinary influence of the mineral and resource industries on the legislative and executive arms of government.

The change in the Government's position was triggered by public concern about climate change, in the context of a federal election due before end February 2008. An Emissions Task Group has reported, a trading scheme is being designed, large corporations are required to participate in energy efficiency programs and will be subject to emissions control legislation to be introduced in 2008. The Government may moderate its position at international fora, if not participate actively in emissions reduction strategies.

Water shortages for agriculture, forestry and urban and rural communities are now endemic in Australia. Restrictions on water use apply in most cities and are likely to persist. Desalination is being introduced across the country. Water is likely to feature prominently as a driver of political processes and outcomes at State and Federal levels. Loss of biodiversity and impacts on coastal communities are major medium term concerns.

Some state and local governments have been more proactive. Positive changes to urban form and transport use are taking place in some communities with Perth leading the trend in some aspects assisted by work at the Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy at Murdoch University.