

media release



Master
Builders
ASSOCIATION

MASTERS OF OUR INDUSTRY

Master Builders Association of Victoria
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Master Builders challenge Garnaut's carbon tax claims

The Master Builders Association of Victoria has challenged Federal Government Climate Change Adviser Ross Garnaut's claim that a carbon tax is the most efficient means of reducing carbon emissions, ahead of direct action on efficiency standards.

Association Executive Director Brian Welch said Professor Garnaut's report did not pass the 'real world' production test, particularly when it comes to the family home.

"A carbon tax will increase house prices across the board, driving up the replacement cost of all homes.

"Increasing the cost of building materials will not achieve carbon reduction over the life of the home.

"Our concern is that in many cases it may have the opposite effect if consumers choose materials that are less energy intensive to produce but lack durability and quality. When applied to home construction it fails the basic principle of encouraging owners and builders to reduce, reuse and recycle"

A recent study by the Centre for Design at RMIT University has shown that the bulk of energy use associated with a home does not come from construction, but the maintaining thermal comfort for the occupants of the home.

"Energy use associated with maintaining thermal efficiency is three times the energy use associated with construction. Low emissions energy alternatives to coal fired power for base load electricity are possibly still decades away. The application of efficiency standards and use of innovative and durable materials are where the real reductions can be made.

Most recently, the introduction of Six Star efficiency for new residential homes is estimated to increase the energy efficiency of a home by 20 per cent.

"The Government is preoccupied with instituting a broad base tax which could work against the best interests of the Australian home buying public and deliver more waste and less recycling.

Mr Welch concluded by saying that "A carbon tax is a blunt and inappropriate tool for the building industry. Emissions reduction policies need to recognise how a product is used, not just how it is produced."

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