



PRIME MINISTER

Kernot undermines Australia to ease her environmental guilt

I was extremely disappointed to learn of Cheryl Kernot's public undermining of Australia's position at the climate change summit in Geneva.

Senator Kernot has significantly undermined our unity at an international forum to make a domestic political point.

Her letter to the Second Conference curiously raises a number of environmental priorities which her party's blind ideological opposition to the partial privatisation of Telstra is undermining at home.

It is interesting to note that the very concerns Senator Kernot raised overseas are seldom mentioned by her at home because they would be directly addressed by our Natural Heritage Trust of Australia.

Other important issues to be addressed by the Heritage Trust are restoring degraded waterways and land and reducing coastal pollution.

Her actions are made even worse by the fact that her letter contains factual errors.

She wrongly asserts Australia's emissions of greenhouse gas are rapidly increasing. The Minister for the Environment, Senator Hill, last week released the greenhouse gas inventory for Australia showing that between 1990 and 1994, our emissions increased by about 0.6 per cent per year. This figure was well down on the 3.1 per cent per annum growth rate between 1988 and 1990.

If Senator Kernot was really concerned with the state of the environment, she would be better served by passing landmark legislation to allow the partial sale of Telstra to fund our \$1 billion environment package.

Cheryl Kernot's actions have again suggested that political point-scoring - even overseas - overrides the Democrats' concern for our environment at home.

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