



# Farmers cheer ETS win

## Agriculture exempt after Opposition pressure

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FARMERS would be exempt from the emissions trading scheme in the first concessions the Federal Government has made to the Opposition to gain its support.

Government sources said it was prepared to exclude agriculture from the emissions trading scheme indefinitely and allow farmers to generate carbon credits as a sign of good faith to the Opposition.

"Over the next fortnight the Government is determined to work with the Liberal Party to achieve a negotiated agreement to establish a carbon pollution reduction scheme," a senior Government source told *The Sun-Herald*.

The concession is the first sign the Government is prepared to accept the Opposition's demands as part of its attempt to get the ETS legislation through Parliament before the end of the year.

The National Farmers Federation will welcome the breakthrough.

It has been urging the Opposition to support the ETS, which leaves the Nationals and the peak farmers group in disagreement.

But environment groups will criticise the decision, saying it will leave a vast source of greenhouse gas emissions unchecked by the

scheme. The Government had previously said it would consider including agriculture in the scheme from 2015.

Negotiations between the Government and the Opposition are continuing over the rest of the legislation. Whether the Government will cave in to demands for billions of dollars more compensation for heavy polluting industries is unclear.

The Government is demanding the legislation be voted on in the next fortnight – the last time Parliament will meet this year – so that it can take the scheme to international climate change talks in Copenhagen.

But it is uncertain what the Opposition will do once the Government finalises its position on the amendments.

Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull put his leadership on the line to secure approval to negotiate a raft of amendments but it is far from certain whether he will be able to convince his party room to vote for the amended legislation.

In a further sign of the divisions in the Coalition over climate change, former opposition leader Brendan Nelson used his final speech to the NSW Liberal Party to repeat his criticisms of the scheme.

"Our responsibility is first and foremost to preserve and defend Australia's interest," Dr Nelson said at the party's State Council meeting in Sydney yesterday.

"It's extremely important we do no more nor any less than the rest of the world."

The Government's concession comes as a new research project shows Australians are more likely to support paying for the cost of climate change through higher petrol and electricity prices than citizens of almost any other developed country.

New international research, to be released today, also shows Australians want the Federal Government to take tougher action at home and a stronger position at the international negotiations next month.

"We're at a fork in the road on climate change," Professor Stuart White, from the University of Technology, Sydney, said.

More than three-quarters of people surveyed said the price of fossil fuels should be increased. This was much higher than the response of citizens of France, Italy, Japan, Britain and the United States.

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Former opposition leader **BRENDAN NELSON**