

Australia Ratifies Kyoto

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has signed the Kyoto Protocol's Instrument of Ratification on Monday 3 December 2007, the same day he was sworn into office.

Under United Nations guidelines, ratification of the Kyoto Protocol enters into force 90 days after the Instrument of Ratification is received by the United Nations. Australia will become a full member of the Kyoto Protocol before the end of March 2008.

"This is the first official act of the new Australian Government, demonstrating my Government's commitment to tackling climate change," Rudd says.

"Australia's official declaration today that we will become a member of the Kyoto Protocol is a significant step forward in our country's efforts to fight climate change domestically – and with the international community," Rudd adds.

The announcement coincided with the opening day of the UNFCCC climate change conference in Bali, where the news received a warm response from other delegates.

Australia now has full voting rights at the Bali conference which Rudd, Treasurer Wayne Swan and Ministers Simon Crean, Penny Wong and Peter Garrett will attend to join with 190 other nations in negotiating for a new climate change treaty.

Newly appointed Shadow Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Urban Water Greg Hunt has indicated he will seek to travel to Bali as well.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has announced that in the newly established departments, Mark Paterson will become Secretary of the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research; Dr Peter Boxall will become Secretary of the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism, and Martin Parkinson will become Secretary of the new Department of Climate Change.

Dr Parkinson is currently a Deputy Secretary in the Commonwealth Treasury and recently headed the Secretariat of the Task Group on Emissions Trading. All departmental secretary appointments will be for five years, in keeping with current convention.

Peter Shergold has notified the Prime Minister that he intends to leave at the conclusion of his five year term in February 2008. Rudd says he is considering Dr Shergold's replacement.

[Source essa news]