



Environment Centre NT - Since 1983

## NT greenhouse emissions: big costs, big opportunities - April 2007

According to the NT government, by ~2010 the NT's emissions will almost double compared to 1990 levels (1990 is the international benchmark year). This doubling will occur mainly as a result of the planned completion of the Darwin LNG plant and the Alcan refinery expansion at Gove.

### The NT's biggest industrial greenhouse polluters:

**No.1: Conoco-Phillips LNG plant**, Darwin Harbour: 4,560,000 tonnes per annum (tpa) (for approved 10 MTPA facility - currently operating at about 3.5 MTPA)

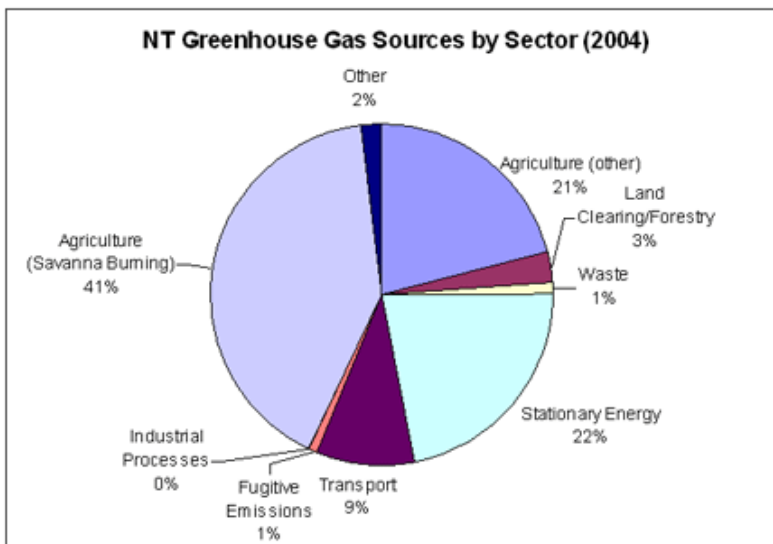
**No.2: ALCAN alumina refinery**, Gove: 3,000,600 tpa (for approved expansion of refinery powered by dirty 'fuel oil'; if used gas instead, annual greenhouse emissions would reduce to 2,215,505 tpa. NOTE: existing refinery emits 1,600,000 tpa)

In 2002, prior to these projects being approved by the NT government, NT greenhouse emissions were running at about 17,000,000 tpa.

**Therefore these two projects alone, when completed, will increase the Territory's greenhouse pollution levels by a massive ~35%!**

No one should be accepting, let alone proud, of such colossal increases from one-off industrial projects - which are only 'economic' because overseas-owned corporations want to maximize profits by accelerating the export (and exhaustion) of our non-renewable resources.

### Other major NT greenhouse pollution sources:



- Savanna wildfires: **~6 million tpa**
- 'Stationary energy', including Darwin, Alice and Katherine power stations: **~3.5 million tpa**
- Land clearing/destruction of native vegetation (e.g. the destruction of 30,000 hectares of native forest on Melville Island by Great Southern Plantations Ltd): **~500,000 tpa**
- Cows (methane produced by digestion): **~300,000 tpa**
- Transport: **~200,000 tpa**

Graph from EPA NT website: <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/environment/greenhouse/whatsnew.html>  
- note that the 2004 figures are the most recent published by the Federal government's Australian Greenhouse Office.

## **What is the NT government doing about our runaway greenhouse gas pollution?**

The NT government, with its heavy focus on old-style industrial development, has been slow to act on greenhouse emissions and is mostly looking at very modest, voluntary measures spread over long timeframes. It's main measures include:

1. Publishing a 'Strategy for Greenhouse Action' in 2006, which set out some **very modest** policy commitments;
2. Attempting to bring about **very modest** emissions reductions in areas such as government buildings ("10% reduction by 2011" - which is about a third of what could be achieved);
3. Encouraging - but not mandating - highly polluting companies like Conoco-Phillips to invest in '**carbon offsets**', whereby they pay to help reduce savanna wildfires in remote parts of the NT in exchange for creating massive greenhouse pollution in Darwin;
4. Working with Australian States and Territories to introduce a **very modest** national carbon emissions trading scheme (likely to **NOT** include, or be based on mandatory emissions reduction targets);
5. **Slowly** introducing mandatory reporting of greenhouse emissions, e.g. by heavy industry;
6. Running a TravelSmart Workplaces project, encouraging the public to use other ways of getting around rather than driving alone in a car;
7. Funding community greenhouse action through **COOLmob** - a project of the Environment Centre NT

## **What the NTG is NOT doing (but should be):**

1. Setting ambitious but achievable mandatory emission reduction targets for the NT, backed by legislation;
2. Promoting renewable energy, e.g. solar, to the greatest extent possible by, for example, mandating solar hot water systems and energy efficient appliances for all new houses, offices and apartment blocks in Darwin, Palmerston, and other centers;
3. Looking at alternative forms of economic activity that do NOT rely on huge energy-intensive fossil fuel-based industries (this means, for example, not pushing ahead with the proposed highly destructive fossil fuel-based Glyde Point heavy industry development north of Darwin);
4. Ending large scale clearing of native vegetation, such as in the Daly and on the Tiwi Islands. The existing moratorium on land clearing in part of the Daly catchment expires some time in 2007. It is unclear what the government will do.

## **Amidst the doom and gloom, a big opportunity!**

Northern Australia, including the NT, is home to the world's greatest remaining expanse of relatively intact savanna woodlands. The value of these woodlands as a global carbon sink - in addition to all their other values - is only just starting to be understood and acknowledged. Working with the WA and Queensland state governments, national and international governments, businesses and non-government organisations, the NT government should lead the way in developing an international carbon offsets scheme that will pay Indigenous and non-Indigenous landholders across northern Australia to protect and look after their native forests/woodlands as an effective global carbon sink - rather than clearing it for woodchip plantations (Tiwi islands) or to run cattle which produce high levels of the most serious greenhouse gas, methane.

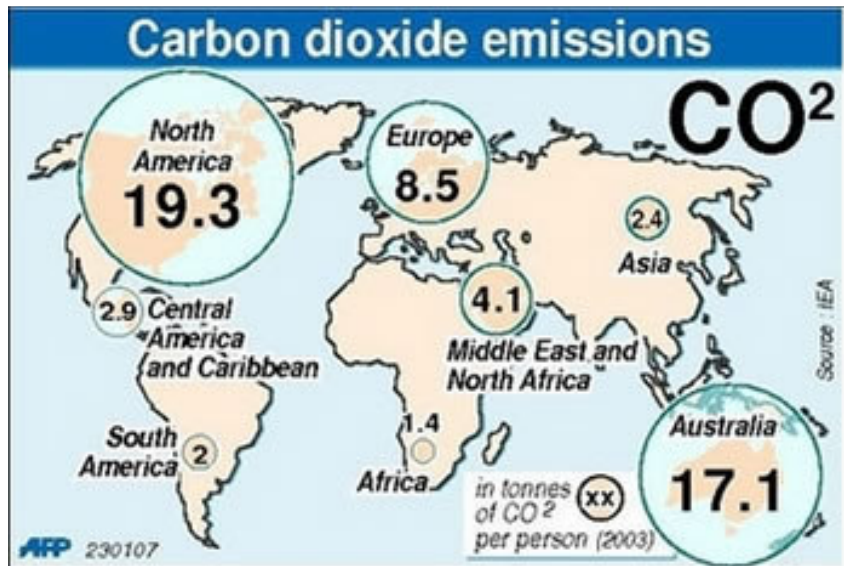


Figure: *Per capita* CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; note that the *per capita* figure for the NT is 27 tonnes – a world record!!

The full greenhouse inventories are at:

<http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/inventory/stateinv/index.html>

or

<http://www.greenhouse.gov.au/inventory/stateinv/pubs/ntinventory.pdf>