



EMISSIONS | No agreed standards or checks, balances

Carbon watchdog

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ONE of the nation's foremost environmentalists is calling for a code of practice to clean up the carbon offsetting industry.

The latest trend for people wanting to save the planet from global warming, carbon offsetting offers people various ways to reduce or eliminate their carbon dioxide emissions. However, the carbon offsetting industry is not regulated.

Founder of Planet Ark Jon Dee yesterday said there were no agreed standards or checks and balances.

"People are very confused about standards, about what is a carbon offset and who checks on these things, and what kind of measurements are used," he said.

A growing number of not-for-profit organisations and commercial enterprises claim to offset greenhouse gas emissions.

Some plant trees, others burn land fill gas, change light bulbs or invest in renewable energy.

Concerns include double accounting, or selling the same offset to more than one person, inaccurate calculators, and payments for offsets that are not new and would have happened anyway.

Mr Dee said he was working to assist industry in a personal capacity and "a lot of the major players" were already involved.

"There does need to be some kind of entity set up that in the first instance involves the industry, with agreement among partners."

He said there could be two levels of membership, with core members, who deal in verified carbon credits, and associates, who work towards accreditation. The industry body would then be in a position to liaise with government on whether other

standards need to be set.

In the meantime, his advice was to buy offsets from people who were "fully accredited". But there are no local providers of the Federal Government's certified Greenhouse Friendly carbon credits.

Not-for profit Canopy at Pasadena has offset vehicle emissions for the State Government fleet with biodiverse tree plantings. But chief executive Noel McArdle said Greenhouse Friendly did not credit carbon to be stored in the future in newly planted trees.

"Greenhouse Friendly offsets in trees only count once the trees have absorbed the CO₂," he said.

To get around this problem, Adelaide-based Carbon Planet trades in NSW greenhouse gas abatement certificates.

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- Founder of Planet Ark Jon Dee