

*Submission in response to the 2012 Renewable Energy Target review Issues Paper*

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As an Australian citizen temporarily living in Hong Kong, I have been made newly aware of the global challenge we are facing with climate change. Awareness of climate change issues is very low in Hong Kong compared to Australia, and as a result the government is doing very little to make sustainable practices a reality at all levels of Hong Kong society.

Australia has the chance to be a global leader in renewables technology and climate change adaptation because it has the good fortune currently to have a (comparatively) robust economic situation, a generally productive political climate (hence the implementation of a carbon tax, a huge boost), and a largely sympathetic population, with an awareness of Australia's wind and solar resources. These three aspects give Australia a unique opportunity to showcase solutions to the very real crisis the world faces in regard to rising temperatures.

One of the most important measures in this is the Large-Scale Renewable Energy Target. While the carbon tax may turn out to be more significant in the long run, the experience from the EU has been that financial downturns and other unforeseen events can reduce the effectiveness of such financial measures. The LRET offers a concrete commitment to growth in renewables technology that will drive innovation and encourage utilities to develop better ways of accommodating fluctuating generation in the most useful ways (this will likely involve forms of storage, such as compressed air or molten salt storage, as demonstrated elsewhere in the world). In addition, the inclusion of a mechanism to allow individuals to purchase certificates, allows citizens to show their personal support for change, and helps create a supportive climate for action from the grassroots to the upper-reaches of government.

I strongly support the continuation of the LRET, and urge the Climate Change Authority to recommend an increase in the targets, and support for mechanisms to achieve this. The technologies to do this are available right now, but they need to be supported and tested extensively to ensure they provide the robust solutions that modern societies rely on. Australia is well-positioned to be this testing ground, and will benefit commercially from taking leadership on this issue.