

Climate Change Authority's Renewable Energy Target (RET) Review

Personal Submission

As a retired professional engineer and investor, I have been increasingly concerned by the state of the world we are now leaving to our descendants.

My generation has been very fortunate, in our education, range of work opportunities, freedom to travel to gain experience and to observe. We are the luckiest generation ever to have lived.

I now work as a volunteer on Landcare re-vegetation projects within my two local council areas, as a WaterWatcher contributing to monitoring within the Melbourne and West Gippsland catchments. Mammal, bird and flora surveys with the Field Naturalists also provide new perspectives.

Our family is contributing directly to projects such as solar electricity for villages in East Timor, the resettlement of people from the low lying and vanishing Carteret Islands, and to resettlement of refugees from wars actively supported by our own government.

I feel that my long and wide ranging perspective gives me some qualification to make some observations regarding the Renewable Energy Target Review.

The Issues Facing Us

The underlying twin drivers are population pressure and consumption levels.

Carbon Dioxide production at current rates now clearly is raising intimidating challenges, including:

- The acidification of our oceans.
- Major changes to climate patterns which will accelerate as ocean currents become affected
- Food production
- Resource scarcity
- Collapse of ecosystems
- Health challenges arising from temperature, and the spread of 'tropical' diseases.

The inevitable result of ineffective action will be worldwide hardship on an unprecedented scale. Wars over water, land and energy resources have become a feature of our lives and will worsen. Revolutions will be likely within nations where distribution is inadequate.

Australia's Natural Advantages

We Australians are, per person, the greatest contributors to the problems.

As a result of our current wealth, resources and geographic location our environmental footprint is amongst the largest in the world.

To maintain our present standards it is estimated we would need four earths.

If we seek to maintain our current way of life whilst continuing to ensure environmental degradation at current rates we will soon be occupied by a greater power.

Australian has great advantages over the rest of the world.

True our land is very old, much of it low in nutrients, harsh and unpredictable in its weather.

But when it comes to renewable energy we are richer than any other nation.

Wind, solar, wave, geothermal, we have it all in great abundance.

We now have the technologies to exploit this

We have the ideal platform to be developing the education, skills, research, companies and so exports to exploit our wealth of renewable resources.