

Brenda Conochie

The Review Panel  
Mandatory Renewable Energy Target Review  
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### **SUB.MISSTON to the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target Review**

I wish to express my strong support for the continuation and improvement of Australia's Mandatory Renewable Energy Target.

The Australian Government has rightly claimed that the MRET is a 'world class' measure for stimulating a strong renewable energy industry in Australia. I understand that the two year review was built in to the original implementation of the MRET initiative but following hard on the heels of the Parer and COAG energy reviews it is hard to feel any more optimistic about this review than investors apparently are. However there is still the chance for this Government to show leadership and RETAIN, RAISE and REFINE the MRET.

I understand. that investment in renewables has been severely impacted by the uncertainty around this review and the verdict that must be delivered by the Government on. the MRET, later in the year. Adding to this cloud over the industry is the COAG Energy Market Review which recommended dropping the MRET, and replacing it only with an emissions trading scheme which does far less to stimulate the renewables industry which in. the long run would result in much greater greenhouse gas reductions.

One of the great initiatives that arose from the Australian Greenhouse Office's funding efforts was Brisbane TAFE's development of the Renewable Energy Technology Certificate/Diploma. Thousands of students around Australia have been studying for this (as well as more advanced university environmental engineering courses) in good faith that under a government which had endorsed the development of this course, and implemented the MRET to stimulate a serious renewable energy industry, they would find their way into work in this industry.

The Parer review's recommendations against the MRET and the recent diversion of AGO funding from renewable energy research into the fossil fuel industry such projects as Rio Tinto's carbon geosequestration, have engendered a high degree of cynical fatalism in renewable energy students of my acquaintance. They feel that the signs were there for a healthy renewables industry, and that they may have been cheated, in the near future at least.

Re the level: I understand from my internet research that the much-vaunted 2% which seems so little anyway, was watered down due to pressure from industry into a target of only 9500 GWh, The Business Council for Sustainable Energy and other environmental organisations has drawn on figures from the AGO to show that this target was based on a serious underestimation of

energy consumption and is 500 GWh. short of 2%. The target of 9500 GWh thus does no more than maintain the 1996/97 market share of 10.5% for renewable energy.

I was most impressed by the recommendation by the BCSE, Origin Energy, Climate Action Network of Australia and other environmental groups that the MRET be strengthened and RAISED to 10% by 2010, to make a total of 20.5% of Australia's electricity mix. These organisations say that when cost comparisons are done, the likelihood that there will be tariffs on CO2 emissions in our trade with Kyoto compliant trading areas such as the EU and Japan, should make the switch to renewables close to cost-neutral. This MRET regime can and should be continued into the future, with a total target for electricity from renewable sources of 30% by 2020. In other words, the path should be set firmly into the future to ensure the changeover from fossil fuels-based generation to renewables by mid-century.

Wind energy, solar water heating and sustainable bioenergy are all viable contenders to make up this 10% of new renewable energy around 15,000 new jobs, mostly (for wind and biomass at least) in rural and regional Australia. As a teacher I see the prospect of all these jobs in a clean industry of the future as lifting the morale of so many young people.

**Yours faithfully**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "B.M. Conochie".

**Brenda Conochie**