



Mandatory Renewable Energy Target Review

A review of the operation of the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Act 2000*

Submission to the MRET Review

I am writing this submission to support continuing and strengthening the MRET.

The MRET is undoubtedly not the most efficient or equitable way to achieve reduced greenhouse gas emissions. However, everyone has known that since its earliest conception so that is not a reason to stop it now without a superior substitute. For the government to now renege on this scheme will be very bad for the renewable energy industry, disruptive to the electricity supply industry as a whole and send the clear signal to the business community that the government cannot be trusted to keep its commitments.

I suggest that the MRET should be strengthened to deal equitably with existing solar hot water heaters – there is no reason to exclude them as is currently done. It should be changed to exclude biomass from old growth forest. These changes would increase the equity and environmental effectiveness of the measure. Excluding old growth forest in particular would lead to a lot more public support for the measure.

The current MRET target is very modest. Other government support for renewable energy is decreasing. Given this, the government should provide other support for the industry so as to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and position Australia for participation in a future low greenhouse world. This support should start with ratifying the Kyoto protocol. After that, given the government's apparent reluctance to support extending the MRET, other actions could include:

- Carbon tax, starting at a low level and increasing
- Increased research funds for energy efficiency and renewable energy
- Improved regulation of appliances and buildings and other energy using infrastructure to reduce energy use
- Funding for public transport, in particular rail, to reduce energy use by the transport sector
- Emphasis in urban design on cities that suit walking and bike riding. This will reduce energy use and improve our health.

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