

Climate Change Authority,
GPO Box 1944,
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Dear Climate Change Authority,

Submission to RET Review.

Please look beyond narrow self-interest to the bigger picture when conducting your review of the RET scheme. The “narrow self-interest” refers to Australia's large electricity generators/retailers whose business models are under serious threat from the merit order effect of renewable energy generators whose fuel is free, and from the very significant falls in the cost of PV when compared with retail electricity prices for domestic and commercial customers.

The “bigger picture” is of course climate change. We are effectively at 400 ppm atmospheric carbon dioxide now, and as the impacts of current levels continue to develop concerns are growing that we may already be in the territory of dangerous climate change. The very recent extensive melting of Arctic sea ice is larger than that predicted by the IPCC, whose 2007 predictions seem to have been excessively conservative, an outcome guaranteed by the process used to finalise their reports. A recent summary published at <http://reneweconomy.com.au/2012/arctic-warning-as-the-system-changes-we-must-adjust-our-science-74779> indicates some of the areas in which climate changes being seen now are worse than that predicted.

The Climate Change Authority's role includes only part of Australia's response to climate change, of course. Therefore, you need to use the levers available to you to indicate the direction all of humanity needs to head with maximum speed. That direction is, of course, to stop using fossil fuels as quickly as possible. It is not a considered, carefully timed phase-out that is required; rather it is much closer to a full, maximum braking effort panic stop. In the case of fossil fuels used for electricity production, we have renewable replacements more readily available than we have for liquid fossil fuels, and so the initial heavy lifting to get us off fossil fuels as quickly as possible has to be done by the electricity industry - and the RET is therefore centre stage. This is your big moment, your chance to really make a difference for the planet.

From my perspective, the RET, while very successful, suffers from a major lack of ambition. It is far too small. We need at least 30% by 2020, and much more ambitious targets after that, such as 50% by 2025 and 100% by 2030. This is an emergency, and drastic measures are called for. Please rise to this challenge.

David Hamilton.