



Local group demands stronger RET for NSW

3rd June 2015

"NSW Renewable Energy Target should be Undiluted, Undelayed"

Inner west community group Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle has raised a petition to NSW Parliament, calling for the state government to maintain its full share of the national Renewable Energy Target (RET), which was until recently 41,000GWh by 2020.

Members of the group met Balmain MP Jamie Parker at Parliament House on Wednesday to hand over the petition, which has 798 signatures collected locally, and over 300 online.

"The renewable energy industry has been hit hard by the Federal Government's indecision over a national Renewable Energy Target in the past year, and the recent agreement to reduce the national target from 41,000GWh to 33,000GWh continues to damage our ability to tackle climate change effectively", said the group's spokesman Dominic Case.

"We should be building renewable energy as quickly as possible, not looking for ways to reduce our targets", he said. "If the Federal Government won't support strong action for renewable energy, it's up to each state to step into the gap. Already South Australia is generating 35% of its electricity from renewable sources, but in NSW it's only 7%. Building renewable energy means more jobs, and ultimately cheaper electricity.

Surveys show that three quarters of people prefer renewable energy to fossil fuels. "Wherever we collected signatures, people queued up to sign, as soon as soon as they saw our banner", said Case. "They recognise that Australia is falling behind, with countries like Scotland setting a target of 100% renewable energy by 2020 and even New Zealand aiming for 90% by 2025.

After months of negotiation, the Federal government recently reduced the target from 41,000GWh to 33,000GWh. "We are asking the NSW government now to ensure that at least NSW delivers its full share of the original 41,000GWh by 2020, and establishes stronger goals for 2025 and 2030" said Case.

"We recognise that the national RET scheme cannot be operated on a state-by-state basis. But there are other mechanisms available, such as the 'Reverse Auction and Contract for Difference' system used successfully in the ACT" he continued.

The group is also concerned that the Baird government has argued that the targets should be delayed by several years. As Case explained: "Every year that excess carbon dioxide enters the atmosphere adds to the total, and it remains there for hundreds of years. It is really much more effective to cut emissions sooner rather than later."

Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle is a group of Sydney inner west residents who want to see a rapid transition from fossil fuels towards renewable energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and heading off the worst effects of a changing climate. Formed in 2006, it is independent of all political parties.

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