

Dissenting Report by the Australian Greens

1.1 The Australian Greens do not support the repeal of the *Energy Efficiencies Opportunities Act 2006* (the Act) and are deeply disappointed that the Labor party is facilitating the government's legislative hostility towards action on global warming.

1.2 There are many well-known barriers to firms (and households) implementing energy efficient opportunities. In order to chip away at these barriers, the Act requires 190 firms with massive energy inputs to publicly report on where savings could be made to their energy use and therefore their cost structures. The Act promotes firms to realise what financial savings could be made by implementing their assessments.

1.3 The Act should be strengthened to make it mandatory to implement energy efficiency opportunities for projects that are covered by a two year payback which grows over time and that the energy use threshold gradually lowers to apply to more companies over time. This was in line with the proposed amendments put forward by the Greens when the original bill was first debated.

1.4 Arguably, there would be no such need for the Act with a capped market in greenhouse gas emissions that drives the market to solve their own problems in innovative and cost-effective methods. However, because the government intends to replace Australia's existing Emissions Trading Scheme with a government controlled grants program which picks the biggest polluters to award money to, there is still a strong case for the Act's retention.

1.5 The Australian Greens realise that the dismantling of the Act is a necessary precursor to fulfil the government's indefatigable policy of corporate welfare. Firms cannot apply for subsidies from the government under Direct Action if they are not additional to what is already required under legislation. Australia's largest polluters will now be able to do what they were going to do anyway under the *Energy Efficiency Opportunities Act 2006*, but will now receive taxpayer's money for their projects.

1.6 The current scheme operates at little cost to government, it has a cost-benefit ratio of 1:3, it will drive innovation, reduce costs for businesses and reduce emissions for the Australian community.

1.7 The only reasons the government intends to repeal the Act is because it places a small compliance on huge businesses, but more importantly because the government is committed to arrest the rapid decline in energy demand that has occurred since 2009-10 in order to prop up its associates in the failing fossil fuel generation sector.

Recommendation

1.8 For these concise reasons, the Australian Greens recommend opposing the Energy Efficiency Opportunities (Repeal) Bill 2014.

Senator Christine Milne

Senator for Tasmania