

Additional Comments by ALP Senators

On 24 June 2004 the Senate referred to the Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee an inquiry to examine the budgetary and environmental implications of the Energy White Paper.

Labor Senators are of the opinion that, whilst submissions were not received from all groups of stakeholders in the debate, this report accurately reports the evidence presented to the Committee in submissions and hearings.

This report also raises a number of issues that are worthy of debate and further consideration, taking into account both the environmental and economic implications for Australia's long term future.

These issues include:

- Developing a strategy that includes specific CO₂ emissions reduction targets beyond the Kyoto period for the long term
- Providing a policy framework that encourages more efficient energy use, demand management, and uptake of more efficient energy technologies
- Greater focus on and support for renewable energy technologies, including photovoltaics
- Re-examining the projected costs of increasing the MRET and extending its life
- Introducing a national emissions trading scheme

Labor Senators on the committee also urge the government to consider:

- Ratifying the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change
- Increasing MRET to 5% by 2010 and continue to review this target as 2010 approaches
- Establishing a national emissions trading scheme
- Implementing mechanisms to deliver improved energy efficiency
- Establish a greenhouse trigger under the EP&BC Act
- Funding low emissions projects including renewable technologies, including those which allow Australia's coal to be burned more cleanly and efficiently, encourage cleaner transport fuels and bring forward the use and development of Australia's gas resources
- Instigating a national education program to encourage power users to switch to renewable energy sources

- Working with industry organisations to ensure all domestic, commercial and industrial users understand their emissions and can track changes in emissions over time
- Identifying technological, economic and institutional barriers to achievement of greenhouse emission targets, and measures to address those barriers
- Seeking to enhance the National Pollutant Inventory to include information on all industrial sources of greenhouse gases as well as aggregate emissions from all minor sources including domestic, agricultural, commercial and industrial
- Reduce greenhouse emissions from road vehicles by:
 - Maintaining planned excise differentials for alternative fuels
 - Investigating economic incentives to encourage Australians to purchase fuel efficient vehicles
 - Continuing to support fuel efficiency labelling and the Green Vehicles Guide
 - Continuing to work with State and Territory Governments towards improved public transport systems and greenhouse efficient land transport systems

The two other important areas in the energy debate include security and affordability. These issues were not canvassed in full by the vast majority of evidence presented in submissions and hearings, and therefore are not covered in this report.

Labor Senators conclude that this report makes an important contribution in furthering the debate on sustainable energy policy, and that, as stated earlier, raises a number of issues that are worthy of further consideration, taking into account both the environmental and economic implications for Australia's long term future.

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