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Western Australian Sustainable Energy Association Inc.
WA SEA: the peak industry body for sustainable energy in WA.

WA SEA policy initiatives to transform Western Australia's economy and encourage businesses that are a part of the solution to climate change.

The challenge of climate change must be the catalyst for changing the way we think about and plan infrastructure, and the way we use energy and in so doing, future proof our economy. A key element of delivering this change is an integrated, whole-of-government approach inclusive of both business and the community to tackle the diabolical threat global warming poses to Australia and the world.

WA SEA has identified the following cost effective and practical mechanisms to deliver lower greenhouse gas emissions and strong growth within the local sustainable energy industry, including measures that remove barriers to business entry and deliver incentives to ensure a more sustainable economy.

Implement a Mandated Renewable Energy Target for Western Australia

To improve the sustainability of the Western Australian economy, the State Government must advance the use of renewable energy in the State by implement a binding renewable energy target that reflects the national target so that local electricity retailers source a minimum of 20% of energy from renewable energy by 2020.

Government support for renewable energy industry in Western Australia

All Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) purchased for Government entities should be purchased from within the state. This will ensure that money is invested in Western Australian renewable energy projects.

Full support for the introduction of an Emissions Trading Scheme

Western Australian Government must be a strong supporter of the planned national emissions trading scheme. The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS), using the cap and trade system, must be broadly based, and commence no later than 2010. The CPRS must operate in parallel with existing Government programs such as MRET and be compatible with other international schemes. The scheme must be implemented with standardised legislation across Australia to provide consistency for business operating across state borders. WA SEA supports action by governments to provide special consideration to export exposed industries, but not through the issuing of free permits. Instead, governments should work with industries to deliver the equivalent value of renewable energy to assist in the reduction of emissions overheads in emissions-intensive operations that might otherwise be affected.

Full support for a strong Emissions Reduction Target

Western Australia is one of the most greenhouse intensive State's in the world. Achievable targets and an effective implementation strategy are required to ensure that emission reductions are achieved and maintained. WA SEA supports setting a scientifically based emissions reduction target for the nation of 80%.

Support the Western Australian Government to be Carbon Neutral by 2015

The WA Government is congratulated for achieving a carbon neutral car fleet, but stronger measures must be implemented across all government operations. All WA Government operations must source 100% renewable energy by 2015, with any remaining emissions offset by appropriate action.

Government commitment to purchase renewable electricity

The WA Government is the State's largest user of electricity and is providing leadership through the commitment to purchase 20% renewable energy by 2010, creating demand that will stimulate the market and yield new renewable energy projects. The Government must grow this target to reach 100% by 2015.

The WA electricity market be managed to encourage distributed generation from renewable energy

The electricity market must be managed to encourage a diversity of distributed renewable energy generation projects by using system diversity such as in a mandatory or voluntary Pool approach. Renewable energy generation is generally more labour intensive, and more broadly distributed across regions. With a better employment factor, renewable energy projects can lead to growth of local communities in rural WA. Furthermore, the establishment of renewable energy generation projects will bolster a broad range of skills, particularly in agricultural regions. Biomass sources in particular will draw on and build skills already available in regional WA.

Support the introduction of a feed-in tariff for solar energy

The State Government should follow other State's within Australia, such as Victoria and South Australia and introduce a gross feed-in tariff (FiT) for solar energy. The introduction of a FiT in overseas countries has led to significant growth of the solar energy industry. A gross FiT - rather than net-metered - delivers more reliable financial estimations based on the predicted yield of the generation equipment, rather than the consumption patterns. A gross metered FiT is also a more accurate way to reflect the value of embedded generation, and attracts the most efficient technologies as these deliver the most cost-effective investments under a FiT.

Renewable Energy Buyback Scheme (REBS) to be available for commercial businesses

At present the Renewable Energy Buyback Scheme is only available to residential customers. Commercial customers wishing to use and sell renewable electricity generated are required to negotiate individual contracts with Western Power and this has proved to be a barrier to market entry. The process for businesses should be simplified and encourage the uptake of renewable energy.

Mandatory installation of solar water heaters

The installation of solar water heaters is a long term cost-effective and environmentally-sound water heating option. Mandatory installation of solar water heaters on all new houses and buildings, and on all existing government facilities.

Maintenance of the State solar water heater subsidy

Support the continuation and enhancement of the State Solar Water Heater subsidy. This subsidy has reduced the upfront cost of solar water heaters and resulted in stimulating sales in the new homeowner and gas-boosted Solar Water Heater market. Electric boosting for homes buying 100% Green Energy should also be included.

Energy Efficiency Fund

An Energy Efficiency Fund to be established to:

- identify energy efficiency priorities among small residential, commercial and small industrial users;
- enhance behavioural change for energy efficiency (similar to current water campaigns)
- create market transformation by support for procurement of energy efficiency products and services;
- establish a rolling fund to support energy efficiency initiatives with commercial and industrial users; and
- use energy efficiency programs in all sectors and ensure that no end user is worse off as a result of rising energy costs associated with a carbon trading program.

Mandatory energy efficiency for large firms

WA SEA supports the immediate introduction of a mandatory energy efficiency scheme including both regulation and incentives for medium to large businesses consistent with other energy efficiency schemes implemented elsewhere in Australia.

Continued development of minimum energy performance requirements for buildings

WA SEA supports further development of minimum energy performance requirements through the Building Code of Australia for all buildings in Australia and further strengthening of the 5 Star Plus initiative. In addition, WA SEA supports the continued development and implementation of modelling programs used to assess and monitor the energy performance of buildings such as AccuRate, FirstRate, Window Energy Rating Scheme (WERS) for Skylights and Australian Building Greenhouse Rating Scheme (ABGR).

Government buildings to exceed minimum efficiency requirements

All new government housing and new public buildings to exceed the minimum energy efficiency requirements under the Building Code of Australia and should be aiming to a minimum 5 Star Plus performance level.

Tax concessions for energy efficiency

Tax concessions including stamp duty relief should be given to those who invest in energy efficient homes and motor vehicles.

Introducing greenhouse gas labelling on residential and commercial energy bills

The mandatory introduction of greenhouse gas labelling on all energy bills will make consumers aware of the environmental impact of their energy use behaviours. In addition, information should be provided on ways to reduce energy use.

Adaptation strategies to limit climate change impacts

Climate change adaptation strategies must not contribute to climate change. Projects such as water desalination plants must be powered with renewable energy to ensure they do not create new emissions.

WA SEA Corporate Members:



WA SEA has over 180 members and is supported by the majority of enterprises in WA's sustainable energy sector. With increasing recognition and support of WA SEA, Corporate Membership guarantees a high profile in supporting sustainable energy in Western Australia. Corporate membership provides vital financial support for the work of WA SEA.

For further information - www.wasea.com.au, email info@wasea.com.au

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