

# Citizens Electoral Council of Australia

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Independent Political Party

10 June 2015

## RET—the poverty trap deal

The Renewable Energy Target legislation now before parliament, the *Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill 2015* will see an explosion of wind turbine construction across Australia, guaranteeing rising electricity bills and a poverty trap—all for no environmental gain. Originally initiated by the Howard government on April Fools' Day of 2001 as the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET), the RET is still mandatory and has contributed to skyrocketing electricity prices.

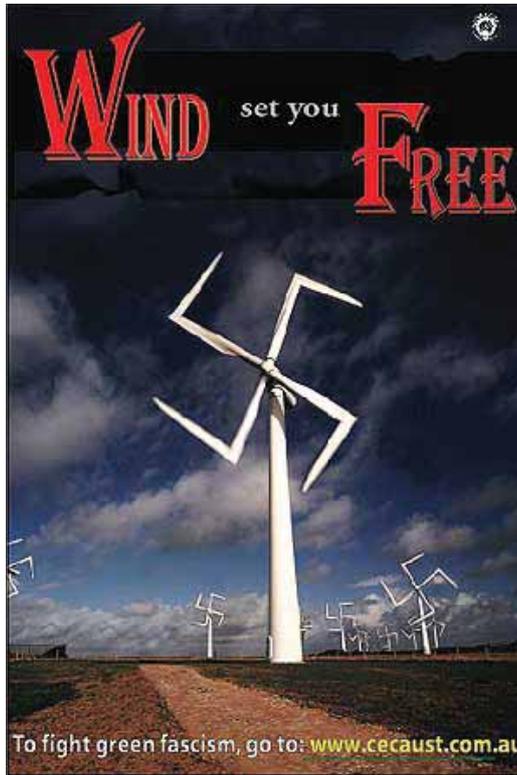
The revised legislation will see the number of wind turbines in Australia double by 2020 since it is widely acknowledged that wind power will play the biggest role. That means an estimated extra 1,500 to 2,000 wind turbines built across the nation in just five years. As Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane put it: "they have to build as much wind generation in the next five years as has been built in the last 15."

Despite the apparent argy-bargy between the Coalition and Labor over the RET, the renewable business interests represented by the Clean Energy Council are delighted as evidenced in their recent briefing paper, "A Bipartisan Renewable Energy Target: The Huge Opportunities for Australia". The paper states, "The RET has been operating since 2001 and is already about halfway to meeting the revised 33,000 Gigawatt-hour (GWh) target for the Large-Scale Renewable Energy Target." They add that "[i]ncluding the economic benefits from the small-scale scheme, the total benefit expected is \$40.4 billion worth of investment and 15,200 jobs."

Out of Australia's primary energy consumption for 2012–13, 37.7 per cent came from oil, 33.1 per cent from coal, 23.6 per cent from gas, 3.6 per cent from bioenergy and 1.1 per cent from hydro. Wind made up only 0.4 per cent and solar 0.5 per cent. If the real intention is to reduce fossil fuels, we'd be replacing our coal-fired power stations with nuclear power. And in any case, wind and solar power will never play a leading role in areas such as the transport sector. Don't expect to see solar-powered aeroplanes be anything more than a publicity stunt.

Numerous claims and counterclaims of monetary costs for renewable energy are debated, but the science clearly proves why most renewable power is incredibly expensive. It boils down to energy density.

A wind turbine extracts kinetic energy from a moving fluid—namely air. The power transferred is therefore proportional to the density of the air and the cube of the wind's speed. Air's density is about 1.2 kg/m<sup>3</sup> (kilograms per cubic metre), whereas water has a density of 1,000 kg/m<sup>3</sup>. Hydroelectric power also extracts kinetic energy from a moving fluid—namely water. So it's no surprise there's over 800 times more power available



per turbine cross section. Solar power also fails the energy density test. There's an enormous amount of solar energy reaching Earth, but it is spread across the entire planet. Even in tropical sunny locations, the cost of concentrating this energy into a useful form is far more expensive than relying on the scientific principle of combustion, the more energy-dense nuclear fission, or better still—for the future—nuclear fusion.

Hydroelectricity, the most energy-dense renewable, has a greater capacity to power our economy, but the environmental lobby dominating government policy is anti-dam, so funding is not going in this direction. Additionally, water flow rates through turbines can be regulated as required. Wind on the other hand may vary from minute to minute and since power is proportional to the *cube* of the wind speed, even a small change in wind speed will result in a large increase or decrease in power output.

Mr Peter Lang, a retired chartered professional engineer, gave testimony on 19 May 2015 to the Senate Select Committee on Wind Turbines: "When the wind [power] is coming on like this, the thermal power stations, coal and gas, have to throttle down, throttle up and throttle down. . . . [W]ith wind coming on and off, some generators shut down for a while and then start up. That is enormously expensive. It costs about \$100,000 every time you shut down a coal-fired power station and restart it. They are also kept on spinning reserve. They are just sitting there waiting to have to take load if the wind comes on."

In our collapsing economy there is no demand for this extra wind energy and since 2010–11 Australian electricity consumption has decreased. We've lost the automotive industry as Ford, Holden and Toyota are all in the process of quitting manufacturing in Australia and oil refineries and smelters have been shut down. So mandating such a significant increase in wind power will force thermal power stations to operate more inefficiently and therefore consume more fuel per unit of energy generated—and for those who care, more greenhouse gas emissions per unit of energy generated.

Without hydroelectricity, a RET relying on wind and solar power will be a poverty trap as the Member for Hinkler, Keith Pitt elaborated in parliament on 2 June: "I spoke with a pensioner in my electorate last week. He gets up in the middle of the night, each and every night, to turn off his refrigerator so he does not use as much electricity. He relies on his rooftop solar to power the fridge during the day, and he would rather risk food poisoning than run up an electricity bill that he cannot afford to pay."

Australia must do better. Demand that your MP oppose the RET swindle and support efficient and reliable nuclear power.

# PETITION

## Australia must secure its future by aligning with the BRICS in a new, just world economic order

### TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of the Citizens Electoral Council draws to the attention of the House the opportunity for Australia, and all nations, to participate in the process that the BRICS nations of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa have initiated: to create a new financial architecture for the world based on equitable and inclusive multilateral credit institutions that prioritise investment in physical economic development, instead of speculation.

The present, inequitable IMF-World Bank system is collapsing under the burden of hundreds of trillions of dollars of unpayable global debts and derivatives obligations, including the Australian banking system's derivatives exposure of more than \$27 trillion. This is the legacy of decades of reckless financial speculation unleashed by IMF-enforced deregulation, and is the driver of the world's present strategic tensions

which have increased the threat of a thermonuclear world war.

Through such new financial institutions as the \$100 billion New Development Bank, the \$100 billion Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the \$40 billion Silk Road Development Fund, the \$20 billion Maritime Silk Road Fund, and the planned Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) bank, the BRICS nations will direct massive investment in much-needed physical infrastructure projects on which all nations can collaborate, forging a basis for lasting global peace and economic prosperity.

We the undersigned therefore petition the House to commit Australia both to full participation in the AIIB, and to full support for the BRICS-initiated process of creating a new financial architecture for the world as the basis of a just economic order.

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