

Committee: *SENATE ENVIRONMENT  
AND COMMUNICATIONS*

**Tabled Document**

Inquiry: *SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES*

Date: *23/10/17* SENATE ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Witness: *MR IAN LEARMONTH* 2017-18 SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES

Organisation: *CEFC* PARLIAMENT HOUSE, CANBERRA

23 OCTOBER 2017

CLEAN ENERGY FINANCE CORPORATION

OPENING STATEMENT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER IAN LEARMONTH

The Clean Energy Finance Corporation has now been in existence for 5 years and investing since May 2013.

Our Annual Report for 2016-17 has been finalised, but not as yet tabled, so for the benefit of Senators I would just like to point out that 2016-17 has been our best year yet with \$2.1bn in investment commitments within the financial year.

That brings our total commitments to more than \$4.7bn since inception, and our current portfolio of commitments to \$3.8bn.

These investments range from large scale renewables generation in solar and wind, through to investment into the property sector for energy efficiency in commercial office buildings and social housing, through to waste to energy projects, and development of a greenfields lithium mine in Western Australia that will produce the inputs needed for electric vehicle batteries.

In addition we have continued to roll out investments at the smaller end of the economy – in small renewables projects like small scale PV and solar hot water, in energy efficient equipment for irrigation, farming and small business, and in fuel efficient, electric and hybrid vehicles. By September 30 we will have deployed funds to some 3,000 of these smaller scale projects across Australia.

We have three areas of specific focus under our investment mandate set for us by the Australian Government:

- Our Innovation Fund – run jointly with ARENA – has now made 9 investments with our commitments reaching more than \$50m – most recently in innovative businesses like SEA Automotive (\$5m), Wattwatchers (\$2m), Thinxtra (\$10m), Redback Technologies (\$8.99m) and Reelectrify (0.75m).
- The Reef Funding Program- where the CEFC has recently supported Edify Energy's latest large-scale solar projects with \$90m in investment. These are the 150MW (AC) Daydream Solar Farm and the 50MW (AC) Hayman Solar Farm located near the town of Collinsville.
- The Sustainable Cities Funding Program – where our latest investment was \$90m to Cleanaway for a range of eligible waste management projects, to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, as well as generating renewable energy and avoiding carbon emissions.

It is very important for both Senators and the Australian public to understand that the CEFC does not make grants – all of our commitments are debt or equity investments – for which we will receive a rate of return above the Government's costs of funds.

Finally, if I could just take this opportunity to acknowledge that since we were last before the Committee, our founding chair Ms Jillian Broadbent AO and original CEFC board members Andrew Stock, Anna Skarbek and Ian Moore have all seen their terms of office expire. I want to place on the record our thanks as an organisation for their excellent service and stewardship, and we have welcomed our new Chair Steven Skala AO and board members Ms Nicola Wakefield-Evans, Ms Samantha Tough and Ms Leeanne Bond. Board members Martin Wilder AM and Paul Binsted of course are also still serving and maintain a sense of continuity. I am pleased to say the board transition was smooth and is working well – in fact we had our third meeting in this format earlier today.

And with that I will end the opening statement and commend my remarks to the Committee. [ENDS]