Submission in response to:

Inquiry into Australia's transition to a green energy superpower

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Terms of Reference:

The Joint Standing Committee on Trade and Investment Growth shall inquire into how trade and investment can support Australia's transition to a green energy superpower. In conducting its inquiry, the Committee shall have particular regard to:

• where trade and investment activities are already having a positive impact;

• emerging and possible future trends;

• the role of key commonwealth agencies including Austrade, in identifying new trade and inward investment opportunities, and assisting Australian companies to access these opportunities, including through whole of government coordination of investment;

• areas of growth, and how can these be accelerated and/or assisted, including through the use of Commonwealth Special Investment Vehicles; and how Australia can capitalise on existing and future trade agreements and economic frameworks with countries or regions around the world.

In inquiring into this topic, the Committee will have particular regard to the areas that play to Australia's strengths, as identified by the Australian Government in consultation with the states and territories including: renewable energy, battery storage, energy supply and infrastructure, electric vehicle industry, infrastructure; advanced manufacturing, and services and technology.

Response:

• emerging and possible future trends;

Point 1:

It is clear that the current science available does not support “green energy” as being viable to meet Australia’s energy requirements going forward.

Time Magazine “Hero of the Environment” and energy expert Michael Shellenberger explains why solar and wind farms require so much land for mining and energy production, are so resource intensive, and so damaging to the environment, that they will never meet our energy needs. Link below:

https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_shellenberger_why_renewables_can_t_save_the_planet/transcript

I won't list all of the points he made, as the presentation is so clear and damaging to the future of solar and wind farms.

Point 2:

We are already seeing the failure of "green energy" programs overseas, the most notable one being Germany.

The headlines last year - **Germany's 'Green' Energy Failure: Germany turns back to coal …**

https://worldnewsera.com/news/startups/germanys-green-energy-failure-germany-turns-back-to-coal-and-natural-gas-as-millions-of-its-solar-panels-are-blanketed-in-snow-and-ice-tech-news-startup/

Its time to learn from overseas experience about "green energy" and realise that it will never provide the energy requirements of Australia.

Point 3:

Japan is already investing in brown coal for energy production and is reducing emissions at the same time. Australia has jointly invested in this project with Japan. Why are we not using this project to assist Australia's energy production? We are currently investing in the project and Japan is getting all of the benefits.

https://www.coalage.com/us-news/japan-invests-in-australian-brown-coal/

Point 4:

The only sensible way forward, to ensure security of energy supplies, is to maintain coal fired energy production until we can get nuclear energy plants in production. We already have the technology and resources, and can produce this secure way of producing energy at minimal cost. The nuclear plant at Sydney could return to energy production (transfer back from nuclear medicine) with minimal refurbishment.

Point 5:

Lithium Batteries. These are the most unsafe batteries currently available, are extremely resource intensive to produce and no country has a satisfactory battery disposal plan as to how to manage these when they are at the end of their useful life. They will produce toxic heavy metals and acids that will remain in the earth for hundreds of years before they break down. They need to be banned from both solar and wind array storage systems, and definitely, from electric vehicles.

The following is an ABC news article:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-09-17/qld-lithium-ion-battery-fires-risk/101428618

Fears fires caused by lithium-ion batteries will 'increase considerably' as popularity of electric scooters rises

While the article addresses issues with lithium batteries in scooters, the concerns are magnified many times when considering electric vehicles. When these batteries catch fire, the fire is virtually impossible to extinguish. Some small lithium battery fires have been known to burn for 5 days.

Imagine what a lithium battery fire in a solar array or electric vehicle will do. The following are a couple of articles on lithium fires and their issues already noted in Australia.

https://news.dfes.wa.gov.au/media-releases-feature-stories/lithium-ion-batteries-have-explosive-fire-potential/

https://thewest.com.au/news/disaster-and-emergency/lithium-ion-battery-fires-exploding-battery-fires-the-new-home-fire-menace--c-7032328

The Rural Fire Brigade in QLD have already been directed not to attend lithium battery fires whether they be on solar / wind arrays or in electric vehicles. They do not have the appropriate safety equipment nor do they have the required training.

So, when someone in an electric vehicle has an accident on a rural road, they may have to wait hours for a regional (and not rural) fire service to get to them. Clearly, these will be fatal accidents if the vehicle is on fire as they won't have hours to live in a burning car.

Imagine if they have a head-on accident at highway speed with a B-double – the explosion is likely to be felt for kilometres around the accident site.

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Renewable energy:

Energy from solar and wind farms is not viable on a large scale. Some solar and wind energy supplementation is fine for small businesses and private individuals, but it will never meet the overall requirements of the Australian people.

We are already seeing massive destruction of prime agricultural land for solar and wind farms and yet, their contribution to the grid is negligible. No-one seems to be able to quantify the amount of "green energy" they are actually contributing to the grid. In reality, when they have a battery storage solution attached to the array, they take power out of the grid overnight in order to stabilise the batteries. They actually draw power out of the grid when not contributing power to it. We need to know the overall impact (which is probably nil contribution) to the supply.

We are seeing massive bird life destruction – note expert Michael Shellenberger's presentation. We will see extinction of species if such farms are allowed to continue.

Coal fired energy production with the appropriate emission controls is the only way to currently secure energy production in Australia.

In combination with this, we need to urgently consider the appropriateness of nuclear energy for electricity production in Australia. Clean, safe energy production that will be cost effective and meet future energy needs.

Battery Storage:

As the science clearly demonstrates, lithium batteries are resource intensive for the environment to produce, toxic to the environment for disposal, and extremely dangerous whether they are in a solar / wind battery array or in an electric vehicle. Their explosive potential is massive.

They need to be banned until we have much improved safety controls around them, and can show they are resource neutral to the environment for both production and disposal. Potential lithium battery producers need to complete an Environmental Impact Statement on how they will be produced, safely managed, and then disposed of at the end of their life. I would also suggest that potential producers of lithium batteries should also be responsible for their disposal at the end of their battery life. (I suspect no-one would be prepared to produce the batteries in this case as they know the dangers of them already.)

Energy supply and infrastructure:

Solar and wind farms will never provide secure energy production 24 hours per day, 7 days per week etc. We would need to close Australia's rural sector to have enough land for such farms to supply the required power and even then, there would be no security for power supply.

Coal fired power needs to be legislated until we can get nuclear power in place.

We have not even touched on the highly toxic material used in wind turbines or in solar panels. This is a complete other issue. There is no recycling available for wind turbines and at the end of their 10 year life cycle, they need to be buried and will potentially sit in the ground for thousands of years and may not even break down then.

We need an Environmental Impact Statement on the disposal of solar panels and wind turbines.

Electric vehicle industry:

The current situation is that the vast majority of electric cars are charged overnight on coal produced electricity. Probably a minimum of 10 hours per night, 7 nights per week of coal fired emissions per each car.

Even a small fuel driven car would only provide an average of an hour per day to drive to and from work – let's say 7 hours per week of emission-controlled discharge. The electric car potentially contributes 10 times the emissions during the charging process, that a fuel driven vehicle does. In addition to this, the electric vehicle has all the issues of the lithium batteries and how harmful they are for the environment, to contend with.

For the sake of the environment, we need to ban electric cars from our streets until they can be shown to be environmentally friendly with both the charging process and the battery use.