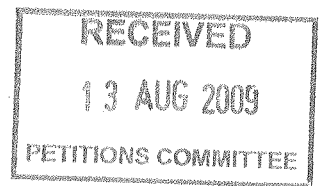




Minister for Climate Change and Water



Ms Julia Irwin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

16 AUG 2009

Dear Ms Irwin *Julia*

Thank you for your letter of 9 June 2009 concerning a petition presented by the Member for Chisholm in relation to alternative energy. I am also responding on behalf of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, as I have portfolio responsibility for this matter.

The Australian Government is committed to achieving deep cuts in Australia's carbon pollution levels and to supporting ambitious global action to reduce the risk of dangerous climate change.

The Government is committed to reducing national emissions to 25 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020 in the context of a comprehensive global agreement capable of stabilising atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases at 450 parts per million (ppm) CO₂-equivalent or lower. This recognises the finding of the *Garnaut Climate Change Review* that fair and effective global action that stabilises greenhouse gases at this level would be in our national interest.

If global commitments in the next few years fall short of being capable of achieving this stabilisation goal, the Government remains committed to the medium term target range set out in the December 2008 White Paper. This includes an unconditional commitment to reduce emissions to 5 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020, regardless of the commitments and actions of other nations. It also includes a commitment to reduce emissions by up to 15 per cent on 2000 levels by 2020 in the context of an international agreement where major developing economies commit to substantially restrain emissions, and advanced economies take on commitments comparable to Australia's, but global action falls short of stabilisation at 450 ppm or lower.

The Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) will help bring renewable energies into the market over time. As a transitional measure, the national Renewable Energy Target (RET) scheme will accelerate deployment of renewable energy technologies by providing a guaranteed market for renewable energy. The expanded RET will increase the previous Mandatory Renewable Energy Target by over four times, from 9,500 gigawatt-hours to 45,000 gigawatt-hours in 2020.

The Government is also providing direct funding for the development of renewable energy technologies. On 12 May 2009, the Government announced the Clean Energy Initiative, which will invest \$1.6 billion in solar technologies, including \$1.5 billion for the Solar Flagships program and \$100 million for the Australian Solar Institute. In addition, \$465 million will be provided to establish the Australian Centre for Renewable Energy, which will support leading-edge technology research and bring it to market.

Furthermore, the Government has announced \$1.3 billion in assistance for the Green Car Innovation Fund, to help Australian companies with projects that enhance research and development and commercialisation of Australian technologies that significantly reduce fuel consumption and/or greenhouse gas emissions of passenger motor vehicles.

The Government recognises that coal currently provides around 40 per cent of global and 80 per cent of Australia's electricity generation. The world needs to find and answer on low emissions technology for coal and that is why the Government is putting so much effort, internationally and domestically, into programs to develop these technologies. In addition to the Carbon Capture and Storage Flagships program, the Government has established the Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute, which will help deliver the G8's 2008 goal of developing at least 20 fully integrated industrial-scale demonstration projects around the world.

Further information about climate change and actions the government is taking is available from the Department of Climate Change's website:
www.climatechange.gov.au.

Thank you for bringing the petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

~~Penny Wong~~