

From: Hedger, Brett
Sent: Tuesday, 28 June 2005 2:47 PM
To: Committee, ISR (REPS)
Subject: Inquiry into developing Australia's non-fossil fuel energy industry - SUBMISSION

Dear Committee Members,

thank you for the opportunity of making this submission.

Firstly, I'd like to say that we have waited a little too long to get this underway, we have known about the impending risks of global warming for over 2 decades now and have not acted. I am extremely concerned about our continued use of fossil fuels (in particular coal, oil and to a lesser extent gas) to accommodate our high consumption/high convenience lifestyles. Each and everyone of us (in Australia) is part of the problem and must be part of the solution. I am also of the view that the research you need to give you ideas has already been done, and was done in 1990, that said we have another 15 years behind us now and have continued to consume and abuse fossil fuels at an alarming rate - seemingly in the face of government inactivity (granted that there are exceptions to this statement, but they do not tackle the big issues).

If we accept that global warming is greatly exacerbated by the release of heat trapping molecules into our atmosphere, and this is in turn is (largely) caused by the release of carbon dioxide (and other gases/chemicals) by burning/using fossil fuels together with deafforestation - then we need to reduce our reliance on these fossil fuels and stop chopping down trees (amongst other things). Global warming (apart from holes in the ozone layer) was one of those issues that never was confined to just one country or one place, the whole globe is heating up. Accordingly, you should have a good think about joining the world community and jumping onboard the Kyoto Protocol, not only jumping on board but recommending targets well in excess of what is suggested. We could easily be world leaders in this area instead of being driven continually toward the 'growth at all costs' by the merchants, miners and magnates of this country. I remember as a kid sitting round listening to stories of how we would be world leaders in solar power, what happened to that?

We have reached and surpassed our carrying capacity of this planet, you must make bold and sweeping recommendations out of this inquiry. I believe that we are well past the point of acting decisively, we must now look at recovering whatever is left, and to do this we must act NOW. If this becomes a debate about Nuclear versus Conventional fuel, it is probably a wasted debate. The best Nuclear energy will do is slow the rate of growth of global warming, it will not stop the growth, nor reverse or correct any of its many impacts. There is the added issue of waste. Nuclear energy is not the answer for Australia (or any other nation for that matter) and neither is coal.

Here is a simple idea, why don't you get a few quotes,

Quote 1: Cost of building enough Nuclear Power Stations to provide all Australias power needs both now and into the future (make sure to add all the associated costs of decommissioning old style plants, waste disposal, security etc, and factor in the time it will take). This could be done with 3 projections in mind, 1 that we continue to increase our energy demands, our energy demands level out and our energy demands decrease (how each of these would be achieved would also have to be added in)

Quote 2: Cost of converting all our gas guzzling, energy hogging appliances, homes and vehicles to more efficient versions.

Quote 3: Cost of building alternative (nueutral) power supply facilities and devices - (not to mention the possibilities throughout the world for this technology), eg solar, wind and water (although I would caution against the flooding of valleys to create dams).

I'm tipping that you will be able to get quotes 2 and 3 done for a song in comparison to quote 1 and history will mark you down as visionaries, whereas quote 1 is fraught with problems and waste well beyond your and my lifetimes, not to mention the cost and other negative impacts of this path. And no, I don't want any of that stuff in my backyard, but you see my backyard and your backyard is now the entire planet, everything is connected, earth, air and water, to think that you can just keep

building stuff to cover up old problems is a fallacy.

Anything that alters the purity of our water, the quality of our air, or the richness of our soil should have its full environment cost added in. We really are kidding ourselves if we think we can continue to consume resources and despoil nature at our current rate. The earth resources are finite, always have been. Now it really is time to act boldly and make some hard decisions, hopefully it won't be too little too late. This has nothing to do with prime ministers, parties, religions or races, it is about survival of our species and all the other species that we depend on - not to mention the planet itself.

Brett Hedger