

Minister Ian Hunter

Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation

Friday, 29 August, 2014

Renewable Energy Target recommendations rejected

Sustainability, Environment and Conservation Minister Ian Hunter has today condemned a report recommending the drastic reduction of the Federal Renewable Energy Target (RET).

Minister Hunter said the report was compiled by a panel led by Dick Warburton to advise the Federal Government on the national scheme that set a country-wide target for renewable energy of 20 per cent, or 41,000 gigawatt hours, by 2020.

"This report modelled five options, but conveniently recommends the two that reduce the RET," Mr Hunter said.

"One option is reducing the annual renewable energy target to just 27,000 gigawatt hours by 2020, while the other, more drastic and short-sighted option recommends winding-up the RET.

"The South Australian Government opposes any move by the anti-science Abbott Government to scale back the RET.

"We are concerned that this Federal Government, which appears to fly against the accepted, worldwide consensus on climate change, will make an ill-considered and ideological decision on this very important issue.

"As a proud leader in responding to climate change, the South Australian Government is committed to ensuring a sustainable future for all South Australians.

"The State Government sees renewable energy as an avenue for ensuring the economic stability and environmental prosperity of this State.

"The RET is an important measure in not only reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the electricity sector, but also for establishing significant investment in our State.

"Any reduction to the RET will jeopardise the \$15 billion investment in the renewable energy sector, greatly affecting South Australia's economic and investment opportunities.

"This is why this Government has set future targets for renewable energy – we announced the low carbon investment in renewable energy of \$10 billion by 2025, and we set ourselves the target of 33 per cent of renewable electricity by 2020.

"When Labor came to Government in this State, electricity generated from renewable energy was 0.8 per cent – it's now 31.7 per cent.

"We will beat our target of 33 per cent very soon, and have set an increased investment target to further cement our place as leaders in renewable energy and climate change action.

"The South Australian Government calls on the Abbott Government to keep the RET in its current form to open up renewable energy opportunities."

It is expected that the Federal Government will respond to the report and declare its intention for the RET by mid-September.