

From: Kevin McCue
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To: Committees
Subject: Inquiry into ACT Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

Submission from Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to the discussion. Our interest is in the methods of achieving a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions though I believe that target should be at least 25% by 2020 (cf 1990 levels). We have been talking about this problem for about 20 years with no action, now is the time for action before it is too late.

The first way to go about achieving the target is to ensure that each individual understands that they share the burden. This is not just a government program. The private sector will be involved in the solution by providing effective and efficient equipment but it should be understood that their sole motivation is making a profit. The government must ensure, by oversight and legislation or taxation if necessary, that the private sector doesn't make excess profit out of the energy market. Excess could be defined as 25% or more.

The ACT Government should establish a green energy development centre in Canberra staffed with researchers and engineers from government, the ANU, Canberra University and the private sector. This centre would design and build non-fossil fuel based power stations over the full range from domestic to industrial including solar, wind, tidal and geothermal. Such stations need not be sited in the ACT, at least not the tidal and geothermal sites which would provide grid-connect power.

The ACT government should immediately commission construction of the first of a series of solar power stations in the ACT and cancel all plans to build any plants burning fossil fuels; coal, oil, gas or wood waste.

The government can assist individuals to make a contribution by

- passing legislation that every house in the ACT have a solar water heater installed, old and new houses, and ensure that all buildings including domestic buildings have adequate roof insulation (incentives might be necessary)
- legislating that every new building, domestic, commercial and public should incorporate low energy usage design and installation of photovoltaics sufficient to provide the average annual consumption of the building. This should apply retrospectively to all government buildings such as schools
- ensuring that all motor vehicles registered in the ACT achieve minimum fuel consumption targets, specifically ban all gas-guzzlers (targets should be set at say 10 km/l) and aim to achieve a 100% conversion of all ACT registered vehicles to hybrid and/or electric vehicles by 2020
- introducing free public transport from the suburbs to the town centres and build electric light-rail links between the town centres, with a spur out to the airport and Queanbeyan.

We don't need to agree on or be limited by national targets, let the ACT set a high target for the states and Commonwealth to follow.

Ultimately the ACT should aim at total energy self sufficiency which will require consideration of population limits at or below current numbers to be achievable. Let us open a public debate about this.

With regard to Assembly resolution 2(vii), every time a Canberran drives to the coast, Sydney or the snow or wherever they transfer greenhouse gas emissions to NSW and other jurisdictions. This item should be dropped or thought through properly, in the light of our self sufficient energy target outlined above.

Regards

Kevin McCue and Sonja Lenz