



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mixed messages in Govt's Renewable Energy Target

The Commonwealth Government and Opposition need to clarify where they actually stand in relation to renewable fuels according to the Independent Member for New England Tony Windsor.

Mr Windsor believes that the recent announcement by the Government of encouraging renewable energy for electricity and the implementation of 'mandatory renewable energy targets' (MRET) is a positive message but flies in the face of a contradictory message for renewable fuels.

"The Government in 2000 put in place an MRET of 360,000 megalitres of renewable fuel by 2010 however there has been nothing that could be interpreted as 'mandatory' in the ensuing policy.

In fact there is currently less biofuel produced in Australia now than there was seven years ago.

Also, as of 2011, producers of biofuels in Australia will be taxed.

This means taxing a fuel source which is renewable and has some impact on fine particle emissions from our cars. Biofuels will be used as a source of revenue.

I would have thought that, if we were trying to encourage renewable fuels, reduce emissions, have an impact on greenhouse gas, do something about global warming, do something about the health of people in our major cities et cetera, we would not be using the solution as a tax source.

Normally taxation is used in an environment area as a deterrent to using something," Mr Windsor said.

Mr Windsor also believes the Opposition has been silent on this issue.

"The Opposition has not announced its policy on fuel production from biomass and how it will be treated in terms of encouragement to invest and deliver environmental outcomes.

The NSW Government is the only Government that has moved in a positive sense towards encouraging the use of biofuels in our energy mix with a 2% mandate of ethanol in petrol.

The mixed messages being sent by the Commonwealth Government create suspicion amongst renewable energy advocates and consumers.

Without consistency in the message, adoption of renewable energy by both investors and consumers is likely to be slow as has occurred with biofuels.

Maybe that IS the message," Mr Windsor said.

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