



Amanda Rishworth MP

Member for Kingston

Speech to Federal Parliament

17 August 2009

Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment Bill 2009

Ms Rishworth (Kingston) (4:04 PM) —I am very pleased to rise to speak in favour of the bills before us today, the [Renewable Energy \(Electricity\) Amendment Bill 2009](#) and the related bill. As a member from South Australia I am very pleased that these bills will have an enormous impact on the growing South Australian renewable energy industry. South Australia is home to 56 per cent of the nation's wind power, 30 per cent of its grid connected domestic solar systems and 90 per cent of geothermal investment. With South Australia home to 7.4 per cent of population, it is clear that South Australia is punching above its weight when it comes to contributing to renewable energy in Australia.

The legislation before us today provides further encouragement for companies to invest in renewable energy. I know that many people in my electorate of Kingston want to see an increase in renewable energy and I know that they will be very pleased to see the Rudd government delivering on its key election promise to increase the renewable energy target to 20 per cent across the nation by 2020. This is in sharp contrast to the opposition, which continues to be hopelessly divided and act irresponsibly when it comes to the challenge of climate change. This legislation represents one part of the government's comprehensive plan to tackle climate change. We have a proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme that creates a pathway to a low-emission future, and this legislation provides a real and effective renewable energy target, showing just how serious this side of the House is about renewable energy here in Australia.

The renewable energy target legislation is widely supported by industry. The Clean Energy Council of Australia has welcomed these bills, indicating they would unleash \$28 billion of new investment and create over 28,000 jobs. These sentiments were echoed by Andrew Dickson, business manager for Wind Prospect, a wind energy company based at Christies Beach in my electorate. He said that as a result of this legislation Australia would see a huge surge in renewable energy investment, and he indicated that their company will definitely expand and this would result in more jobs.

In 2010 our annual gigawatt hours target will be 12,500, which is a substantial increase from the previous target of 9,500. And, of course, this target will increase through the decade to the year 2020, resulting in 45,000 gigawatt hours from renewable energy. In my home of South Australia the state government has already introduced a renewable energy target scheme. The bill before us has been designed in cooperation with the states and territories through the Council of Australian Governments and it brings the MRET and existing and proposed state schemes into one national scheme.

The introduction of the national scheme signals this government's commitment to creating and supporting innovation in the renewable energy sector. The renewable energy target comes in addition to measures that we have already introduced and which complement this target. As part of the 2009-10 budget, the government committed to \$15 billion in climate change related initiatives, including the \$4.5 billion Clean Energy Initiative, which includes a \$1.5 billion Solar Flagships program. This program will aim to generate 1,000 megawatts of solar energy capacity and will be by far the biggest solar generation project in history. This development will also be supported by \$100 million for the Australian Solar Institute, which will continue its groundbreaking research into solar energy technology. In addition, there is the \$465 million Renewables Australia fund that will support cutting-edge technology research and provide for this technology to make it to market. This has been something that people within my electorate have been very keen for. They do not want to see technology go offshore and be developed offshore. They want the technology that they come up with to be developed here in Australia. The combination of such policies and the renewable energy target means that renewable technology development in this country will drastically increase.

The bill also provides for a review of the operation of the renewable energy target scheme to be undertaken in 2014. This will coincide with the strategic review of the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme—that is, of course, if the coalition can get its act together and support such a scheme. This government has made creating jobs its core business. The increase in the renewable energy target represents the Rudd government taking strong action on climate change, and it will stimulate investment in the industries for our future. I commend the target and the bill to the House.