

The Transition to 100% Renewable Power for Australia

Briefing and Recommendations to the COAG Energy Council



SolarCitizens



+350



AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION



Friends of the Earth Australia



Contact:

Claire O'Halloran
Campaigns Facilitator
Climate Action Network Australia
Email: claire@cana.net.au

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*Cover page: Hazelwood Power Station,
La Trobe Valley, Vic
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*This page: Common Grace give Prime Minister
crowdfunded Christmas gift - solar panels for
Kirribilli House
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Executive Summary

As COAG Energy Ministers prepare to meet on 19 August 2016, the transition of Australia's stationary electricity sector is already underway, with renewable energy technologies promising new jobs, lower electricity prices and a pollution-free future. However, to date, this transition has been haphazard, with the Federal Government conspicuously absent in the provision of a clear path to a clean energy future. This has resulted in unnecessary costs being passed on to consumers, misinformation about Australia's electricity market and poor policy solutions, which came to a head in South Australia in July.

The environment sector, as well as the wider Australian public, are looking for regulatory certainty and national leadership for a transition to 100% renewable power. We welcome the COAG Energy Council's recognition of the need to better align energy and climate policy, and believe this is an opportunity for the Energy Council to show leadership in the transition.

This briefing paper calls for the modernisation of our electricity sector to further support renewable energy growth, the removal of barriers that distort the market in favour of fossil-fuel incumbents, and for the development of a roadmap that can enact a smooth and speedy transition to the rapidly approaching electricity market of the future.

We recommend that the COAG Energy Council take the following key steps:

- Facilitate a process to develop a national energy transition roadmap that will see a smooth transition to 100% renewable energy before 2035, including a clear plan with a timeline for the phase out of all coal fired power stations and just transition plans for affected workers and communities.
- Establish an independent expert panel, with representatives from key stakeholder groups to oversee roadmap development.
- Commission technical reviews of existing electricity infrastructure and the changes required to support renewable energy, as well as emerging renewable and storage technologies, to act as the basis for future decision-making.
- Commit to national electricity market reform, including amending the National Energy Objective to achieve 100% renewable electricity.
- Support long-term, stable policies that drive investment in clean energy, like extending the Renewable Energy Target and supporting more reverse auctions, as well as recommending that the Federal Government endorse State and Territory leadership on renewable energy.
- Avoid policies that lock-in the use of fossil-fuels and delay the transition to clean energy.