

**Submission
No 23**

SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW

Name: Peter Thompson

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To: Members of NSW Parliamentary Committee on Energy Sector

Dear Committee Members,

This is a submission to the Inquiry into the Sustainability of Energy Supply and Resources in NSW. This issue is important to me because our generation must consider the stark choice of our legacy: either a dangerously heating climate where human life is suffering; or a sustainable future. A rapid and full transition to renewable energy is taking place across the world. Australia is and must be part of this life-affirming change.

Regional communities such as mine want support from government to be part of this transition. We are already dealing with the impacts of climate change like more extreme heatwaves, droughts and bushfires. Coal mining is polluting and overusing our surface water and ground water. Coal is polluting our air and our regionally-prized dark skies. It is now past the time when any new fossil fuel power stations should be built. No new coal mines or extensions to existing coal mines should be permitted. Coal seam gas is not the answer because of its fugitive methane emissions.

Inland NSW has abundant sun and wind energy. Solar, in particular, is suitable for community owned and controlled power. State, regional and local planning policies and rules should give strong preference, backed by public investment, to community owned and controlled power. From the social perspective, renewable energy can be done much better than fossil fuel energy, because it lends itself to decentralised infrastructure. Regional communities can benefit socially and economically from the new opportunities of renewable energy.

NSW can be at the forefront of a better future that gets us to beyond zero emission of greenhouse gasses while supporting a sustainable and equitable economy for agriculture, industry, services and nature conservation that is powered by renewable energy.

Government and citizens need to formulate plans that will ensure this change. Social justice issues are important in this transition, with government, unions, industry and communities working together to ensure local redeployment of workers currently in the fossil fuel industries. There will be many more jobs in an energy future powered by solar and wind energy plus storage.

Hydro-electric energy should not be favoured because our river ecosystems are already in crisis due to over-regulation and over-extract of water.

I ask the committee to recommend that the NSW government should make large public investment to back community-driven regional diversification based on wind and solar energy.

A good priorities to fast-track this transition would be to act in the existing coal fields of the Hunter Valley, Gunnedah Basin and Lithgow.

Peter Thompson

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