

**Submission  
No 177**

## **SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW**

**Organisation:** MEG Midcoast Environment Group

**Date Received:** 15 September 2019

Thank you for the chance to put in a submission and apologies for not being able to fully cover or explain how critically important it is for our country, state and households to get a grip immediately on how energy is developed and used.

I'm sure that you have many more coherent submissions dealing with the technicalities of these issues. I just want to say that there is no need to burn wood for energy when:

1. Renewables like sun, wind and water (from waves and natural flows) are widely and reliably available.

2. Trees and vegetation are critically important to our air and soil quality and as cooling agents and habitat for native species.

3. There are ways of dealing with the massive amount of waste currently going to landfill. A process exists in NSW where plastic etc can be converted into oil! In Denmark and other countries, waste is burned off and produces energy without pollution. Redcycle in Victoria produces building and other durable (too durable - some might say!) from soft plastic waste.

4. Regions like ours - the Mid North Coast - are crying out for government help to back the sensible, practical and economic solutions mentioned above. And there are many more.

5. Many jobs could be made available in renewable and sustainable industries if government only had the courage - we can't even say 'foresight' now because NSW is so incredibly backward in adopting solutions which already exist and are used in other countries and even by private entrepreneurs here.

6. Locally, this turbine could be used perhaps in fast flowing water such as the estuary from Wallis Lake to the sea! <https://www.businessinsider.com/whirlpool-turbine-water-energy-turbulent-belgian-green-energy-2018>

7. A holistic approach to energy generation and use is sorely lacking in Australia, mainly because the current federal government has not agreed on a sensible, sustainable energy policy. But this shouldn't stop NSW taking the lead and showing an example - and please - let it be a good one. Not the current anti-nature land clearing, heat creating (and not in a useful way) mindless destruction that is denuding our landscapes, burning living trees instead of leaving them to provide us with oxygen.

8. We all have to breathe the air and we all need water. These are not 'greeny' frills on the economy. As Ross Gittins (Economic writer for the Sydney Morning Herald) has pointed out more than once, nature literally sustains us. <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/what-the-economy-really-needs-more-of-trees>.

9. It is very distressing to see vast swathes of native vegetation being cleared for houses with roofs that create more heat and without any trees or other native vegetation, or water tanks, or solar panels. NSW government should outlaw these developments because if we have enough hard surfaces and lose our green spaces to buildings and broadscale monocultural farming, we will lose our quality of life entirely and perhaps even suffocate from lack of air and desiccate for lack of water.

10. MEG believes there can be sustainable and sensible development but it's hardly happening here although there are thousands of good practices that could be adopted.

11. If only government could realise that the fossil fuel and its attendant damage is totally outmoded and listen to those who suggest ways of using sun, sea and wind (among other sustainables) rather than coal, oil and gas.

12. One of the most dangerous practices is the kind of New Speak (viz Orwell's 1984) quoted below: The Carbon Dioxide emissions from these facilities are not counted toward any national targets or limits, because 'biomass' is considered to be carbon neutral. These facilities get Renewable Energy Credits for the wood that they burn. More than 800 climate scientists and ecologists have written to various international agencies, stating that the burning of woody biomass should be counted towards our emissions, because the lag time in the landscape in re-capturing the carbon can be decades (in the case of the north coast plantations, they are being converted to pasture so the carbon will never be recaptured).

13. Members of the NSW government (including our local Member for Myall Lakes) are suggesting that National Parks could be de-gazetted and opened up for logging. This short term unsustainable robbing of our country's future is evident in so many areas. The NSW government has sold off - or allowed to be plundered - many important and irreplaceable parts of our heritage and environment.

14. The Office of Environment and Heritage has itself been subsumed into the Department of Planning Industry and the Environment! MEG has collected quite a few signatures on a Petition to the Premier of NSW asking:

We the undersigned want reassurance that the movement of the Office of Environment and Heritage into the Department of Planning will not in any way reduce the activities and scope of the OEH to defend, protect and enhance the natural environment of our state.

To quote the OEH website: Working with the community, OEH cares for and protects NSW's environment and heritage, which includes the natural environment, Aboriginal country, culture and heritage, and built heritage. OEH supports the community, business and government in protecting, strengthening and making the most of a healthy environment and economy in NSW.

We also ask for extra resources to be devoted to preventing species extinction and to boost National Parks as an asset protected from commercial development. The natural environment cannot be sacrificed for a narrow economic agenda such as mining

15. You may consider this petition is not relevant to the ToR of this inquiry but we believe it is material to points 4., 5. and 6.

16. Why can't government see that there are many jobs and other opportunities in nurturing, protecting and enhancing our natural assets rather than destroying them?

Hoping we can all work together for sustainable - and sorry I'll repeat - sensible solutions. Thanks for your time.