Submission No 211

SUSTAINABILITY OF ENERGY SUPPLY AND RESOURCES IN NSW

Organisation: Climate Action Wagga (CAW)

Date Received: 15 September 2019

Submission to the NSW Inquiry of Sustainability of energy supply and resources in NSW

15 September 2019

Climate Action Wagga (CAW) is a new community organization that supports action to deal with climate change. It was established because of inaction by all levels of government and the lack of policies by major political parties to assist the Australian public to prepare for and adjust to the effects of climate change. The Federal government had supported a think tank to develop a National Climate Resilience and Adaption Strategy 2015 but there has been little or no action at the local level to adopt any of the outcomes of this strategy. Our membership realizes the urgency for action and is taking steps to ensure that something does happen. CAW collaborates with other like-minded community groups like Climate Rescue of Wagga (CROW) that have a long history oSusf promoting aspects of sustainability.

CAW supports the very thorough following submission by CROW to the *NSW Inquiry* on *Sustainability of energy supply and resources in NSW*. In addition to what CROW has submitted, CAW believes there needs to be development and support for the recycling of Photovoltaic (PV) Cells and storage batteries as part of the sustainability principle of the inquiry.

By 2050, the global photovoltaic panel waste is predicted to be 60 to 78 million tonnes with an estimated value of solar module recyclable materials of $15 billion. It is important that these panels are not dumped into landfill because they contain toxic materials and rare elements. It is known that between 80 to 98% of the materials can be safely recycled. Australia should not be put into the same position with PV cells as it has been with other waste products such as plastics because it is a cheaper option to send elsewhere. These facilities could provide valuable employment in rural areas throughout Australia.

Information for recycling PV cells is available; for example, a European solar panel recycling association has developed a mechanical and thermal treatment process that achieves a 96% recovery rate for silicon-based photovoltaic panels. The European Union's Waste of Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) directive also has guidelines for disposing of solar panels that could be adapted to Australian conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Sustainability of energy supply and resources in NSW.

Attachments included with submission

Text of Submission 164