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Energy white green paper Panel

Submission from Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Community Member : dominicWYkanak,
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Sovereignty of Aboriginal Torres Strait Island Peoples is an integral part of any discussion whenever the Australian Government speaks about commitments to a set of signature economy-wide reforms to grow the economy while addressing rising business and household costs. A recognition of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Sovereignty approach should pervade all responses to the Green and White Paper.

The Australian Government needs to add Local Government to its commitments to work closely with industry, state and territory governments in developing an integrated, coherent national energy policy. Local Government is not mentioned in the first paragraph of the Terms of Reference.
<http://ewp.industry.gov.au/documents/terms-reference>

"The COAG Energy Council will continue to develop the proposal to increase the consumer voice in national energy market matters, particularly household and small business consumers. " : COAG needs to structure special mechanisms for Aboriginal voices to be heard in national energy market matters not only in advocating job creation projects but also in the debate about Indigenous Sovereignty and the impacts on Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples as some of the poorest and most vulnerable People in Our Community.

"There are barriers to engaging Indigenous Australians in employment or business opportunities. These barriers arise from poorer outcomes for Indigenous people in education, limited work histories, poor health, and increased contact with the criminal justice system. A flexible and collaborative approach with early and sustained consultation between Indigenous peoples, industry, communities and government is needed to overcome such barriers and realise future opportunities." : A proper analysis of the history of English imperialist invasion and colonial dispossession from Country should be acknowledged and included in the resolutions for this Country's energy future. The barriers mentioned as coming from poorer outcomes for Indigenous People should properly include an analysis of the intergenerational trauma and ongoing effects of invasion and Cultural genocide that surround these barriers against Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Jobs are not enough if not supported by a strong base of Cultural Recognition and Respect for Indigenous Sovereignty that allows appropriate energy exploration and exploitation Community veto and negotiation with Indigenous Peoples on Country.

Projects and trials of alternative renewable sources of energy supply to off-grid remote Indigenous communities reducing reliance on nonrenewables and network expansion should provide infrastructure mimicking opportunities for all households to become more grid independent, especially homes of the poor and vulnerable.

"Greater use of distributed energy generation infrastructure for wind, solar and hydro), combined with demand management, can help address some of these issues for regional and remote communities." (p31) : These measures should also be available to urban centers of low socioeconomic demographics.

"The Australian Government will provide \$10.6 million over four years as part of the Outback Power measure to service up to 250 existing renewable energy systems. These will be in remote Indigenous communities in Western Australia, Queensland, and the Northern Territory."(p79) : The Aboriginal Flag which flies alongside the Australian Flag has the Sun as its center symbol and therefore makes a special statement recognizing the LifeGiving power and place of Our People's Connexion to Country and should in contemporary Times be a mascot to champion the broader Community's commitment to Solar Energy infrastructure development and consumer usage.

"Energy Ministers have recognised the need for a more strategic and long-term approach to national advocacy for energy consumers."(p31) : Further to those comments already made , Energy Ministers need to implement special measures for hearing the voices of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander advocacy in the energy future of Our Country.

"As a member of the IEA, Australia is required to hold stocks (equivalent to 90 days of prior year's net imports), which can be released as part of an IEA-agreed collective action in the event of supply disruptions. Increasing demand for oil (and oil refined products) along with declining indigenous production has created a shortfall against Australia's IEA commitment. Australia relies solely on the commercial stockholding of industry, which currently stands at less than 60 days of net imports, to meet this treaty obligation."(p143) : A small grammatical point that the use of the word "indigenous" should as far as possible not be used to potentially create ambiguity between the use of the word as describing Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples and other uses in the same document, and therefore any further reports should choose an alternative appropriate word for 'indigenous' when that word is not used to describe Indigenous Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Infrastructure powered by renewables should be part of the backup regime for the potential supply disruption mentioned in this section, and it should be structured so that it can meet the full IEA Treaty obligations. Given the broader Community debate about a Treaty with Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples any international Treaty obligations by Australia should include provision in any resultant document for Indigenous input and contain a proper written recognition of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Sovereignty in contextual contemporary energy terms.

Not properly supporting and developing the renewable energy industry is criminal negligence and wilful blindness.

"Electric vehicles (including hybrid electric, plug-in hybrid and all electric) have an advantage over alternative fuels, with the fuel supply drawn from well-developed electricity sources. There are, however, several disadvantages compared with the current fleet, including high vehicle prices, unsophisticated sale and maintenance networks, limited recharging infrastructure, and motorists' concerns. The consumer concerns holding back growth include range anxiety (and limited recharging choices), vehicle performance and higher up-front costs."(p53) : As previously mentioned in this response, strategies for Local Government (which is missing from the 'Terms of Reference') should be considered as part of the outcomes of consultation on the Green, White Papers because Local Councils can play a major role in providing local municipal infrastructure leading to an increase in recharging choices and thereby supporting the advancement of electric vehicles.

I am willing to be involved in any capacity that will secure an affordable Community renewable energy future of equality for all the People in Our Country, and You may contact me for that involvement towards securing household energy grid independence,

Yours In Community ,

dominicWYkanak ,
boondi-boondi Bondi ,

