

# Clean energy solutions | ACF

Pollution from burning coal is a 19th century problem with a clear 21st century solution – clean, cheap energy that doesn't run out or pollute the air we breathe or the water we drink. We have the technology, the sun and the wind – we just need the political will.

## **Momentum for clean energy is unstoppable.**

One in five Australian households have rooftop solar panels. Charged by people power, countries around the world are taking giant leaps to cut pollution and grow clean energy. China is building a clean energy system that's fifteen times the size of the US energy grid, in just 15 years. G7 countries have embraced renewables, and countries as diverse as Costa Rica, Denmark, Albania, Iceland and Mozambique are all at or moving towards 100% renewables. Communities, scientists, doctors, business, faith groups, emergency services, the UN, the World Bank and G7 countries are all demanding action.

Australia has one of the world's best and biggest solar energy resources, yet today less than 1% of our electricity is generated from this clean energy source. And despite a decade of government renewable energy targets we currently generate only about 7% of our electricity from renewable energy sources.

A clean energy revolution is unstoppable, but big polluting companies – and the governments who do their bidding – can dramatically slow things down.

Right now in Australia, [a handful of big polluting companies are sabotaging change](#). Just like big tobacco, they want to make a quick buck digging up and burning coal and gas while they still can. And our government is listening to these giants instead of the Australian people.

## **The Renewable Energy Target**

In 2001 the Howard government introduced the Mandatory Renewable Energy Target to increase the amount of renewables in Australia by 2 per cent. From this slow beginning we moved to a 20 per cent Renewable Energy Target by 2020 in Australia.

After the government attempted to undermine clean energy in Australia for more than a year, [flawed legislation to weaken the RET](#) finally passed through Parliament on the back of a political deal in June 2015. The government slashed the target by 20 per cent. It now counts burning native forests for electricity as 'renewable'. And in a deal with anti-wind crossbenchers, the government established the wasteful and unnecessary post of a 'wind farm commissioner.'

If the RET had been allowed to do its job, around a quarter of our electricity would have come from clean energy sources like wind and solar, within five years.

The winners from this dodgy deal? The operators of old, inefficient coal-fired power stations and companies that want to generate electricity by burning native forests.

We want a nation-wide clean energy revolution that will rapidly shift us away from polluting energy like coal and gas and put Australia in a leading position on clean renewable energy

In this critical decade, we believe that Australia should pick up the pace and aim for 40 per cent of our energy

coming from renewable energy sources as soon as 2020.

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### **Clean Energy Finance Corporation and ARENA**

In December 2010 we released a report, [Funding the transition to a clean energy economy](#), which assessed the tools used to support clean energy investment in other countries, and first put forward the blueprint for a \$2 billion a year Clean Energy Finance Corporation. The \$10 billion CEFC was accepted as part of the Clean Energy Future Package in July 2011, passing through parliament as law in June 2012. In July 2014 the Clean Energy Future package was voted down and dismantled by the new Senate.

#### Jobs in a clean economy

The shift to a cleaner economy will mean a surge in 'green collar' jobs for Australians. We'll see more and more jobs that contribute to better environmental outcomes or increased sustainability.

In modelling undertaken in partnership with the ACTU, we highlighted the [jobs growth that would occur from a price on pollution](#) together with strong support for clean energy development. We used a scenario that very closely resembles Australia's price on pollution and the CEFC, which found that around 3.5 million new jobs would be created in Australia by 2030, which is 770,000 more than under a price on pollution alone. [Find out more about clean energy jobs.](#)

### **Clean energy map**

Late in 2010 we released our [clean energy map](#) which highlights Australia's huge renewable energy potential and the hundreds of thousands of jobs that would be created across each state. This map shows how much more we could be doing. With this sort of momentum behind us, we're optimistic about meeting the challenges ahead.