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Public submission to GAURNAUT REPORT

Reducing Emissions from buildings:

- Legislate that a minimum 5 Star (or higher) energy efficiency applies for new buildings (homes, schools and commercial buildings).
- Legislate that when existing electric hot water systems wear out they must be replaced with preferably solar systems, or possibly gas, or electric heat-pump.
- Property developers in particular must be forced to put items such as Photo-Voltaic (PV) electricity generators, solar hot water systems etc into new houses and apartment blocks that will house many people. This could be achieved by either legislation or tax incentives to provide these items.

Promoting Renewable Energy:

- Governments (state and federal) should go into business and manufacture bulk grid connected photo-voltaic (PV) electricity generators and solar hot water systems to then sell to householders at greatly reduced prices. Government manufacturing of these goods on a huge scale will overcome the current disincentives of big upfront purchase prices and inadequate current supply to be able to provide en-mass. Qld govt. just announced a trial program to supply 1,000 homes with cheaper photo-voltaic generators, and in 48 hours over 5,000 people registered their interest to purchase a PV generator. This shows consumer demand is there, but government must provide these items in huge volumes and at cheaper prices. Increasing subsidies for PV generators and solar hot water systems may be required in the mean-time until manufacturing can be ramped up sufficiently to bring the purchase price/unit down.

See

http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/sustainability/energy/solar_homes_program/

- Once govt. can guarantee unlimited cheaper supply legislate that 50% or more of all new buildings (houses, apartment blocks, office blocks, schools, shopping centres, and factories) must have roof mounted PV generators and solar hot water system. Over time increase this figure to 100% of new buildings.
- Legislate that all current and future water desalination plants must be run using 100% renewable energy.
- Why is methane gas from land fills not being captured and used to generate electricity? Perhaps further investigation and action is warranted.
- Federal Government to phase out fossil fuel subsidies and instead spend this money on renewables like solar and wind power.

Reducing Emissions by Promoting Recycling:

- Legislate that all recyclable aluminium cans and plastic drink bottles must be returnable for a refund of at least 10 cents per item. This will increase recycling rates thereby decreasing energy used making new cans and bottles.

- I work for 2 different state govt. departments and neither of them recycle. Ensure all local, state and federal govt departments have recycling services for all recyclable materials.
- Assist private businesses to set up recycling services.

Promoting Energy Efficiency of Electrical Products:

- Improved energy efficiency labels on new products.
- Expand the energy efficiency labels on new products to include a far greater range of electrical goods.
- Set minimum standards so that appliances using more than a set amount of electricity can not be sold in Australia.
- Increase the testing of claimed electricity use of electrical goods. There was a 2007 ABC "4 Corners" program showing independent testing of imported air conditioners that were using far more electricity than was claimed on their energy efficiency labels. This must be stopped.

Reducing Emissions from Transport:

- I read a newspaper article on 10 March 2008 about a Budget submission to the Government by the Australian Automobile Association calling for a major change to taxes and charges applied to vehicles. The proposal includes an "access charge" and a "user charge". The access charge would include Congestion Fees to travel on certain roads during peak periods. The amount of the user charge would depend on the size of the vehicle and the wear it causes roads, an environmental charge related to engine capacity, a levy to cover the costs of crashes and the congestion charge. This tax structure would replace existing charges motorists pay - federal fuel excise, GST on petrol, state registration charges, stamp duty on registration and road tolls. This is a better system as motorists who drove in non-peak periods and have environmentally friendly cars should pay less to own a vehicle.
See <http://www.news.com.au/couriermail/story/0,23739,23348302-952,00.html>

- Introduce minimum fuel efficiency requirements all vehicles built in Australia and also all vehicles imported into Australia.

In March 2003, the Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries adopted a voluntary target aimed at improving fuel consumption for new petrol passenger vehicles. An Australian car industry target was established for a reduction in average CO₂ emissions for all new light vehicles (< 3.5 tonnes gross mass) to 222 gm CO₂/km by 2010 - See

<http://www.autoindustries.com.au/media/2008/03/00000156.html>

This voluntary target is very inadequate when you consider the E.U. legislation is for CO₂ emissions of 120-130 gm/km, which is way below the Australian voluntary target of 222 gm CO₂/km. Legislation must ensure Australia has a rate similar to 120-130 gm CO₂/km.

The U.S. and the European Union have legislated for similar requirements in their countries. Legislation must allow sufficient time for car manufacturers to implement new technology to achieve required reductions, but this must not be excessively delayed - e.g. Not having these laws in place until 2018 would be an excessive delay. Perhaps a staged phase-in of tougher requirements could be considered.

See <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/cape/overview.htm> (U.S. laws), and <http://www.carkeys.co.uk/features/industry/2007/14413.asp> (E.U. laws)

- Since 2001 the UK has taxed new cars according to their CO2 emissions. The UK system has 7 different tax bands and motorists pay an ANNUAL tax based on a sliding scale of CO2 emissions. So the cleaner your vehicle, the less you pay in car tax. We need a similar scheme as an incentive for motorists to purchase more fuel efficient vehicles.

For full details –

see:http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/OwningAVehicle/HowToTaxYourVehicle/DG_10012524

- All hybrid vehicles should not automatically attract tax reductions, as not all hybrids are low polluters. According to the Federal Government Green Vehicle Guide, the Lexus LS600hL hybrid 4WD – rates >400th out of 1575 vehicles. (The guide only allows you to search to a maximum of 400 vehicles and the Lexus LS600hL hybrid 4WD, was NOT in the least polluting 400.

See:<http://www.greenvehicleguide.gov.au/gvgpublicui/AdvancedSearchWebForm.aspx?CurrentTask=eaef0439-9d62-4158-8636-35a91abc5c6b>

- Many people lease a car under a Salary Sacrifice agreement. These agreements give a reduced tax rate for driving higher Km. Several of my friends who normally drive 10,000 Km/year are forced to take their leased car on unnecessary long trips to accumulate 25,000 Km/year to obtain a reduced tax rate. This unnecessary driving is only increasing emissions. This tax law needs changing.

- More needs to be done to get interstate/long distance freight currently transported by road onto rail freight lines. Is rail freight too expensive? Do rail freight charges need to be subsidised, or tax incentives given to carry more freight? Do better freight rail depots need to be built to allow efficient transfer at destinations of rail freight onto road transport?

Promoting Increased Use of Public Transport:

- Massive investment in Public Transport is required to build new rail lines, new busway, and purchase new train carriages, new buses, ferries etc.

- The tax breaks given to the mining/coal/fuel industries need to be drastically reduced and some of this money diverted to funding expansion of Public Transport.

- Remove GST from all public transport fares to make public transport cheaper and entice more people to give up the car.

- Introduce or expanding free public transport in more areas, especially in the central business districts of our capital cities.

- Send a letter out every year with car registration renewal notices advising people of where the nearest public transport routes are near their home. This informs people of public transport options that may be convenient to them that they may be unaware of.

- Introduce a network of busways and bus priority lanes nation wide. All too often I am sitting on a bus in Brisbane CBD going nowhere stuck in peak-hour traffic because there are insufficient bus-lanes. An extensive bus lane

priority network would speed up bus travel and encourage more people to leave the car at home and use public transport.

Emissions from Australian Coal:

- We export so much coal which contributes to massive greenhouse emissions. We need to take more responsibility to reduce the greenhouse emissions released when Australian exported coal is burnt.
- Only expand existing or build new coal-fired power stations as a last resort. Other less polluting sources of electricity generation (Gas, etc) must be built in preference to coal-fired power stations.