

Right of Reply Demanded

Memo to ABC Current Affairs and Ben Knight

The World Today's report by Ben Knight from Melbourne's Greenhouse Conference was grossly misleading on the potential of renewable energy to compete against both coal burning and nuclear fission (uranium burning) power in an economically efficient manner.

In his intro to Ian Hore-Lacy's vox pop, Mr Knight said:

- * "renewables are in their infancy" - WRONG
- * "renewables are expensive and unreliable" - WRONG AGAIN
- * "renewables are no replacement for coal" - NO! (was it Mr Hore-Lacy said this?)

As usual the mining and energy industry spin doctors have brainwashed us with their clever spiel into completely forgetting the world's "Cinderella" renewable technology: solar water heating (nuclear FUSION power from the sun).

Consider this:

Solar water heating can save 2 tonnes CO₂ annually per \$1000 invested. Solar ELECTRIC cells on the other hand (feeding batteries, or feeding into the electric power grid, makes no difference) can only save a paltry 200 kg CO₂ annually per \$1000 of up-front capital outlay. And which renewable technology is government energy policy focussing on? - you guessed it they want us to waste tens of thousands of dollars of our own savings investing in a LOSER technology that does not compete with baseload electricity or gas. The smart money is investing in solar hot water, not solar photovoltaics. Smart federal energy policy should do the same. Competition policy and market reform demands that consumers should apply a competitive cudgel to the heads of the fossil fuel industry heavies: universal solar water heating for 8 millions Australian homes;

Eight million solar hot water systems on Australia's domestic rooftops is a peak nuclear fusion power transfer capability of 32,000 MW*: equivalent to the peak electric output of TWENTY Hazelwood power stations. Some prejudiced spin doctors of the fossil fuel industry have been trying to tell Australian kids that solar is a "weak" energy source!! (AAS Nova Web site - I can give the link if you're interested.)

* 32,000 MW (32 gigawatts) is **ten to fifteen times more peak power capacity** than the two or three gigawatts of nuclear fission capacity that Mr Hore-Lacy spoke of in his interview, and yet it would cost only about \$20 billion to retrofit to eight million households around the country. Because solar hot water is stored in large tanks for use day or night, *it does compete* with baseload electric power (be it coal or nuclear fission) and is also a cost-competitive market competitor with natural gas.

Just because green groups cannot constantly tail reporters at conferences like this, doesn't absolve your journalists from getting the scientific facts right on cost-competitive renewable technologies.
Michael Gunter

Mobile 0408 385 172 Telephone (03) 9376 7515 email mickgg@suburbia.com.au
Owner/operator of the Breamlea Wind Generator - Webmaster of www.voltscommissar.net