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Statement from Matthew Warren, Chief Executive, Clean Energy Council

Renewable Energy Target passage through Parliament

Today the Senate approved the Rudd Government's landmark Renewable Energy Target (RET) legislation to ensure 20 percent of Australia's stationary energy will come from renewable energy sources by 2020.

This is to date the most significant piece of climate change legislation in Australian history. It is the result of bipartisan support within the Parliament and years of hard work by many in the emerging clean energy industry.

The RET legislation will be the foundation of clean energy policy in Australia for the next decade. But our job has only just begun. We need to raise more than AU\$20 billion to finance new clean energy projects over the next decade to help create 28,000 new clean jobs.

We will continue to work with the emerging cleantech sector, government and investors to find the best ways to accelerate development of emerging technologies and drive them as quickly as possible into this growing clean energy market. We will use this next decade to make clean energy cheaper, more reliable and more accessible. Our goal is not to just meet this target by 2020, but to surpass it.

The Prime Minister is to be congratulated on honouring his election commitment and demonstrating continued leadership on climate change policy. The effectiveness of the RET legislation was ensured by Climate Change Minister Penny Wong, who listened to the concerns of the clean energy industry over key aspects of the design of the proposed bill, and addressed them.

Climate change is the biggest policy challenge in modern history. The legislation to address it is generational in scale. It needs bipartisan support, as inevitably both sides of politics will be stewards of its execution and implementation. Importantly, this has been achieved today. And of course the next challenge is the successful passage of the Federal Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

We would like to recognise the support of the Opposition leader Malcolm Turnbull and pay special tribute to the hard work of shadow Climate Change Minister Greg Hunt. It's important to note that Australia's first renewable energy target was established by the coalition in 2001 and we welcome their continued support.

The Clean Energy Council is made up of more than 300 clean energy companies who have been working for years to develop an effective policy platform around which Australia can develop a world class clean energy industry. That foundation has now been laid and their substantial efforts have been rewarded. Now the real work begins.