



RET, adaptation research and Clean Air Act glimmers of hope in 'climate-lite' campaign

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The Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) has welcomed the announcement by the Katter Australia Party to support Australia's Renewable Energy Target but urged all parties to strengthen their commitments on climate and energy policy.

"The renewable energy target has been the main driver of renewable energy in Australia over the last ten years. The dropping of a fixed carbon price by Labor and its abolition by the Coalition puts future renewables investment at risk, making a strong commitment to the Renewable Energy Target more important than ever," Ms Armstrong said.

CAHA is urging all parties to match The Greens' commitment of 90% by 2030 or aim even higher.

The announcement from the Coalition that they will restore some funding to the National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility (NCCARF) was very welcome, CAHA said.

"This initiative is important and must continue, but while adaptation is vital, we need a much stronger focus on mitigation to protect health. The planned cuts by the Liberal National Coalition to the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) and Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) will undermine other efforts to reduce emissions, and should be reconsidered," Ms Armstrong said.

CAHA welcomed The Greens' commitment to implementing a national Clean Air Act in response to the report from the Senate Inquiry into Air Quality.

"The reality is, we will reduce significant risks to health if we improve air quality through cutting emissions from energy and transport," Ms Armstrong said. "Stronger regulation and nationally consistent standards for air quality are very important for preventing respiratory and cardiovascular disease, and the strategies that deliver better air quality also reduce emissions."

Despite these small steps, the federal election campaign was experiencing a drought of ideas in terms of leadership on climate and energy issues, and a startling lack of insight from the major parties in terms of the implications for health, Ms Armstrong said.

"There is little indication from the major parties that the risks to health from inadequate climate and energy policies are understood," Ms Armstrong said.

The CAHA scorecard on political party's policy commitments on climate and health issues can be found at www.caha.org.au

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