To whom it may concern

Re: Australian Renewable Energy Agency (Repeal) Bill 2014

The University of Sydney would like to provide some feedback on the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA). The ARENA is viewed as a highly effective, important and forward looking instrument that enables Australian industry to link to research support from all providers (universities, CSIRO, etc.) across all stages of development of renewable technologies.

The renewable energy sector is fast growing in importance globally from an economic perspective and it therefore offers an important mechanism to enhance the competitiveness of countries in what is a rapidly expanding, knowledge-based global market.

While Australia can be challenged in competing with established large-scale manufacturing technologies internationally, due to our local market size and geographical location, these factors are not as significant in the development of renewable energy technology. Rather technology development in renewable energy is knowledge-intensive and leverages existing investments in knowledge infrastructure across the nation.

At the University of Sydney we have a number of high profile research initiatives such as the Clean Energy & Intelligent Networks Research Cluster, the Energy Storage Research Network and the Centre for Sustainable Energy Development as well as the Laboratory of Advanced Catalysis for Sustainability. These activities are all strongly associated with renewable energy and receive funding from ARENA directly or through shared funding arrangements with the other nodes in these clusters (e.g. James Cook University for biofuels from algae). The FutureGrid Research Cluster, led by the University of Sydney, is a $13M three year project with four universities and CSIRO, with a major focus on integration of renewable energy sources into electricity and gas networks.
Australia has a strong position within the renewable energy industry based on our large potential resources of renewable energy (i.e. wind, sun, agricultural waste), as well as acknowledged Australian scientific and technical excellence and leadership. However, this opportunity could be easily lost and would take many decades to re-build. ARENA provided some funding certainty that allowed longer term planning and relationship building between all stakeholders, which is crucial for innovation, the creation of globally leading technologies, and wealth and knowledge generation in Australia.

Yours sincerely

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