

Renewable Energy Support A Sham: Claim

Federal Agriculture Minister Peter McGauran's comments criticising Victoria's wind energy industry have again exposed the Federal Government's approach to renewable energy as a sham, according to Victorian Energy Industries and Resources Minister Theo Theophanous.

Theophanous said McGauran's description of the wind energy industry as a "total fraud" showed the federal government's policy on renewable energy changed depending on who they were talking to. "The only wind farm fraud I know about is McGauran's criticism of the industry, despite his government's support for it," Theophanous said.

"In one breath, John Howard's cabinet members will say that climate change is a

serious issue and indicate their support for renewable energy. In the next breath, those same politicians will go back to their electorates and attack local wind energy projects."

"For some time it has been obvious that the Howard Government is prepared to slowly choke the wind energy industry to death, strangling it with red tape. Now it seems that their tactics have descended into open warfare with an industry that is trying to generate energy without greenhouse emissions."

McGauran came under fire in late June for his stance of windfarms after he told a gathering of dairy farmers that wind energy is only viable with government subsidies and windfarms are a threat to rural communities.

He said wind farms are not a cleaner alternative to coal fired power stations and should only be allowed in places where the community wants them. "Wind farms don't live up to the hype that they are an environmental saviour and a serious alternate energy source," according to an ABC radio report.

"And the effect they can have on their neighbours are so serious it means they should not be allowed to get away with the exaggerated claims, their claims are fraudulent."

A total of 600 wind farms have so far been built or been approved in Australia under the coalition government. ■