



Partnership Proposal

Bloomberg: "scraping or reducing Australia's Renewable Energy Target would shelve \$12-21 billion of investment in clean energy, cut 7,000-11,000 future jobs in wind and solar industries every year, lead to higher power prices for consumers and deliver power companies \$6-12 billion of extra revenue from 2015 to 2020."¹

Dear friends,

As you know Australia's Renewable Energy Target (RET) is under attack from the big 3 power companies.

Having spend a number of years looking into consumer action in the energy space we'd like to invite your organisation to be part of a huge campaign led by GetUp to save renewable energy in Australia. Participating organisations will be part of a strategic, deep campaign to save the RET by giving their Victorian members the opportunity to switch their energy provider away from the big three energy companies who are attacking the RET to a 100% renewable energy retailer that is championing the RET - Powershop.

On top of being the "only retailer to call unequivocally for the current target to be retained" of taking the strongest publicly pro-RET position of any energy company and its renewable energy heritage, Powershop is also one of the cheapest energy retailers in Victoria. So that's a win/win situation for people who switch to the Better Power campaign offer with Powershop - they get to support the growth of renewable energy in Australia, send a strong message to the big three energy companies that attacking the RET is unacceptable and cut their energy bills too.

We can change the game and save the RET by launching a massive "switch" where organisations and their members leave the Big Three power giants for pro-renewable energy companies:

1. **Better Power.** Shift to the 100% renewable energy backed energy company Powershop, sending a clear message to the Big Three that they need to drop their campaign against renewables.
2. **New Power.** The current political power being exerted to save the RET won't be enough. The campaign by the anti-RET power companies and anti-wind lobby is too strong. We need to establish a new and powerful political force in the marketplace demonstrating deep public





commitment to renewables in a public frame that is as strong and mainstream as health or education - cost of living.

3. **Great for members.** The Essential Services Commission rated Powershop as one of the lowest power offers in Victoria, so participants will save money.²
4. **Fast and easy.** Powershop have developed world leading online customer service. It will take less than 10 minutes to switch. There are no contracts or fees. And if you're under contract, Powershop will cover exit penalty fee (up to \$75).

This campaign will only work if it happens at a scale beyond what any one group can achieve. We made it easy for organisations and individuals to be part of the switching campaign. Find out below how to get started!

Context

Origin, AGL and Hong Kong-controlled EnergyAustralia are doing everything in their power to try to entirely scrap or seriously reduce Australia's RET. The impact of this would be devastating for consumers, job creation and the price of power, but the Big Three power companies would reap windfall profits as power prices soar. With the RET under review right now, we need to change the game and fast.

The Big Three retailers currently account for 70.53% of the electricity market in Victoria. For too long, their oligopoly means they think they can get away with an anti-renewables campaign. But this is also a hugely fluid market: every month over 50,000 Victorians change energy provider. It's a constant fight to keep customers and stay competitive, meaning the big companies keep a very close eye on their outgoing customers. So the only thing that can beat their anti-renewables campaign is consumer power.

With a review of the RET already underway, Origin, AGL and EnergyAustralia have been alleging that the target itself is to blame for the massive increase in Victorians' power bills. But this is not true and they are misleading consumers. Associate Professor at RMIT and leading energy market analyst, Alan Pears, demonstrated that the real reason for the massive increase in power bills has been the unreasonably high profits and unethical gaming of the energy market by the big energy companies along with massive, and unnecessary, over investment in energy infrastructure. In fact, the reduction in the RET is expected to drive even higher prices and more dirty energy to come.

Meanwhile, the Essential Services Commission, Victoria's independent regulator, found the two lowest priced power offers residential



customers can get across the board are from Powershop and Momentum – two 100% pro-renewable companies. So, a mass switch to cheaper, pro-renewables companies will simply leave the dirty power companies behind.

1. GetUp

GetUp is an independent, grass-roots community advocacy organisation which aims to build a more progressive Australia by giving everyday Australians the opportunity to get involved and hold politicians accountable on important issues.

GetUp provides Australians with the tools to fight back, hold politicians accountable, and take innovative and effective action on important issues facing our country. GetUp is a ground-up movement of real people who are putting participation back into our democracy.

Since its inception 9 years ago, the GetUp community has grown to include over 677,500 members who are not afraid to stand up and have their say about important progressive political issues, helping shape the direction of Australian politics.

Of the pro-RET renewable power companies in Victoria GetUp approached (Powershop, Momentum and Red - before we saw Red's parent company Snowy Hydro's submission to the RET which was not supportive), Powershop were keen to step up and use their market position to work jointly with the GetUp movement to save the RET. Their work to counter the lies of the Big Three energy companies and their hard-hitting submission in support of the RET are critically important parts of the campaign; as well as their willingness to make it easy and attractive for GetUp members to switch. Their awards for customer service and innovative features that help customers monitor energy use online and save on bills, coupled with their low prices, also made them a good partner.

When the campaign to save the Renewable Energy Target is publicly launched for each person that switches Powershop will make a small contribution to further GetUp's better power campaign. All funds raised as part of our renewable energy campaign will be put straight back into the Better Power campaign. The commitment here is to save and strengthen the renewable energy target and to take on the Big Three power companies with their massive lobby teams and ad budgets. Our movement will need resources for grassroots events, awareness raising materials and maybe our own ads too if enough people switch. This is not about fundraising.



2. Powershop

Powershop is wholly owned by Meridian Energy, one of the world's largest 100% renewable generators - generating only 100% zero carbon renewable energy. Meridian is 51% owned by the New Zealand government and is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange.

It's the world's first online energy retailer and the first power company in the Australian market to allow households and small businesses to see how much power they are using and what it costs before they pay for it and to pay for it how and when they want to, using their smart phone, tablet or laptop.

Powershop is a huge supporter of important legislation like the RET, and proud to be leading the way for growth of renewable energy in Australia. Giles Parkinson in RenewEconomy reviewed how major energy companies had been responding to the 2014 RET Review and found that Powershop "is the only retailer to call unequivocally for the current target to be retained."³

Powershop has wind and hydro projects in Australia: including the Mt Millar wind farm, which is located on the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia and produces approximately 180 GWh of renewable energy each year; and the Mt Mercer wind farm near Ballarat, which is about to begin operations and will generate enough electricity to power over 100,000 households.

Customers buying Powershop's standard power are directly funding Meridian's work to invest in and grow renewable energy generation in Australia (as well as supporting a company that is using its voice to help the campaign to protect the RET). Powershop also has a 100% Green electricity product, which is backed by Meridian who supply the renewable energy on behalf of Powershop from its Mt Millar wind farm in South Australia and its Mt Mercer wind farm in Victoria.

Powershop selected Victoria as its first Australian location because the local electricity market is the most ripped off in Australia, margins are higher than in any other state. A 2013 report from the Essential Services Commission shows retailers in Victoria are making profits four times higher than elsewhere in the country. Powershop used the same data to estimate that it can save Victorians currently with AGL, Origin or EnergyAustralia in excess of \$300 million every year if they switch to Powershop as they are one of the cheapest retailers in Victoria. The Essential Services Commission, Victoria's independent regulator, found that Powershop had the cheapest residential prices on average in Victoria.



The Better Power campaign

For too long, doing business with power companies lobbying against our goals and values has been a necessary evil. But it is not anymore. Consumer power can be stronger than the big energy retailers campaign against renewables.

We can save the RET by launching a massive "switch" – where organisations and their members leave the Big Three power giants for pro-renewable energy retailers.

GetUp has been looking into various energy providers for over two years and approached three excellent renewable energy companies in Victoria: Momentum, Red, and Powershop before partnering with this latter because it is the most pro-RET power company and they are already campaigning hard to save the target. They're 100% renewable and they have one of the cheapest power offers in Victoria.

GetUp also researched what it would take to move customers on a large enough scale to push the big power companies to rethinking their corporate policies on issues like renewable energy and fossil fuels and worked with Powershop to develop an online application that allows customers to easily and quickly switch, at no cost, to an ethical energy provider.

It's a bold tactic but it's not the first time we've used unconventional means to hold powerful interests to account - and we've seen consumer power work before. Our assessment of the current political situation reveals that our traditional tactics won't be enough. We've mobilised over 60,000 people on the streets for climate action in November 2013, carried out policy work and lobbying on the RET. Now we need to show that people will take high barrier actions, at a large enough scale, to demonstrate that Australians will settle for nothing less than a strong renewable future.

It is essential to note that the current market dynamics in Victoria mean that customers can get the cheapest power at the same time as sourcing their power from a pro-RET, 100% renewable energy company. This is a remarkable situation that puts this campaign into two of the strongest political frames in Australia: the high cost of living and the unfair profits of big power companies to the detriment of consumers.

We soft launched the campaign last week to a list of about 200 people in Victoria and already dozens of GetUp members have switched to Powershop.

The most exciting part is their reaction. Already they are taking the campaign



on independently. A number of people have received call-backs from Origin urging them not to switch. People have used this as an opportunity to tell them that they are switching because of their campaign against the RET and that they would come back if they supported renewables. Others are taking to social media asking their members to switch and letting the Big Three know why they've moved away. Here is one example:



Michael Pulsford ▸ **Origin Energy**
2 seconds ago

Origin! It's been good doing business with you. I had no complaints at all and thought everything was fine, until you started campaigning against the Renewable Energy Target. That's a deal-breaker for me, so I'm leaving for a company which supports the RET.

I mean, dudes? It's 2014. I don't know if you've noticed, but we're kind of at the pointy end of needing to build renewables fast. You know, for the kids. Slowing that process down is short-sighted and wrong, and I can't support it. I'd rather give my money, and whatever moral support that implies, to people who know it's 2014 and aren't living in a fantasy where we've got decades to get around to changing how our energy is generated. We don't.

Hope you reconsider, anyways, and have a good day.

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Other members are telling their personal story to send a personal message. Like a couple who owns a cafe in Fitzroy who have switched and are now keen to inform their customers of the reason why they have moved to a pro-renewables company and the benefits they have seen.



We are opening to exploring a range of next steps following the launch of the campaign from events and switching parties to switching MP's. One of GetUp's sister organisations, 38 Degrees based in the UK, ran a switch campaign which we've been able to learn a lot from and where over 40k of their members switched to cheaper and 100% renewable energy as part of a cost of living campaign. They found that the tactic that excited their members the most was when they successfully lobbied their local MPs to switch, directly bringing the consumer action back into the political debate.

Your organisation, network and members also have this exciting opportunity to make this easy switch to better power. It is easy to lead the way for the growth of renewable energy in Australia while making great savings: join GetUp's switching campaign and benefit from our online application to easily switch to Powershop!

From there we have lots of ways individuals, members or staff can be part of the campaign from simply switching through to telling your personal story or hosting events. Our team would then work with you to determine the best way we can work together to scale this campaign and have the most impact to save the RET.

To see the current draft of the Powershop online switching platform go to: <http://www.getup.org.au/BetterPower>

For any further information or to get started please don't hesitate to contact me.

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References:

- [1] Modelling options for Australia's RET Review. Bloomberg New Energy Finance, 16 May 2014
- [2] Energy retailers comparative performance report—pricing 2012-13. Essential Services Commission 2013
- [3] [Who is the greenest energy retailer in Australia?](#) RenewEconomy, 6 June, 2014



Statements of support for the Better Power campaign

"I want the 2020 Renewable Energy Target maintained or preferably increased. I also support stronger climate targets. So I support energy retailers that publicly advocate for these. That's why I switched to PowerShop. I also admire Powershop's public advocacy for innovative electricity retailing models that empower consumers."

Alan Pears AM, climate and energy researcher at RMIT University

"I switched to Powershop because they are a renewable energy company that puts its money where its mouth is. They are up for the fight and their work to support the Renewable Energy Target and take on the lies of the big three energy companies - not just about renewables but across the board - this deserves both credit and support."

Rob Gell AM, former television weather presenter, Chairman of Wildlife Victoria

"Consumers in Victoria have been well served by the Renewable Energy Target because it's opened up the market to new and innovative generators and retailers and helps keep price rises in check. In a market dominated by just three big energy companies, Origin, Energy Australia and AGL, that's very welcome."

Gerard Brody, CEO Consumer Action

"I switched my home and my business - Season's Provedore in Carlton. It took less than ten minutes to do and I've made significant savings on both bills! I am very happy - especially when I know that I'm also getting behind the Renewable Energy Target and sending a strong message to big energy to support renewables - instead of going out of their way to constrain and even reduce the use of renewables."

Fernando Longo, Season's Provedore

"When I switched to Powershop I was really impressed by how easy it is to manage my power usage. I've now got control over my electricity usage and costs and I can login to my account through my app or laptop any time I like. Best of all I'm supporting a renewable energy company that cares about me as a customer and is using my profits to support the Renewable Energy Target, not wreck it."

Liam White, Kensington

"I want to be with an energy company that is as pro-renewables as me. I timed my switch and it only took 5 minutes"

Millie Telford, Fitzroy



"I am passionate about taking decisive action against climate change, and switched to Powershop as part of the Better Power campaign because I support the Renewable Energy Target. I was horrified to discover my previous electricity supplier was lobbying against the RET."

David Tomkins, Melbourne