

# Eco-energy rallies

By CHRYSTAL BRAND

ABOUT 75 people rallied recently in Newcastle's Foreshore Park demanding the federal government keep the Renewable Energy Target.

The Renewable Energy Target was implemented to provide a cleaner environment for the future by ensuring at least 20 per cent of Australia's electricity would come from renewable sources by 2020.

However, the Abbott government wants to scale the targets back.

Rallies were held across Australia on Friday, September 26, to support continued investment in renewable energy.

Siobhan Isherwood, of CWP Renewables, said a rally was a good way to show how important renewable energy was to Australia.

"We need to send a strong, loud message to the government," she said.

Greens campaigner and activist Cathy Burgess said she was appalled the government wanted to axe Renewable Energy Target when it was working well.

The Renewable Energy Target has created \$20 billion in revenue and



**THE MESSAGE:** Siobhan Isherwood speaks on the importance of renewable energy for Australia at Newcastle's Foreshore Park.

21,000 new jobs across the country, according to Newcastle's Greens councillor and Newcastle state seat byelection candidate Michael Osborne.

He said that investment opportunities would lead companies to invest.

Cr Osborne said the existing Renewable Energy Target was estimated to lead to a further \$15 billion in investments and create another 18,000 jobs.

"We shouldn't be going backwards. These are the sort of jobs we need in our country," Cr Osborne said.

Federal Minister for the Environment Greg Hunt

and the Minister for Industry Ian MacFarlane released a joint media statement on the independent panel review of the Renewable Energy Target.

It said the government would be announcing its response to the report in the coming weeks and confirmed renewable energy played an important and ongoing part in Australia's energy mix.

It said the government was supporting ongoing investment in renewable energy projects, including a \$1 billion investment in almost 200 projects over a range of technologies.

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