

MEDIA RELEASE

Australia must heed global warning on energy savings

Sydney, Wednesday 27 February 2013, for immediate release

Influential experts from Europe USA and China meeting in Sydney this week agree that energy efficiency is the biggest, cheapest, fastest way to cut greenhouse gas emissions and cut energy costs. But time is running out for Australia to heed the advice.

Robert Tromop, Head of Energy Efficiency at the International Energy Agency (IEA), will tell the gathering that energy efficiency can cost effectively cut global energy expenditures and increase economic activity.

“Our research shows that saving energy can buy time for the climate, delaying the complete ‘lock-in’ of the allowable emissions of carbon dioxide under a 2°C trajectory— currently set to happen in for 2017 - by an extra five years,” said Mr Tromop. “Even though it is cost effective for the end users, two-thirds of this potential will remain untapped without specific, new action by governments.”

Meanwhile, President Obama has recently announced an ambitious goal for the US to “cut energy waste in half by 2030”. Also attending the Sydney meeting is Ms Kateri Callahan, President of the US Alliance to Save Energy that was instrumental in developing the Obama commitment. Ms Callahan said energy efficiency is bipartisan.

“Forward-looking legislators are tapping into a huge pool of savings for households and businesses that give back to the economy and we are here to share results with Australia,” said Mr Callahan.

In Australia, this year will be critical for tackling the thorny problems of energy market reform, electricity affordability, and climate change response, according to Australian Alliance to Save Energy Chief Executive, Mr Chris Dunstan.

“If we don’t get this reform right then consumers are set to lose in three ways,” says. “Firstly, with higher bills at home; secondly with rising electricity prices driven by unnecessary energy infrastructure; and thirdly with greater impacts of climate change.”

Demand in the national electricity market has dropped for four years in a row, last year it was 5.3% below the peak of 2008 [1]. A large part of this fall is due to energy savings measures by government and by energy users in response to higher power prices.

The key question is “do we still need to spend an unprecedented \$9 billion per annum in electricity network investment, when smarter solutions are starting to work?”

Mr Dunstan says that while the recent announcements by the Council of Australian Governments to tackle network over-investment are welcome, the danger is that these reforms will take too long to help energy customers.

Over 300 experts, business people and policy-makers are gathering in Sydney this week at The Australian Alliance to Save Energy Summer Study to discuss solutions for a lower cost, more efficient Australia.

27 Feb – 1 March. *Talking about a revolution: Australian Summer Study on Energy Efficiency and Decentralised Energy.* /CONTINUES/

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Comment Available:

Kateri Callahan, (USA), Alliance to Save Energy - on nationwide solutions to rising energy costs

Steve Nadel (USA), American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy - on where Australia ranks in a global rating of energy efficiency action

Robert Tromop, (NZ) Head of Energy Efficiency Unit, International Energy Agency - on new research into how governments invest, is money going to the right place?

Li Tienen (China) Director, China Centre for Industrial Energy Efficiency – on the surprising scale of efficiency measures in China.

Benoit Lebot (Senegal) United Nations Development Programme-Global Environment Facility – on how developing nations can gain energy access that doesn't trash the climate.

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[1] 196 TWh, for 2012 calendar year. *Source: Australian Energy Market Operator*

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