

**ACHIEVING ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL
SUSTAINABILITY: LOWER EMISSIONS
AND ACCESS FOR ALL**

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Minister for Resources and Energy
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**Check against delivery*

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you the Australian Government's views on this most important topic.

The question of how we can reconcile the need to improve energy supply, living conditions and employment opportunities with the equally important global need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, is an important one.

I believe it is possible to achieve economic growth while increasing deployment of low-emissions energy technologies.

In this context Australia has recently introduced a carbon price that will operate from 1 July 2012, and will help stimulate private investment in clean energy technologies.

We all know that we need investment in technology and infrastructure to meet our energy needs.

In its 2011 World Energy Outlook, the International Energy Agency estimates that global investment in energy supply infrastructure of \$38 trillion will be needed for the period 2011 to 2035.

To meet our domestic energy demand, Australia will need investment of around \$240 billion over the next two decades in our generation, distribution and transmission infrastructure.

Meeting our investment requirements will be strongly influenced by the global investment environment and by the appetite of foreign investors to commit to energy projects.

Hence, policy and investment settings must be appropriate and stable to attract required investment.

Government has a role to play in this respect by ensuring sound legal and regulatory conditions.

The Australian Government regards the development of effective and efficient markets as fundamental to the transition to a clean energy future.

We are now setting in place measures which we are confident will allow us to reduce emissions while maintaining economic growth.

In July last year we announced the Clean Energy Future package, with four main elements:

- a price on carbon;
- a renewable energy target;
- energy efficiency initiatives; and
- action on carbon abatement and storage in agriculture and the land sectors.

We followed this in December with the release of a draft Energy White Paper which identifies priority areas for further action in our energy sector.

Australia has a proud record of achievement in renewable and clean energy research and development.

Our universities, research institutions and companies have developed world-class technologies and in many cases are leaders in their fields.

For example, the University of New South Wales in Sydney holds the world record for the highest energy conversion efficiency for a silicon solar cell at 25 per cent.

The Government will maintain and build on Australia's R&D strengths through continued public support of key technologies.

I might add that we will clearly not make meaningful progress towards emissions reduction without addressing emissions reductions from fossil fuel use.

We believe it is vital to explore the potential of carbon capture and storage as part of the broad technological response to reduce emissions.

In this respect Australia has driven the establishment of the Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute to help share lessons among member countries.

Conclusion

Australia is not only among the world's largest suppliers of natural gas and coal, we also are leaders in many areas of technology development.

The Australian Government recognises that collaborative efforts—where resources are pooled and risks shared—help to bring down individual costs, promote the exchange of know-how, and expand investment and trade in clean technologies.

Australia looks forward to continuing to play an active role in this important work.

Thank you