



MEDIA RELEASE

SENATOR THE HON. KIM CARR

Minister for Innovation, Industry,
Science and Research

THE HON. MARTIN FERGUSON MP

Minister for Resources and Energy
Minister for Tourism

SHARON GRIERSON MP

Federal Member for Newcastle

Wednesday, 1 April 2009

\$20 MILLION CLEAN ENERGY CENTRE OPENS FOR BUSINESS

Australia's clean energy sector received a boost today with the launch of a new national \$20 million Clean Energy Innovation Centre by Innovation Minister, Senator Kim Carr.

The centre offers a range of hands-on services to small- and medium-sized businesses in the clean energy sector including free business reviews and supporting grants, to help boost productivity and tap into the sector's enormous potential.

"From today, this centre will deliver real, practical advice to help businesses," Senator Carr said.

"Expert business advisers will be rolling up their sleeves, getting out from behind their desks and heading off to talk to businesses face-to-face about ways of improving their day to day processes.

"And it doesn't end there. Advice from the initial business review will be followed up with ongoing mentoring and the opportunity to obtain up to \$20,000 in Government funding to implement improvements.

"Clean energy is an industry sector with enormous potential for growth. By investing in this centre, we are investing in the future.

"The Australian Government is giving businesses the tools and advice they need to be more productive, more innovative, and more dynamic."

Newcastle Innovation, the University of Newcastle's commercial arm, is hosting the centre working in close partnership with the Australian Institute for Commercialisation, and the Western Australian Sustainable Energy Association.

Minister for Energy, Martin Ferguson welcomed the centre's opening.

"Supporting the clean energy sector will not only help to create jobs suited to the future low carbon economy but will encourage firms that are helping to reduce Australia's carbon footprint right now," Mr Ferguson said.

"This centre will adopt a broad definition of the clean energy sector. It will capture firms involved in the generation of energy from renewable and low carbon sources such as solar, wind, wave, tidal, low-emission coal, biofuels and geothermal as well as cogeneration."

Federal Member for Newcastle Ms Sharon Grierson said that the centre would build on Newcastle's reputation as a great place to do business.

"Newcastle is a vibrant city which constantly demonstrates its ability to evolve and renew itself for the future," Ms Grierson said.

"We know the future lies in innovation and a big part of this innovation will be in the clean energy sector. Being selected as host city for this important centre positions Newcastle to lead the way in clean energy and provide jobs for the future."

Senator Carr also announced the appointment of Mr Philip Pledge as the chair of the Clean Energy Centre Interim Advisory Board.

Mr Pledge is currently the chair of the SA Water Board. Prior to this he was a partner with Ernst and Young and has particular strengths in financial management, business planning and corporate restructuring.

"The board will comprise experts from within the clean energy field and the research sector. It will provide advice to me on the strategic direction of the centre. I look forward to working with Mr Pledge and his board," Senator Carr said.

The Clean Energy Centre is an integral part of the Rudd Government's \$271 million Enterprise Connect initiative, and will be a valuable resource for businesses operating in the clean energy sector throughout Australia.

To see how your business can benefit from the Clean Energy Innovation Centre and other Enterprise Connect services, visit www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au or call the hotline on 131 791.

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