



MEDIA RELEASE

Senator the Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Climate Change and Water

The Hon Peter Garrett MP

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts

PW 43/08

29 March 2008

GOVERNMENT TAKES EARTH HOUR LONG TERM

The Australian Government today announced new steps to deal with climate change and sustainability, as more than 100 of its departments and agencies sign-up to switch-off for Earth Hour 2008.

A whole of government taskforce will work on ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, waste, energy and water use in Government operations, as well as the sustainable use of Commonwealth land.

Known as the Inter-Departmental Committee on Government Leadership in Sustainability, it will report to the Prime Minister in June, with an ongoing role in overseeing the implementation of Government action on sustainability.

“The Australian Government is leading by example on climate change, not just by participating in Earth Hour tonight, but also by finding long terms ways to reduce emissions,” Senator Wong said.

“That Government action starts tonight, with thousands of lights in hundreds of government offices across the nation will be extinguished for Earth Hour 2008,” Mr Garrett said.

The Department of Climate Change and the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts are among 110 departments and agencies that have registered to participate in Earth Hour. [The full list is attached.]

“The lights across more than 2220 buildings occupied by government departments and agencies, with a floor area of 3,738,113m², will be off for Earth Hour 2008,” Minister Garrett said.

“This accounts for 97 per cent of Australian Government buildings across the nation that have signed up and will be participating in the first global Earth Hour,” Senator Wong said.

The High Court of Australia, National Library of Australia, Australian War Memorial, Parliament House, National Museum of Australia, National Science and Technology Centre and Royal Australian Mint are among the iconic buildings in our nation’s capital that will be switching off their lights.

The Maritime Museum of Australia in Sydney and Federal Courts of Australia around the nation have also committed to Earth Hour.

“Even with a function scheduled on the night, the National Gallery of Australia has signed up to switch off as many lights as possible, to conserve energy for the benefit of our environment,” Mr Garrett said.

“The Australian Government is throwing its full support behind the efforts of WWF in organising Earth Hour. It is vital that we raise awareness that we can all make a difference by saving energy in our homes.”

The Interdepartmental Committee will examine a range of options to increase government sustainability.

“It will consider all options including setting targets and powering Parliament House and electorate offices with renewable and clean energy,” Senator Wong said.

“Importantly, we will investigate using the Government fleet to drive the market for low emission cars, Senator Wong said.

“Minimum 5 star ratings for government office buildings and leases will be on the table, with the most efficient and cost effective appliances used for Commonwealth operations,” Mr Garrett said.

“In parallel with the Committee’s work, the Australian National Audit Office is undertaking a performance audit across Government agencies to assess and report on the progress being made in achieving better practice in green office procurement and sustainable office management; completion anticipated in early 2009,” Minister Garrett said.

Senator Wong and Mr Garrett urged all Australians to participate in Earth Hour.

Participants should register online at www.earthhour.org then switch off all unnecessary lights and unplug unnecessary appliances, from 8pm until 9pm.

Departments and Agencies committed to Earth Hour to date

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- Administrative Appeals Tribunal
 - ARPANSA
 - Attorney-General’s Department
 - Australia Council for the Arts
 - Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)
 - Australian Antarctic Division
 - Australian Broadcasting Corporation
 - Australian Bureau of Statistics
 - Australian Business Arts Foundation
 - Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
 - Australian Commission for Law Enforcement and Integrity
 - Australian Communications and Media Authority

- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
- Australian Crime Commission
- Australian Customs Service
- Australian Federal Police
- Australian Film Commission
- Australian Film, Television and Radio School
- Australian Fisheries Management Authority
- Australian Government Solicitor
- Australian Hearing
- Australian Industrial Registry
- Australian Institute of Criminology
- Australian Institute of Family Studies
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
- Australian Institute of Marine Science
- Australian Law Reform Commission
- Australian National Audit Office
- Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)
- Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
- Australian Public Service Commission
- Australian Securities and Investments Commission
- Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO)
- Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority
- Australian Sports Commission
- Australian Taxation Office
- Australian Trade Commission (Austrade)
- Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
- Australian War Memorial
- Bureau of Meteorology
- Centrelink
- Child Support Agency
- Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA)
- Comcare
- Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions
- Commonwealth Grants Commission
- Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)

- ComSuper
- CRS Australia
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
- Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
- Department of Climate Change
- Department of Defence
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
- Department of Families, Housing, Community Service and Indigenous Affairs
- Department of Finance and Deregulation
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Department of Health and Ageing
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Immigration and Citizenship
- Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
- Department of Parliamentary Services
- Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism
- Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Department of the Treasury
- Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Dept of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development & Local Government
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace
- Family Court of Australia
- Federal Courts of Australia (aka Law Courts Ltd)
- Film Australia
- Film Finance Corporation Australia Ltd
- Geoscience Australia
- Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
- High Court of Australia
- Insolvency and Trustee Services Australia
- IP Australia
- Jervis Bay Territory Administration
- Land & Water Australia
- Medicare Australia
- Migration Review Tribunal-Refugee Review Tribunal

- National Archives of Australia
- National Capital Authority
- National Competition Council
- National Gallery of Australia
- National Library of Australia
- National Maritime Museum of Australia
- National Museum of Australia
- National Native Title Tribunal
- National Science and Technology Centre (Questacon)
- National Water Commission
- Office of National Assessments
- Office of Parliamentary Counsel
- Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman
- Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General
- Private Health Insurance Ombudsman
- Productivity Commission
- Professional Services Review Scheme
- Royal Australia Mint
- Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
- Social Security Appeals Tribunal
- Special Broadcasting Service
- Superannuation Complaints Tribunal
- Supervising Scientist Division
- Takeovers Panel
- The Director of National Parks
- Therapeutic Goods Administration
- Tourism Australia