

PRESS RELEASE

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The New Energy Paradigm- Better Energy. Better Business.

Energy users from across Australia have gathered today at Crown Melbourne for the annual Energy Users Association of Australia (EUAA) national conference, New Energy Paradigm- Better Energy. Better Business. 'We're delighted to give Australia's large energy users the opportunity to hear direct from our industry's key influencers,' said Brian Green, EUAA Chair. 'During the next two days, delegates will be hear presentations that focus on the pertinent matters affecting and likely to affect large energy end-users.' Opening the conference, Mr Green noted the somewhat lacking energy policy faced by users. 'Energy policy has been a demonstrable failure,' said Mr Green, 'one that has led to the exodus of industry and manufacturing and vastly increased energy costs for both our members and the average person in the street.'

The conference's first keynote address was delivered by the Hon Greg Hunt, Federal Minister for the Environment, with a declaration that 'Australia is open for business.' Minister Hunt reiterated the government's commitment to the Renewable Energy Target and RET Review, stating 'there's broad recognition that the current scheme is out of balance and needs fixing.' The EUAA has participated in the review, meeting with the Minister's Taskforce to ensure the views of large energy users are considered by the Review.

Minister Hunt was joined by the Hon Russell Northe, Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources, who launched Victoria's Energy Statement. 'The energy sector is undergoing rapid change with falling demand, greater uptake of renewable energy and the rapid rise of rooftop solar,' said Minister North. 'We need a strong plan for the future to make sure Victoria is ready to meet the challenges that lie ahead and to take full advantage of the opportunities. This plan sets out how we will deliver a more efficient energy system that is better regulated, with empowered consumers reaping the full benefits of a more competitive market.'

The theme of Day One- The Political and Regulatory Landscape- continued with presentations from Michelle Groves from AER and Neville Henderson from AEMC. Rod Sims from ACCC delivered an emphatic presentation on the repeal of the carbon tax with the key message for all energy users that all cost savings should be passed on to consumers, basically 'what went on with the carbon tax must come off.'

Mr Sims also addressed the issue of the foreshadowed privatisation of generation and network assets in NSW and Queensland. The overriding concern of the ACCC will be on ensuring competitive structure for any breakup or sale of these assets. 'The EUAA will be watching the state government's intentions carefully to ensure such competitive structure is also about delivering affordable electricity,' said Mr Green. 'Any attempt at fattening up the assets prior to sale will be opposed. Network resets in these states are taking place right now- approving high expenditure programs for these networks will be strenuously opposed by all consumer and user groups.' said Mr Green.

New Energy Paradigm- Better Energy. Better Business continues tomorrow. Opening Day Two of proceedings is the Hon Gary Gray, Federal Shadow Minister for Energy, and the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio, Victorian Shadow Minister for Energy. The full program is available at www.euaaevents.com.au

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