

Thursday, 9 December 2010

### SOUTH AUSTRALIA CONTINUES TO LEAD ON CLIMATE CHANGE

South Australia's role as a leader among States and Regions committed to taking action on climate change has been further enhanced after Premier Mike Rann co-chaired an international conference in the Mexican city of Cancun which set ambitious new targets and reforms.

The Federated States and Regions Alliance which represents about 15 percent of the world's GDP and includes more than sixty States and Regions from the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania also reported back on progress made since last year's conference in Copenhagen.

"For example, last year I proposed that we commit to plant one billion new trees by 2015 and at this week's meeting a number of jurisdictions came back with publicly stated pledges which already total more than 250 million extra trees," Premier Rann says.

"So we are well advanced on delivering on an ambitious commitment which some thought was unachievable when I first raised it last year.

"This year specific, new commitments are being made to take practical action in four areas – encouraging further growth of renewable energy; promoting energy efficiency; transitioning to more sustainable transport; and decreasing energy consumption."

Mr Rann says South Australia will be responding with a suite of new initiatives addressing these areas including:

- Amending the Pastoral Act to open up the 400,000 square kilometres of Crown Land subject to pastoral lease to provide a fast-tracked, streamlined and more certain access regime for solar and wind farms;
- Providing \$1 million worth of grants to kick start the creation of community-owned and operated solar farms. The funds will be distributed after an Expression of Interest process to be run early in 2011; and
- Supporting further research and development in solar energy through a grant of \$100,000 for the development of an affordable automatic solar tracking system. The funds are being provided to a joint venture by two local companies, Hydragate and the Solar Shop Australia.

The Premier says South Australia will also be committing to new initiatives to promote energy efficiency.

"Today a discussion paper is being released for consultation proposing the mandating of "cool roofs" for all new and refurbished commercial buildings with flat roofs.

“It is expected that energy demand in commercial buildings can be reduced by using lighter coloured paints or more sophisticated coating systems to reflect the sun’s energy and reduce heat transfer into these buildings.

The Premier also committed the Government to a package of measures to improve energy efficiency standards for air-conditioners.

“South Australia already has the toughest standards in Australia and we will be looking to take the rest of Australia with us in achieving a further 10% improvement in minimum standards from 2014.

“Next year ETSA will undertake a pilot project of smart technology in some 5000 homes and businesses.

Mr Rann says one important area identified by the Alliance for action is transitioning to more sustainable transport and he committed the Government to leading by example by setting a new target to reduce emissions in the State Fleet by 10% by 2014-15 over the 2009-10 level.

This will be achieved by:

- Replacing more than 1,000 six cylinder cars with four cylinder cars;
- Purchasing more petrol-electric hybrid vehicles; and
- Increased use of diesel in light commercial vehicles.

He also announced that along with Adelaide City Council, the Government will be installing Adelaide’s first public “smart” electric vehicle recharging station at the Adelaide Central Market.

“These are the first actions in the development of our low emission vehicle strategy. We have started consulting with industry and expect to release the strategy in the first half of 2011.

The meeting in Cancun has focussed on the practical actions that regional governments are best placed to implement and South Australia is an early mover in many of these areas.

“Our actions complement the big picture initiatives we have taken such as payroll tax rebates for wind and solar farms; a purpose designed regulatory system for geothermal drilling; and having Australia’s best land use planning system for wind investors.

“This has resulted in 51% of the national investment in wind power gravitating to South Australia and 90% of planned geothermal investment.

“Through the initiatives of this Government, South Australia is recognised as a leader on the world stage in tackling the effects of climate change.”