



MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Malcolm Turnbull MP

Australian Minister for the Environment and Water Resources

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World first! Australia slashes greenhouse gases from inefficient lighting

In a world first move, the Australian Government is taking action to phase out inefficient light bulbs.

The step, announced today by Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull MP, should reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by 4 million tonnes by 2012.

The reduction in emissions will increase as the phase out progresses and the annual average reduction between 2008-2012 is estimated at around 800,000 tonnes.

However, by 2015 the annual cut in emissions will have soared to an estimated 4 million tonnes per annum.

Household lighting costs can be reduced by up to 66 per cent.

"The most effective and immediate way we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions is by using energy more efficiently," Mr Turnbull said.

"Electric lighting is a vital part of our lives; globally it generates emissions equal to 70 per cent of those from all the world's passenger vehicles."

"But it is still very inefficient. We have been using incandescent light bulbs for 125 years and up to 90 per cent of the energy each light bulb uses is wasted, mainly as heat."

"A normal light bulb is too hot to hold – that heat is wasted and globally represents millions of tonnes of CO₂ that needn't have been emitted into the atmosphere if we had used more efficient forms of lighting."

"These more efficient lights, such as the compact fluorescent light bulb, use around 20 per cent of the electricity to produce the same amount of light."

"A compact fluorescent light bulb can last between 4 and 10 times longer than the average incandescent light bulb, which can lead to major savings in household energy costs."

"While they may be more expensive to buy up front, they can pay for themselves in lower power bills within a year."

In Australia, lighting currently represents around 12 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions from households, and around 25 per cent of emissions from the commercial sector.

Working with its state and territory counterparts, the Australian Government will gradually phase out all inefficient light bulbs and is aiming for full enforcement of new lighting standards legislation by 2009 to 2010. Special needs areas, such as medical lighting and oven lights, will be taken into consideration.

The Government will also work with the world's largest manufacturers of light bulbs, including China, to broaden the benefits beyond Australia.

“The International Energy Agency has estimated that if all countries made the global switch to compact fluorescent lights that by 2030, annually it would save energy equivalent to more than 5 years of Australia's current electricity consumption,” Mr Turnbull said.

“The climate change challenge is a global one. I encourage other countries to follow Australia's lead and make the switch to more energy efficient products like compact fluorescent light bulbs.”

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