

AFL goes carbon neutral



ACF Executive Director Don Henry, AFL CEO Andrew Demetriou and Collingwood Coach Mick Malthouse at the launch of AFL Green in Melbourne. Josh Meadows, Australian Conservation Foundation

The Australian Football League's 'AFL Green' program will neutralise an estimated 120 000 tonnes of greenhouse emissions generated from AFL headquarters, the pre-season competition, the main Premiership Season and Finals Series matches over the next three years. Now individual AFL clubs are beginning to commit to the program.

Launching the program in Melbourne alongside Origin Energy's Karen Moses and The Australian Conservation Foundation's Don Henry, the AFL's Chief

Executive Officer, Andrew Demetriou, said by 2009 the AFL will be 'carbon neutral' by offsetting its greenhouse emissions through investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency efforts. He said the offsets would be equal to taking 25 000 cars off the road or planting 500 000 trees.

Don Henry acknowledged the initiative, saying, 'Climate change is real, it's here and it demands serious action from governments, business and the community. Well done to the AFL for choosing to reduce greenhouse pollution with the

support of Origin Energy.'

Mr Demetriou said, 'The AFL will be the first sporting league in Australia to reduce its carbon footprint to zero. By taking this step the AFL will do their part to help the environment.'

'Collingwood is the first AFL club to commit to AFL Green and we applaud Collingwood and encourage other clubs to come on board. The football public will soon be able to support their club and help the environment at the same time, by choosing to support AFL Green.'

'I encourage state, suburban and country leagues to follow our lead and help

'The AFL will be the first sporting league in Australia to reduce its carbon footprint to zero.'

the future of our environment with green energy initiatives. Everyone wins,' Mr Demetriou said.

Karen Moses, Chief Operating Officer of Origin Energy, which will be the AFL's green energy provider, said her company was delighted to be a partner. 'We congratulate the AFL for being the leader in the sporting industry to introduce measures to make its operations carbon neutral. We believe this program is extremely innovative because it is fully integrated across the organisation.'

Emission reducing technology pays off

PLASCON™ technology, jointly developed in Australia by CSIRO and SRL Plasma Ltd to convert hazardous gases and liquids to harmless substances, is now reducing potent greenhouse emissions around the world and paying back handsomely.

Research for the technology began in the late 1980s in CSIRO's Division of Manufacturing Technology in Melbourne. At its height, four Divisions were involved, including a team at Applied Physics (now Industrial Physics) who adapted a plasma arc process (like that used in arc welding)



The PLASCON™ machine. CSIRO

to destroy ozone-depleting substances such as halons (once used in fire extinguishers)

and CFCs (the banned refrigerants).

CSIRO sold its share in PLASCON™ last year to DoloMatrix International Ltd. There are now ten PLASCON™ units around the world, destroying the potent greenhouse gas trifluoromethane and organic chemicals such as PCBs, as well as halons and CFCs.

A PLASCON™ plant in Mexico is quite a little earner because developed countries pay carbon credits for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions – such as destroying trifluoromethane, which has a global warming potential 11 700 times that of CO₂.

At the going rate of over \$20 per tonne of CO₂, the rate per tonne of trifluoromethane is well over \$200 000, which exceeds the cost of destruction by more than a factor of 20. Add that to the fact that PLASCON™ destroys around a tonne per day, and the economics are obvious.