

Clean energy gaining ground

Renewable energy supplied a record 13.14 per cent of Australia's electricity in 2012, according to new figures released by the Clean Energy Council (CEC).



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CEC Chief Executive, David Green, said the 2012 Clean Energy Australia Report showed that energy efficiency and renewable energy such as wind, solar and bioenergy were starting to make a major difference to the way we produce and consume electricity.

‘The clean energy industry contributed \$4.2 billion in investment and approximately 24 300 jobs to the Australian economy in 2012,’ Mr Green said.

‘The cost of fossil fuels such as gas has been going up, while clean energy has been getting cheaper – fast.

‘Recently the level of power generation from coal has been declining, while Australia’s 20 per cent Renewable Energy Target has been driving the increased use of technologies such as wind, solar, hydro and bioenergy. Solid rainfall in key hydro catchments in the first half of 2012 was also a factor.

‘Earlier this year, the millionth solar power system was installed [in Australia], while last year was a record one for Australia’s wind power businesses, with the country’s 62 wind farms powering the equivalent of more than one million homes for the first time. These milestones clearly show the progress towards cleaner sources of power.

‘Power prices are clearly front and centre in the minds of consumers, demonstrated by the 90 per cent of people who took some kind of action to reduce their bills last year, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

‘As many people have come to realise, the cheapest – and the cleanest – energy is the energy you don’t use.

‘Businesses and households are increasingly turning to energy smart appliances, and more than 800 000 solar hot water systems have now been installed as well,’ he said.

The Clean Energy Australia Report 2012 is the first industry report that looks at renewable energy generation and energy efficiency across both the National Electricity Market and the Western Australian electricity grid over the last calendar year. It includes industry statistics on generation, investment, jobs, power prices, and individual clean energy technologies.

Clean Energy Council Chair and AGL Chief Executive Michael Fraser said the clean energy industry was showing significant progress towards providing at least 20 per cent of Australia’s electricity from renewable sources by 2020.

‘The review of the Renewable Energy Target last year reinforced the bipartisan commitment to the policy by all major parties, and in its current form it is estimated that it will generate another \$18.7 billion in investment,’ Mr Fraser said.

‘We recognise that there are many challenges we will need to meet in the decades to come. But this is a rapidly maturing industry filled with innovative thinkers who are constantly looking for ways to overcome these challenges and do things better.’

Source: CEC

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