

WOOLWORTHS LIMITED

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PRESS RELEASE

ACT support encourages Woolworths to invest in renewable energy generation

MEDIA CALL

What: Launch of Woolworths program to install solar panels at ACT petrol stations
Who: Andrew Hall, Woolworths Dir. of Corporate and Public Affairs
Date: 9.45am Thursday 3 December 2009
Where: Caltex/Woolworths, 94 – 96 Sheppard St, off Monaro Highway, Hume ACT

Support from the ACT Government has led Australia's leading retailer, Woolworths Limited, to choose Canberra as its first location nationwide for the installation of renewable energy generation technology.

Woolworths will be the first major retail company in Australia to generate on-site renewable energy.

Solar panels will be installed on the canopy of Woolworths petrol stations in Belconnen and Hume. Approximately 15 percent of each site's energy needs could be generated through the panels, reducing dependence on coal-based electricity.

Woolworths Limited Director of Corporate and Public Affairs, Andrew Hall, said a total 60 kW of solar power generation capacity will be installed at the two stations.

"The solar panels to be installed at Woolworths petrol stations in the ACT will potentially generate enough energy to operate both the lighting for the store and the bowsers," Mr Hall said.

Mr Hall said the ACT Government was to be congratulated for being the only Australian state or territory to put in place gross feed-in tariffs with business incentives, a payments structure for renewable electricity generators which makes the installation of the solar panels commercially viable.

"Woolworths is committed to significantly reducing its carbon emissions and so we welcome the ACT's decision to back commercially viable on-site renewable energy generation. This is the type of policy framework which other States could introduce to drive the necessary incentives for business to have commercial-scale installation.

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“If more companies are encouraged to invest in renewable technology, the more the costs of this technology will fall. But at the moment costs are prohibitively high and incentives like the ACT gross feed-in-tariff are needed to give renewable energy generation a kick start and reduce our dependence on coal generated electricity.

“If all States followed the ACT’s lead and introduced gross feed-in tariffs that benefited businesses Woolworths would certainly look at rolling out this exciting new technology to locations nationwide, potentially pumping significant amounts of clean electricity back into the grid,” said Mr Hall.

“Retailers often have expansive roof spaces that should be perfect for capturing the sun’s rays, a clean resource Australia has in abundance.”

Woolworths’ investment in renewable technology is part of the company’s commitment to reduce its carbon footprint on projected growth by 40 percent by 2015 maintaining 2006 levels. Already, Woolworths has introduced a new store design which has seen CO₂ emissions reduced by more than 25 percent per square metre compared to older stores. In addition, the company’s new truck fleet is fitted with Euro 5 series low-emission engines which rates among the cleanest in the world.

- Ends -

CONTACT DETAILS: Woolworths Limited Press Office (02) 8885 1033 or 0429 566 196.

NOTES

Woolworths will install two sets of solar panels at Woolworths petrol outlets in the ACT during the New Year.

The two 30kW capacity solar panels could generate as much as 42,000kWh of renewable energy a year between the service stations, allowing each to extract approximately 15 percent less electricity from the grid which is primarily supplied from fossil fuel intensive energy sources.

The generation of renewable and low carbon electricity can be done through harnessing solar energy through photovoltaic technology. However, the expense of current technologies has made investment not commercially viable on a wide scale.

Current government grant and rebate programs are primarily targeted at the residential sector and there had been little or no support anywhere in Australia for on-grid commercial projects until the introduction of the ACT’s unique gross feed in tariff.

Feed in tariffs are a payment structure that guarantee generators of electricity from renewable sources a fixed rate for the energy they produce which is above market rates and provides an incentive to invest in a technology which, commercially, is only marginally viable.

Most feed in tariffs introduced by state governments have been net feed-in tariffs which only provide incentives to electricity fed back into the grid. Gross feed in tariffs, however, provide an incentive for the total amount of clean energy generated which encourages companies to invest in low carbon energy generation technology and ultimately should bring the prices of this technology down.

The ACT is the only state or territory to widely enable the use of gross feed-in tariffs by businesses.