

**ClimateWorks Australia Launch
Monday 21 September 2009**

Prof John Thwaites, Chairman, ClimateWorks Australia

I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land.

I would also like to particularly thank the Acting Prime Minister the Honourable Julia Gillard for agreeing to come today and officially launch ClimateWorks Australia. And thank you to our other distinguished guests and all of you for coming this morning to what is a very proud day for us.

Most Australians, except those with their heads in the sand, understand that climate change poses an unprecedented threat to our communities, our country, and our planet. Australia is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, and yet we have the highest per-capita emissions in the developed world.

However, we don't want to be like Hanrahan in John O'Brien's famous poem and simply say "We'll all be rooned". That is likely to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. More and more we are realising there are opportunities to get moving on practical solutions that will deliver a low carbon society and create new jobs and a sustainable and prosperous future.

ClimateWorks Australia will play a key role in brokering these solutions for important climate initiatives. Philanthropy has a significant role to play as an

honest broker, coming from a position unaligned with commercial or political interest groups.

Our mission is to help develop projects that will deliver substantial and lasting reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, in the fastest, most cost-effective way. We will act as **the enabler** – bringing together people, groups and companies to achieve emissions reductions. We don't intend to 'own' or host all projects ourselves, but to identify where the emissions reductions can be best done and help business and the community make them happen. Collaboration is the key.

In simple terms, we aim to be into the "how" of climate change action, not the "why" and the "what".

ClimateWorks Australia was created by The Myer Foundation, one of Australia's most respected philanthropic institutions and the Monash Sustainability Institute – which is part of one of Australia's largest and leading universities.

ClimateWorks is therefore a fusion of philanthropy with academia. This is a very powerful combination, which offers huge opportunities to link leading figures in Australia's business and philanthropic communities with the education, cutting edge research and reach of the university's networks.

We are very fortunate to have the support of the Myer Foundation, which has boldly set a new direction for philanthropy in Australia by tackling climate change in a strategic and cohesive way.

We have also deliberately built links with government to ensure that our work can influence the national policy framework, so that the benefits are enduring and sustainable.

Our response to climate change cannot afford to be parochial. Which is why we're very pleased to be working with the ClimateWorks Foundation in the United States. That organisation comprises a ground-breaking partnership between six major US philanthropic organisations. We're honoured to have Chris Stori from the ClimateWorks Foundation in the US with us this morning and he'll talk to us about their work shortly.

We hope that locally, with the leadership of the Myer Foundation, we will soon see philanthropists working together in a similar way here with ClimateWorks Australia. To help be a springboard for this group effort, we have created the *ClimateWorks Action Fund*, which will allow funders to choose specific, targeted projects through which they can channel their support for climate change mitigation and education projects. I'm very pleased to announce today that the Myer Foundation and Monash University are giving a seed contribution to this fund of \$400,000.

So what sort of projects can you expect to see from the fund? Everything from the macro level – including policy and technical interventions – through to the micro – such as community focussed projects that empower all Australians to help the country move towards low carbon prosperity and avoid dangerous climate change. There’s a lot of low-hanging fruit. We have a huge opportunity to make a difference, and an enormous amount to do.

Today, we’re pleased to announce the first two new projects the *ClimateWorks Action Fund* will support. The first is the over-arching **Low Carbon Growth Plan for Australia**. The ClimateWorks Foundation has already had success developing Low Carbon Growth Plans in other countries including Mexico and China.

The plan will map out a path by which Australia can grow while significantly reducing its greenhouse emissions in the lowest cost way. It will be based on an updated greenhouse abatement cost curve for the Australian economy, including detailed bottom-up analysis of key industries. What this means is we will calculate where the largest emissions can be reduced for the least cost, and what steps are required to reduce emissions from different sectors.

We will then add a practical overlay to the economic analysis, to assess what other barriers or benefits exist in each of the abatement options, and make recommendations on the best order to implement them in the short, medium and long-term.

The plan will assume that the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme will be a cornerstone of Australia's way to a low carbon economy, but there are a whole portfolio of other complementary levers which can be tailored to specific abatement opportunities, for example in energy efficiency, transport and agriculture.

We will be working closely with the Australian Government through the Department of Climate Change on the Low Carbon Growth Path Plan. The Department has agreed to second staff to the project which will increase the expertise we have available and also ensure the government is fully aware of our proposals.

We will seek to engage industry sectors, individual businesses and experts in carbon abatement in different industries in the preparation of the plan. In order to complete this major piece of work we are pleased to have the support of international management consultants, McKinsey & Company, who have developed expertise in low carbon growth plans around the world.

So that's our big macro-level project, that will guide much of our future work. In parallel, we're also launching today a very different, and very grass-roots project, called ClimateWatch. ClimateWatch is really a community science project, which asks each of us to collect data on the tangible impacts of climate change on the flora and fauna in front of our eyes. Professor Mark Burgman from Earthwatch will give us more detail about this very exciting project shortly.

As you can see our scope is broad, yet practical. We'll be identifying a further suite of projects for the ClimateWorks Action Fund in the coming year. We will seek out projects that:

- accelerate structural or behavioural change
- demonstrate or support new technologies or behaviours; or
- exhibit better policy solutions.

ClimateWorks Australia is about making real that which we know will reduce carbon emissions. We won't rest at the point of making or endorsing recommendations, we'll work to see them through. We'll find the right people and work with them to implement the solutions. Whether they be businesses who could demonstrate the viability of a project; or government, who may need to amend policy, we will work behind the scenes to make things happen. We are independent and non-profit, so we can help broker the coordination that is so often needed to get things done.

We know that there are many practical ways to reduce emissions that are already being successfully deployed elsewhere in the world and by leaders in our own community. We're excited about helping more of these solutions take hold in Australia. Global investment in clean energy has grown five-fold since 2004, with the bulk of this driven by regulatory incentives in the EU and US. To achieve this kind of growth requires as many hands on deck as possible, so we look forward to rolling up our sleeves and working together with all of you to achieve low carbon prosperity for our current and future generations.