

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### THE MYER FOUNDATION AND MONASH UNIVERSITY JOIN FORCES TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

ClimateWorks Australia, launched today by Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard, heralds a new cohesive approach to tackling climate change, led by the philanthropic sector.

ClimateWorks Australia is a unique partnership between The Myer Foundation and Monash University. It will bring together philanthropic, government, business, community, research and education stakeholders to support projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Professor John Thwaites, ClimateWorks Australia Chairman, said the organisation would play a pivotal role in brokering solutions for the most important national climate initiatives and connecting breakthrough research with practical outcomes.

Established by a \$4.6m grant from The Myer Foundation, ClimateWorks Australia embodies a new strategic direction for philanthropy in this country.

"Globally, philanthropic groups recognise the enormous risks climate change poses to communities worldwide. Reducing emissions is now considered just as vital to a sustainable community as addressing social disadvantage and supporting health, education and the arts," said David Shelmerdine of The Myer Foundation.

Professor Thwaites said that philanthropy is well placed to show leadership on climate change because it is trusted, credible and independent.

ClimateWorks Australia today announced the establishment of the *Climate Works Action Fund*, which will foster philanthropic partnerships for climate-related projects. Monash University and The Myer Foundation have provided initial seed funding of \$400,000 for the *Climate Works Action Fund*.

"Through the *ClimateWorks Action Fund*, we will link key funders to projects delivering major behavioural and structural change and make lasting impacts on reducing emissions," said Professor Thwaites.

The first ClimateWorks Action Fund project is the *Low Carbon Growth Plan for Australia*, which will set out a roadmap for Australia to grow while substantially reducing its carbon emissions.

"The *Low Carbon Growth Plan* will identify sectors where there are opportunities for new jobs and emissions reductions, based on detailed economic and policy analysis. It will provide a national tool to prioritise where to direct our efforts in the urgent challenge of tackling climate change," said Professor Thwaites.

The Australian Government is enthusiastic about this project and, through the Department of Climate Change, intends to provide practical support for its key activities and modelling.

"The *Low Carbon Growth Plan* will be a valuable tool for promoting constructive engagement by business and other organisations, such as local government," said Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

The *Low Carbon Growth Plan* will be supported by international management consultants, McKinsey & Company, who have developed world-wide expertise in this analysis. It will also be supported by the US-based ClimateWorks Foundation, which coordinates an international philanthropic network advising government and business leaders on how to take action to address climate change. The ClimateWorks Foundation has developed similar plans for several countries including Mexico, Indonesia and China.

ClimateWorks Australia is also supporting the *ClimateWatch* project, an initiative of Earthwatch Australia. *ClimateWatch* will encourage the Australian community to observe and record the changes occurring in their own local environments – for example when leaves start to fall, the budding of flowers or the appearance of migratory birds – giving every Australian the chance to help scientists understand the effects of climate change on Australia's biodiversity.

"In the coming year, ClimateWorks Australia will identify a range of additional projects for support. We will seek to accelerate structural or behavioural change, contribute to the development of new technologies or behaviours, or demonstrate better policy options," said Professor Thwaites.

"We're excited about identifying practical ways to reduce emissions. We will find the best people to implement them, and work with business, government and community groups to get things done."

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**The Myer Foundation:** Myer Family Philanthropy comprises the Sidney Myer Fund and The Myer Foundation. Its mission is to build a 'fair, just, creative, sustainable and caring society through initiatives that promote positive change in Australia, and in relation to Australia's regional setting'. Support for ClimateWorks Australia forms part of the 2009 Commemorative Grants Program, celebrating 75 years of 50 years respectively of the Sidney Myer Fund and The Myer Foundation.

**Monash Sustainability Institute:** The Monash Sustainability Institute (MSI) delivers solutions to key sustainability challenges through research, education and action. For government, business and community organisations, MSI is a gateway to the extensive and varied expertise in sustainability research and practice across Monash's faculties and research institutes. MSI brings together sustainability researchers and practitioners from across Monash and beyond to work together to promote sustainable practice by individuals, organisations and communities. MSI is a multi-disciplinary, cross-faculty institute that coordinates, strategically guides and represents the wealth of sustainability expertise of Monash's faculties and research centres.

**ClimateWorks Foundation:** The ClimateWorks Foundation, based in San Francisco, is an international network of funders, technical experts, and policy advocates with a goal to prevent the negative impacts of climate change. The network's members, located in over a dozen countries on four continents, take advantage of each other's expertise, connections and political relationships to accelerate the deployment of established policy solutions that dramatically reduce carbon emissions.

The conceptual framework for ClimateWorks emerged from 2007 research supported by six foundations published "*Design to Win: Philanthropy's Role in the Fight Against Global Warming*." The research sought the input of more than 150 of the world's leading experts on climate change to produce a short list of the top-priority strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. *Design to Win* spurred several foundations and individuals to establish the ClimateWorks Foundation to fund the development of climate change policies.