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Prime Minister's Task Group on Energy Efficiency - Reactions\_

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**8 October 2010** - Following are highlights of reactions to the Report b the Prime Minister's Task Group on Energy Efficiency

**The Greens:**

The Gillard government should move ahead immediately with energy efficiency policies which cut household and business costs while reducing our impact on the climate.

The recommendations appear to be largely in line with Greens policies, though not as ambitious. They include a national energy efficiency target scheme, removal of the Fringe Benefits Tax Concession which rewards driving longer distances and a form of efficiency standard for light vehicles.

"Energy efficiency is such a no-brainer that it is baffling that successive governments have allowed Australia to fall so far behind the world. It's time to catch up," Australian Greens Deputy Leader, Senator Christine Milne, said.

"I will be encouraging Minister Combet to act on the recommendations of this report as fast as possible whilst continuing progress towards a carbon price.

"In fact, getting started with efficiency measures will show the community how much we can all save on our energy bills with a bit of effort and smooth the path to a carbon price.

"The Greens have proposed an energy efficiency target scheme to run in parallel to the renewable energy target scheme as an efficient and effective way to help householders and businesses find ways to save on their energy bills and we're pleased to see a similar recommendation in this report.

"However, it would be a huge missed opportunity if that target were set at such a weak level that our energy demand kept rising. With a little ambition, we can actually turn around Australia's sky-rocketing energy demand and start to use less energy to do more."

**The Green Building Council of Australia**

Chief Executive of the GBCA, Romilly Madew: "We are delighted to see the report identify some of the opportunities within the built environment -although I emphasise that there are many more opportunities to be embraced than those outlined in the report," Ms Madew said.

"Green building is one of the world's fastest growing industries and many buildings and communities can now produce their own energy through solar, photovoltaic, wind, cogeneration, trigeneration and biogas initiatives, among many other approaches," Ms Madew explains.

"Energy efficiency schemes and technologies are readily available now - they don't have to be expensive to implement, and they're not complicated to understand."

The GBCA was pleased with the current multi-partisan discussions about a price on carbon.

"Certainty in the market is important. Australian business, as well as the general public, should be part of the conversation so that they can fully understand the benefits, the value and the long-term significance to the economy, the environment, policy and productivity.

**The Australian Conservation Foundation**

The recommendations of the Prime Minister's taskforce on energy efficiency will help reduce electricity bills for Australian households and businesses and should be implemented immediately.

"This report on energy efficiency joins the chorus of voices in Australia calling for a price on pollution to help us make the switch to a cleaner economy," ACF executive director Don Henry said.

"A target to improve the energy efficiency of the Australian economy by 30 per cent by 2020 will help Australia catch up with countries like China, which has improved its efficiency by 20 per cent over the last five years.

"The recommendation for a national energy savings initiative to replace existing state schemes is welcome and should be swiftly put into practice.

"ACF urges the government to begin implementing these reforms now in parallel with the necessary introduction of a price on pollution."

**The Energy Efficiency Council**

"This report is a wake-up call for Australia. It shows that energy efficiency programs would strengthen the economy, cut energy bills and slash carbon emissions. This is a win-win-win," said Rob Murray-Leach, chief executive of the EEC and adviser to the Task Group.

Energy efficiency saves money simply because it uses less of a valuable resource. Modelling on just one measure, the National Energy Savings Initiative, found that it would save households up to \$296 a year. This means that Australia has a huge opportunity to cut its carbon emissions and save money.

ClimateWorks Australia estimates that improving Australia's energy efficiency would save homes and businesses \$5 billion a



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