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Deputy Prime Minister

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Speech

Launch of ClimateWorks Australia - Melbourne

To my Lord Mayor Cr Robert Doyle; my parliamentary colleagues Mark Dreyfus, Anna Burke and Bruce Billson; members of the Myer Foundation; Professor Ed Byrne; Bishop Phillip Huggins; my old colleague and friend, Professor John Thwaites; our guest Chris Stori, and friends of this exciting new venture.

Thank you and it's a great pleasure to be here today to launch the newest addition to Australia's effort against global warming.

Monash and the Myer Foundation deserve our congratulations and support for joining forces in this way.

And a number of people played a special role in making this happen.

David Shelmerdine from the Myer Foundation. And Vice-Chancellor Ed Byrne, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Edwina Cornish, Professor Dave Griggs and Professor John Thwaites from the Monash Sustainability Institute.

We should give them a big round of applause.

The story behind the establishment of this partnership is an important one.

A couple of years ago, the Myer Foundation began work to establish the case for philanthropic involvement in the climate change issue. It was a signature project to help mark the 75th anniversary of the Foundation's tremendous work, which has ranged across so many issues of importance for Australia and beyond.

What it found was a *trust gap*.

Sustainability is such a complex issue, involving so many contradictory experts, a huge volume of information and so many vested interests, that it is sometimes difficult for people to wade through it all and find the facts.

In short, the Myer Foundation quickly worked out that the missing link in the Australian response to climate change is the *honest broker*. Someone without something to gain.

And it decided that philanthropy combined with a trusted university was admirably placed to fill this gap. Altruism combined with scholarly disinterest and a jealously guarded academic reputation.

Hence this new venture.

It's a great partnership that is part of a global philanthropic effort now underway to implement large scale and strategic climate change solutions.

ClimateWorks Australia does something vital – it engages the whole community in considering the challenge of climate change. We will only create a greener economy and begin to meet the climate change challenge if there is a widespread movement for change.

Pricing carbon through the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) will engage many sectors in this issue and provide industry and communities with the motivation to take action.

That's why the Government is determined to get its emissions trading legislation through.

But while the CPRS is a major platform, it is not a stand alone solution.

That's where Climate Works Australia comes in. It has set its sights high, with the aim of developing a low carbon growth plan for Australia and being part of a worldwide effort to reduce annual global emissions by 30 gigatons by 2030.

The Government is enthusiastic about this project and through the Department of Climate Change we intend to provide practical support to the project's key activities and modeling. The result of this work will be a valuable tool for promoting constructive engagement by business and other organisations (such as local government).

What I particularly like about the ClimateWorks approach is that it recognises something absolutely crucial to the environmental movement: the mitigation of climate change should not lead to slower economic growth, or reduced living standards or fewer jobs.

If we do this in the right way we will create new economic opportunities for Australia. The decisions that individuals, businesses and communities make to address the challenges of climate change, for example, through investing in renewable energy, sustainable water technologies and innovative ways of designing buildings and products, will generate economic activity and create jobs.

The deniers and the opportunists have two weapons of choice: doubt and fear.

They will try to divide communities by telling them their jobs are threatened by the proponents of change. As if jobs won't be destroyed when the Great Barrier Reef shrinks further or if drought becomes a permanent condition in inland Australia

So here's my message: *sustainability equals more job opportunities for the Australian people.*

Employment and income are both projected to rise as carbon emissions decline. The Government's economic modelling, led by Treasury, found that achieving substantial emissions reductions through market based policy mechanisms is likely to have little impact on aggregate national employment, and that real wages will continue to grow strongly.

It will be a big task.

The CSIRO, the Climate Institute and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum have calculated that to meet its sustainability targets and goals, Australia will need to equip or re-skill millions of workers by 2025.

These jobs can be transformative – as in the specialist science and engineering fields. Or they can be as straightforward as making sure every one in every occupation knows how to cut their energy use.

The Rudd Government is making green jobs and green skills a major priority.

We've started in a direct way by providing training, job experience and a pathway to work for low- and un-skilled job seekers to insulate and retrofit homes with sustainable improvements. People like the Brotherhood of St Laurence were involved in designing this program, and I want to acknowledge their and others' great work.

Over time this approach will be expanded to cater for the needs of medium and high skill workers, driven by broader government policies.

Our \$6 billion energy efficiency investments are creating new jobs for electricians, insulation workers, plumbers, heating and air conditioning installers, carpenters, construction workers, roofing specialists, truck drivers, construction managers and more.

Our expanded Renewable Energy Target is projected to create thousands of extra jobs.

The Clean Energy Initiative will likewise create jobs in specialist fields like solar energy, carbon capture and storage, and emerging renewable energy technologies.

And by promoting efficiency across all industries, Australia will become more productive and more able to create new jobs.

To improve our knowledge about the type of skills and training that businesses will require to manage this transition, my Department will conduct the "Skills for a Sustainable Future" survey next month.

The Department of Education, Employment & Workplace Relations (DEEWR) will ask 1800 businesses in emissions intensive industry sectors to identify their current and future requirements for green skills in the context of climate change and

increasing global, national and local concerns about sustainability and environmental issues.

We need to know the extent to which these issues are affecting employment and recruitment right now and in the future, and specifically, what kinds of skills and training employees require in order to adapt to new, greener ways of working.

Employers' responses to this survey will improve our knowledge of how businesses are planning for a low carbon future. They will help Government to build the capacity of businesses to provide employees with the training they need to prosper in a low carbon economy.

ClimateWorks Australia can help business to make the changes that are necessary.

Importantly, CWA can build links through a major resource in tackling climate change – philanthropy – and it is uniquely placed to bring together philanthropists, industry, educationalists, community organisations and cutting edge university-based research.

The science of climate change should help inform key disciplines such as economics, engineering, architecture, agriculture and forestry - areas that are vital if Australia and the globe are going to be successful in meeting the climate change challenge.

CWA can play a positive role in ensuring that new graduates have the knowledge and skills necessary to create a sustainable economy into the future.

We've seen in other areas, like social welfare and education, how philanthropy can lead the way for major government decisions by trialing projects that work.

So we will be looking to ClimateWorks to take the lead. And for it to help Australia's climate science community build further links internationally.

As ClimateWorks Australia develops and demonstrates its effectiveness over time, the Government will welcome opportunities to examine potential further support for its activities.

The new ClimateWorks Action Fund also being announced today will set the ball rolling by giving support to important mitigation and education projects.

So, ladies and gentlemen, we're at the birth of a new organisation that is destined to have a big and positive impact on Australia and make a significant contribution to the worldwide effort to head off dangerous climate change.

And it's my happy duty to declare ClimateWorks Australia and its associated Fund, launched.

Thank you.

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