

2009 WINTER EMISSIONS DOWN BY FOUR PER CENT IN AUSTRALIA'S EASTERN STATES

- **WINTER EMISSIONS DOWN ACCROSS THE BOARD IN VIC, NSW, QLD AND SA**
- **ONE OF THE WARMEST WINTERS ON RECORD DRIVES DOWN EMISSIONS**

Greenhouse gas emissions from energy use fell by more than three million tonnes or 4 per cent across Australia's eastern states this winter compared with the previous winter, according to a new report released today by The Climate Group. This is the equivalent of taking almost 3 million cars off the road over winter.

Total emissions for the season were 74.69 million tonnes. Emissions were down across all states included in the report with South Australia recording the largest relative fall in winter emissions of more than 8 per cent compared with 2008.

The Climate Group's Greenhouse Indicator Winter Report tracks the main sources of greenhouse emissions (those produced by coal, natural gas and petroleum) in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia.

Emissions fell across all three major sources of energy in all four states: overall coal emissions were down 4.4 per cent, gas emissions were down 5.7 per cent and petroleum emissions dropped 2.7 per cent.

The drop in emissions was because of a fall in demand for both electricity and petroleum across the four states of 3.4 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively compared with winter 2008, rather than from significant changes in the way states generated their electricity. On average across the four states the overall share of electricity generation from coal, gas and renewables remained the same as in winter 2008, although there were some differences in individual states.

"The extraordinarily warm winter is likely to be the major contributing factor to the drop in greenhouse emissions," said Rupert Posner, Australia Director of The Climate Group.

This winter has been one of the warmest ever recorded in Australia with average temperatures at least one degree higher than the long-term average across all four states: Victoria was 1.0 degree

higher, New South Wales 1.48 degrees higher, Queensland 1.52 degrees higher and South Australia 1.76 higher than the long term average. The average maximum daily temperatures were also the highest ever recorded in Australia in each of the four states during winter. Greenhouse emissions traditionally peak in winter and summer due to increased heating and air conditioning use. A milder weather means people did not use their heaters as much.

“While this winter’s reductions in greenhouse emissions are good news there is an unfortunate irony as this is because of unseasonably warm winter. Reducing demand is an important step in cutting our greenhouse emissions but we also need to change the way we produce energy.

“The recently passed 20 per cent Renewable Energy Target does bring some good news in that we will start generate more of our power from renewable energy sources.

“Significantly slowed economic growth rates are also likely to have eased pressure on emissions growth,” said Posner.

“Higher temperatures have also been joined by the reduced rainfall we have seen for a number of years. These early trends should serve as a potent reminder of why we need to reduce greenhouse emissions in Australia as well as do everything possible to strengthen the chances of a meaningful international climate agreement in Copenhagen at the end of this year.”

For more information contact Luke Muir on 0433 059 905 or Rupert Posner on 03 9617 4329/0438 989 420.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

For a summary table, please go to Appendix 1 at the bottom of this document

Time scale

The winter report looks at emissions across the 13 week period from 29 May – 27 August inclusive, and compares them with the similar period in 2008.

About the Weekly Greenhouse Indicator

The Climate Group has tracked greenhouse emissions from energy use in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia on a weekly basis since the beginning of 2007.

The Greenhouse Indicator provides accurate and real time information on greenhouse gases produced each week from energy use. It includes the major sources of greenhouse emissions that can be tracked accurately each week and is a unique tool designed to bring greater understanding to the issue of climate change and to help track greenhouse gas emissions in selected Australian states. It was developed with advice from some of Australia’s best experts in the field.

For more details and an explanation of the Indicator’s methodology visit www.theclimategroup.org/indicator

About The Climate Group

The Climate Group (www.theclimategroup.org) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that works internationally with government and business leaders to advance climate change solutions and accelerate a low carbon economy. The Climate Group was founded in 2004 and has offices in the UK, USA, China, India and Australia. We get business and government leaders talking – CEOs talking to heads of state, senior VPs to policymakers. And we concentrate on building the economic case for taking action against climate change. Because we believe that's the best way to make change happen.

We broker partnerships and harness investment in low-carbon technologies. Because we can only tackle the climate issue if business, government and civil society work together.

We share practical ideas so others can be inspired and learn from them. We run leadership groups and webinars on issues like carbon management and energy efficiency. We focus on 'game changing' initiatives, because they're the ones that will make the biggest difference in the least amount of time.

We act independently with no political agenda or any vested interest. And our plans are flexible, because the climate change challenge is evolving every day.

