



## **PRIME MINISTER**

138/92

### **STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP**

#### **RELEASE OF NATIONAL ESD AND GREENHOUSE STRATEGIES**

The Council of Australian Government has endorsed the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) and the National Greenhouse Response Strategy. The Council also agreed to the release of the Compendium of ESD Recommendations as a record of how the Strategies agreed by Heads of Government, together with examples of present policies and programs, relate to each of the recommendations arising from the ESD process.

Endorsement of the Strategies represented an important step forward and demonstrated that Australia was serious about seeking to achieve ecologically sustainable development. This was not, however, the end of the process. The Commonwealth would continue to discuss a range of ESD issues with the States and Territories and also with key interest groups. The Government would also take further initiatives within the Commonwealth's own areas of jurisdiction.

The achievement of a broad national commitment to ESD was a tribute to the contributions that many individuals and organisations had made to the ESD process. Overall, governments have accepted more than 80% of the original recommendations in some form. Less than 4% had not been accepted, with the balance still under consideration.

The National Strategy for ESD will play a crucial role in setting the scene for the broad changes in direction and approach by governments. It constitutes a substantial agenda for change and reform in the longer term. Such changes will present new opportunities in the future, in areas as diverse as ecotourism, agriculture and cleaner manufacturing processes.

Major features of the ESD Strategy include initiatives to:

- endorse the ESD goal, objectives and principles and review of relevant agencies to incorporate these in charters and corporate plans;

- . **enhance the role of integrated and total catchment management in policies and programs;**
- . **adopt a fisheries ecosystem management approach;**
- . **promote adoption of best practice environmental management by industry and whole-life-cycle methodologies by industry, and prepare a strategy for the environmental management industry;**
- . **ensure mine sites are rehabilitated to sound environmental and safety standards;**
- . **incorporate ESD principles in tourism strategies;**
- . **establish criteria for access and use of protected areas consistent with ESD principles and objectives;**
- . **extend the National Residues Survey to cover wildlife and the wider environment;**
- . **finalise a national biological diversity strategy for consideration by Heads of Government;**
- . **develop a national approach to the protection of rare, vulnerable and endangered species;**
- . **assess the current rate of native vegetation clearing on a national basis;**
- . **review national and sector balance sheets in Australian National Accounts;**
- . **improve the coverage and effectiveness of the Environment Impact Assessment process;**
- . **consider the need for a national approach to coastal issues following the Resource Assessment Commission's coastal zone inquiry;**
- . **improve management of water allocations and determine the most appropriate mix of water resource management mechanisms;**
- . **ensure waste disposal costs reflect externalities;**
- . **establish an intergovernmental consultative forum for RD&D; and**
- . **establish an intergovernmental Ministerial-level Roundtable and establish ad hoc advisory bodies**

The Council also endorsed the National Greenhouse Response Strategy (NGRS) and committed governments to a range of actions aimed at limiting greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the level of uncertainty which is associated both with climate change predictions and the actions needed to tackle the problem. Greater effort will also be given to enhancing our capacity to adapt to climate change and involving interested community sectors in the future development of greenhouse responses.

The first phase responses are mainly in the areas of energy production, distribution and use. This reflects the level of understanding of greenhouse gas emission mechanisms in these areas, and the reasonable scope for taking no-regrets actions. The measures included are consistent with the broader micro-economic reforms already underway in the energy sector.

The NGRS is broadly consistent with existing policies and programs, although it gives greater impetus to energy efficiency reforms both in the energy production and use sectors. Major features of the Greenhouse Strategy are initiatives to:

- . promote more transparent and accessible energy markets
- . develop and apply an integrated least cost approach to energy planning
- . improve linkages between energy costs (including externalities) and prices
- . diversifying energy sources
- . improve household, industrial and commercial energy efficiency
- . improve efficiency of motor vehicles
- . establish a National Greenhouse Advisory Panel (NGAP)
- . develop a National Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Community involvement will remain central to the future development of both the ESD and Greenhouse Strategies. As part of the monitoring and review process, the ESD Steering Committee and the National Greenhouse Steering Committee will report to Heads of Government within twelve months, and biennially thereafter, on the implementation of the Strategies seeking input and comment from key business and community groups.

In addition to the intergovernmental Ministerial-level ESD consultative roundtable, to be held biennially as established under the Strategy, the Commonwealth will continue to hold more frequent ESD Roundtable meetings to provide opportunities for dialogue with community representatives at the peak national level.

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