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MEDIA RELEASE

Zero emissions homes within reach

In the wake of one of the nation's warmest and driest winters on record, environment groups today called for new building standards to reduce emissions and water use, and to help Australia's homes and families cope with future temperature and price shocks.

The call coincides with the release of a new report today, which shows that with the right government support and with efforts to fast-track stronger environmental building standards, Australian homes and neighbourhoods could be emissions free and water efficient by 2020.

The report, *Towards climate safe homes: The case for zero emissions and water saving homes and neighbourhoods*, was prepared by Environment Victoria in partnership with the Alternative Technology Association (ATA), Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), Friends of the Earth (FoE) and the Moreland Energy Foundation (MEFL).

Environment Victoria's Campaigns Director Mark Wakeham said the Australian governments had a unique opportunity to reduce emissions and help climate-proof our homes.

"At the moment our inefficient homes are part of the climate change problem," he said.

"However, the report shows that emissions from the average home can be reduced by more than 75 per cent with energy efficient design and appliances, while the rest of the home's energy needs can be supplied by renewable energy. This means our houses can be effectively emissions free and part of the climate change solution.

"The report also advocates for a 40 per cent water savings target to be applied to new homes to reduce our dependence on increasingly unreliable water supplies."

ACF's Monica Richter said the Federal Government had a golden opportunity to set Australia on the path to zero emission homes by 2020.

"The government has made a good start with its national strategy on energy efficiency, but more needs to be done," she said.

"We would like to see 7 or 8-star standards introduced in the next 12 months and a stronger commitment to retrofitting existing houses to help low income and vulnerable Australians adapt to the impacts of climate change."

ATA's Ian Porter said climate proofing Australia's homes was not an optional extra but essential.

"Australians recognise that we need to change our homes and many have already shown that sustainability can be achieved with environmental and financial benefits," he said.

"It is time Governments recognised this and implemented systems to support households to reduce their carbon footprint and save on energy and water bills."

The release of the report signals the beginning of a new national campaign calling on governments Australia wide to strengthen building standards for new homes, provide green makeovers for our existing houses and set zero emissions and water efficiency standards for new homes and neighbourhoods over the next decade.

The report can be downloaded from www.environmentvictoria.org.au

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