

Hon David Parker
Minister of Energy
Minister responsible for Climate Change issues



Speech notes

29 June 2007

Bright solutions for saving energy in our homes

*Address at the launch of the EnergyMad Nationwide Ecobulb project
12pm, Dunedin Public Art Gallery*

Thank you for inviting me to the launch of your Nationwide Efficient Lighting 'Ecobulb' Project.

I am delighted to join you today in support of this initiative, and review some of the things that are happening in my energy and climate change portfolios.

As you will be aware, the Government is committed to tackling climate change.

I announced some weeks ago that work is progressing on the design options for an economy-wide emissions trading scheme – a “cap and trade” system – covering all greenhouse gases. This will effectively put a price on carbon emissions that will, over time, be reflected in the economy. It will incentivise investments in lower emissions alternatives technology and infrastructure.

Cabinet will consider recommendations on emissions trading options over the coming months and we expect to make announcements on the emissions trading scheme during September.

I have also recently consulted on the draft New Zealand Energy Strategy, which incorporated the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy – the “NZECS”. The NZECS sets out the Government’s proposed action plan to reduce the large amounts of energy wasted in New Zealand, and increase use of renewable energy.

Climate change policies in the energy area often focus on increasing the amount of electricity generated from renewable sources. However, the development of renewable energy generation invariably has local impacts that need to be considered against the national benefits of renewable generation. Improving energy efficiency can negate or defer the need for some new investment in generation, whilst reducing energy bills – a win-win situation.

In recognition of this, the draft NZEECS establishes the principle that investment should occur in energy efficiency measures where this is cheaper than the long-term costs of building extra supply capacity, including environmental costs.

Submissions on the draft NZEECS were almost unanimously supportive of work to improve the efficiency with which we use energy in New Zealand. In particular, many submitters identified the residential sector as an area where significant improvements in efficiency can be achieved cost-effectively.

Improving energy efficiency is good for our pockets, and good for the environment.

This is an area of “low-hanging fruit”.

There’s already a lot of energy and enthusiasm amongst New Zealanders to do their bit for climate change. Small actions in the home can help us tackle climate change collectively and go a long way towards ensuring New Zealand’s sustainability for years to come.

The government is supportive of initiatives that help consumers make informed choices that reflect the wider environmental effects of their energy-use decisions.

The government is doing a lot in this area. We recently completed the 30,000th energy efficiency retrofit under EECA’s EnergyWise Home Grants programme. This programme generates reductions in household energy bills by up to 30%, whilst improving comfort and the health of occupants.

The solar water heating programme, further roll-out of Minimum Efficiency Performance Standards for appliances, Emprove, and the review of the Building Code are just some of a raft of other programmes also underway to improve energy efficiency.

Looking forward, we have also provided in the Budget more than \$72 million over the next four years to help Kiwi families live in warmer, drier, healthier homes that are energy efficient and better for the environment.

The climate created by the recognition of the environmental and financial issues that we all face when we use energy has produced exciting new and innovative products.

I would particularly like to applaud the work of EnergyMad to date in their efforts in developing and marketing the Ecobulb, which is a great example of what can happen when engineering expertise is applied to producing a lighting solution that is both a leader in efficiency and meets the particular needs of New Zealand consumers.

We have already seen 26 regional programmes to increase the uptake of the Ecobulb. With lighting accounting for around ten per cent of the electricity used in our homes, this has achieved a permanent step-change in residential energy use.

The EnergyMad team will no doubt talk about the savings that this national programme will achieve. Suffice to say, the savings will be substantial, and will make a material contribution to reducing New Zealand's carbon emissions, and reducing New Zealanders' energy bills.

Finally, I would like to congratulate and wish well the EnergyMad Directors, Chris and Tom, and the rest of their team in bringing together this initiative. I also acknowledge work of the Electricity Commission, Shell New Zealand, TrustPower and Housing New Zealand as key project partners.

It gives me great pleasure to the launch of EnergyMad's nationwide Ecobulb project.

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