

Securing a clean energy **future for Australia**

rime Minister Julia Gillard, Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer Wayne Swan and Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Greg Combet yesterday announced the Gillard Government's plan for a clean energy future. Scientific evidence has confirmed our planet is warming. And after years of debate and deliberation, most Australians agree the time to act is now. Australians want to do the right thing by the environment. We are a confident, creative nation that's up to the challenges of tackling climate change.

That is why the Gillard Government is implementing a comprehensive plan for a clean energy future for our nation. Under our plan, Australia will cut 159 million tonnes a year of carbon pollution from our atmosphere by 2020. That is the equivalent of taking over 45 million cars off the road.

The comprehensive plan announced today to reduce carbon pollution and secure a clean energy future includes:

- ✓ putting a price on carbon pollution
- ✓ promoting innovation and investment in renewable energy
- ✓ improving energy efficiency
- ✓ creating opportunities in the land sector to cut pollution.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer Wayne Swan said the carbon price is a fundamental economic reform that will help maintain our living standards and future competitiveness as the world moves to tackle climate change.

The carbon price will change Australia's electricity generation by encouraging investment in renewable energy like wind and solar power, and the use of cleaner fuels like natural gas. Households will be looked after with tax cuts, higher family payments and increases in pensions and benefits, to help meet the costs passed through by some businesses. Minister for Climate Change and Energy Efficiency Greg Combet said the Government is committed to supporting jobs as the economy is transformed. That is why we will support industries like steel, food processing and the broader manufacturing sector. Carbon pricing is a reform we need to make to keep our economy competitive, to protect our environment and to do the right thing for our children and future generations. With this plan, the Gillard Government is acting to help Australia meet the environmental and economic challenges of competing in a low-pollution world.

Further information about the Gillard Government's clean energy future and carbon price announcement is available at www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au

NEW TRANSLATION AND INTEPRETING SERVICE FOR AGED CARE RESIDENTS

¬ranslation services and on-site interpreters will be available to older Australians in aged care facilities who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Minister for Mental Health and Ageing Mark Butler announced last week.

The Gillard Government is providing \$2.2 million to engage interpreter services to help older people from non-English speaking backgrounds communicate on health and aged care matters.

"This investment delivers on our election commitment to provide improved access to translation services for older Australians from non-English speaking backgrounds and cultural awareness training for aged care staff.

"The new service will include onsite visits and telephone interpreting services and services will be available around the clock for 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

There are currently almost 30,000 culturally and linguistically diverse residents in aged care homes that could benefit from this initiative.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship's Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) will provide the translation and interpreter services.

Mr Butler said that the Government's investment would help older Australians from CALD backgrounds access the care and sup-



port they need.

"At present, people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds make up 16 per cent of residents in residential aged care homes. However, the AI-HW projects that by 2026, one in four people aged 80 and over will be from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

"Communication barriers can mean these older Australians may not receive timely care and support which can lead to poorer health outcomes and increased isolation.

"These services will ensure that language or culture do not act as barriers to receiving high quality aged care. "This new initiative complements the Government's new national multicultural policy, The People of Australia, and underlines the Australian Government's commitment to quality aged care by improving translation services for CALD recipients of aged care."

"Government funded residential aged care homes will be notified in coming weeks of details of the new service and how to access it," Mr Butler said.

175,000 Australians not being checked for diabetes-related blindness

large number of Australians are at risk of losing their sight because of the complications of diabetes.

A simple eye check can detect diabetic retinopathy; however 35 per cent of people with diabetes did not have their eyes checked in line with National Health and Medical Research Council Guidelines.

Diabetes Australia and Vision 2020 Australia today launched a campaign to raise awareness of the risks of diabetic retinopathy and are calling for a better screening strategy for people with diabetes.

The DIABETES: Don't be blind to the risks campaign is the main feature of National Diabetes Week which runs from July 10–16 July.

Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of vision impairment and anyone with type 1 or type 2 diabetes is at risk of developing retinopathy.

New research released today from the Centre for Eye Research Australia found that a large group, 35 per cent of Australians with diabetes, did not have their eyes checked at least every two years as recommended in the NHMRC guidelines. 17 per cent had undetected diabetic retinopathy.

Head of Health Services at CERA Associate Professor Ecosse Lamoureux said the results suggested further screening options could help prevent a large group of Australians from losing their sight.

"Diabetic retinopathy related vision loss can be prevented by early regular screening and treat-

"We are looking at new ways to incorporate an

eye check into regular pathology health checks," Associate Professor Lamoureux said.

"Our research shows 92 per cent of Australians were likely to take advantage of this model if it was available."

Diabetes Australia's Chief Executive Lewis Kaplan said diabetic retinopathy is a significant cause of vision loss and blindness in adult Australians.

"There are around 300,000 Australians who have some degree of diabetic retinopathy and around 65,000 have sight-threatening diabetic retinopathy. At 15 years after diagnosis, half of all people with diabetes will develop retinopathy."

Vision 2020 Australia's Chief Executive Jennifer Gersbeck said much of this vision loss is preventable.

"There is no screening strategy for diabetic retinopathy in Australia but the key to preventing diabetic retinopathy is to have regular eye tests from an eye health professional – an optometrist or ophthalmologist."

"If we ensure that the 35 per cent who don't currently have eye checks do get them checked, we can go a long way to improving the sight of Australians."

Former Richmond footballer Dale Weightman, who has had type 1 diabetes from an early age, had regular eye checks (twice a year) which have helped him diagnose his eye problems. He is encouraging people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes to get their eyes tested regularly to avoid preventable blindness.

"People with diabetes need to have regular eye

checks to avoid complications like blindness. Please go and get your eyes checked and don't be blind to the risks." He urged.

Dan Gregory, the Creative Director of SMART Advertising and panel member on the ABC's Gruen Transfer, was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes a couple of years ago. His message to all Australians is to be vigilant with maintaining a healthy weight, prevent diabetes and don't take risks with your health.

Diabetes information:

Diabetes is a chronic disease with serious complications including blindness. As the number of Australians with type 2 diabetes increases, so too does the number of people with vision impairment.

The diabetes epidemic is growing by a staggering 275 new cases every day.

There are 1 million Australians registered on the National Diabetes Service Scheme.

For every person with type 2 diabetes there may be another yet to be diagnosed.

Type 2 diabetes may be prevented through sustained lifestyle change, together with healthy eating and maintaining a healthy weight.

As part of the campaign launched today two million Australians at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes will be encouraged to assess their risk by visiting the website www.diabetesweek.org.au and completing the online risk assessment test.

They can also call the national Diabetes infoline 1300 136 588.