

Australia & Germany – Cooperation towards a sustainable energy future

For the second time since 2012, Melbourne hosted a German trade delegation for energy efficient building technologies from 6 to 10 June. The 2016 industry conference, organised with the support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, the New Zealand-German Business Association and eclareon GmbH in Berlin, welcomed 80 guests interested in the German renewable energy and green building sectors. Six German companies were invited to showcase their technologies and share their experience.

The Merkel Government has recently approved the next phase of Germany's Renewable Energy Act (EEG), which will initiate a tender process for large scale solar and wind projects. Minister for Energy and the Economy, Sigmar Gabriel, calls the agreement “a paradigm shift in the promotion of renewable energy”. Germany is passionate about promoting the targets, achievements and challenges of its Energy Transition policy (Energiewende) in markets abroad. The policy focus is quite broad – relying on renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy demand management.

Therefore, the Melbourne conference was aptly titled “Australia & Germany - Cooperation towards a sustainable energy future”. The German-Australian Chamber hopes that the event helps strengthen the dialogue between Australia and Germany on energy and climate change related matters, following up on the recently published Australia Germany Advisory Group Report “Collaboration, Innovation and Opportunity”. The transfer of energy expertise and the facilitation of international cooperation are part of the “energy solutions - made in Germany” initiative around the globe.

Michael Pearce, Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany in Victoria, opened the conference in Melbourne, supported by Tina Thoms and Anne Schettler, representing the Australian and New Zealand German Chambers of Commerce.

His address was followed by a welcome address by The Hon Lilians D'Ambrosio MP, Minister for Energy, Environment, Climate Change and Suburban Development in Victoria. In particular, Minister D'Ambrosio presented the State Government's Renewables Energy Action Plan for renewable energy investment, worth A\$ 200 million initially, and the New Energy Technologies Sector Strategy to advance new clean energy technologies and job creation. Victoria already has 17 wind farms with a combined capacity of 1,200 MW. The state is also looking to further analyse the potential for solar in key regions as well as domestic and commercial battery storage solutions.

Dirk Kalusa, Head of Business Promotion for Berlin-based eclareon GmbH, gave an update on the German Energy Solutions Initiative. Germany's energy productivity target is 2.1% per annum. The current share of renewables for energy supply is 28% for electricity, 10% for heating and 5% for transport. Germany aims to increase the final energy consumption from renewables from currently 13% to 18% until 2020. Mr Kalusa noted that the share of renewables is growing fastest in the electricity sector.

The second session focused on renewable energy supply concepts and featured a presentation by Ms Sarah Rieseberg (Arepo Consult, Germany) about solar PV business models around the globe. To highlight recent efforts by the City of Melbourne in this regard, Mr Adam Zaborszczyk, Senior Sustainability Officer gave a presentation on lessons learned from the Melbourne Renewable Energy Project.

The Victorian audience also heard updates from Mike Underhill (New Zealand's Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority) and Carola Jonas (climate friendly Australia) on renewable energy and energy efficiency policy in Australia and New Zealand.

Dr Nermin Brgulja, Head of the Department "Communication & Software" at the Institute for decentralized Energy Technologies in Germany spoke about SmartHome technologies and how they can provide significant potential for energy savings in commercial and residential buildings.

Rob Murray-Leach, Head of Policy for the Energy Efficiency Council (EEC), concluded the day with a witty and optimistic update on the prospects of improved industrial energy efficiency in Australia.

The conference featured presentations by German companies, including:

Fermacell GmbH, a leading manufacturer of high-quality and heavy duty dry lining building materials for the pre-fab and modular and dry lining boards market.

Intech Clean Energy Australia, providing solutions in the field of technical building services, industrial planning and energy-management for communities.

RAICO Bautechnik GmbH, a leading German manufacturer of curtain walls systems for aluminium, timber and steel constructions.

Wieland Electric GmbH, a European pioneer in pluggable installation technology for commercial and industrial applications.

Dr Hermine Hitzler of plan-bee Consulting who assists with comprehensive energy concepts for individual buildings, housing developments and production sites.



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PPSI Engineering, advising on sustainability and energy efficiency management in buildings by use of regenerative fuel sources.

After three busy days in Melbourne, the German delegates continued their business trip with additional meetings in New Zealand.