

LIGHTS OUT DURING EARTH HOUR 2009

Earth First

By Nick King

Earth Hour is a worldwide campaign that aims to educate the community about the threat of climate change to our planet, informing businesses and individuals about the difference they can make by reducing their carbon emissions both at home and in the workplace.

EARTH HOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Earth Hour is an Australian initiative that began in Sydney in 2007. Approximately 2.2 million people and 2100 businesses took part in the first year. In 2008, Earth Hour went global, and attracted between 50 and 100 million people across 370 cities and towns around the world, including Chicago, Toronto, Copenhagen, Dublin, Atlanta and Bangkok. An independent survey found that 58 percent of Australian's joined in by switching off their lights in 2008, and this year's event will be even bigger.

EARTH HOUR – MARCH 28

This year, Earth Hour aims to reach 1 billion people in more than 1000 cities worldwide, encouraging everyone to cast their vote for the Earth by turning off lights and electrical appliances for 1 hour. This action will send an important message to the world's leaders that action is urgently needed to combat climate change.

In December 2009, the world's leaders will gather in Copenhagen for the UN Climate Change Conference, which will create the most important international climate change agreement ever. People the world over will be directly affected by the decisions that will be made in Copenhagen, and Earth Hour 2009 gives Australia the opportunity to further stamp its leadership on this crucial issue.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is the most significant threat to life on Earth. Greenhouse gas emissions are contributing to the world's warming, and Australia emits around 560 million tonnes of greenhouse gases per year —of which 20 percent comes from households.

Scientists attending last week's Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen expressed concern about the rate and degree of global warming and climate change, and have issued warnings to world governance about the urgent need for action to prevent climate change catastrophe.

As the Australian climate warms, it is predicted that more extreme weather events will occur, average heat related deaths among older Australians will increase, mosquito borne disease may spread, agricultural production and food security will be adversely affected by changing rainfall patterns, and sea levels will rise.

TO SHOW YOUR CONCERN

- Turn out all lights and electrical appliances between the hours of 8.30pm and 9.30pm on Saturday, March 28th.
- Talk to your friends, neighbours and family about climate change and encourage them to participate in Earth Hour.
- Write or email our Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, the Minister for Climate Change, Penny Wong, the Minister for the Environment, Peter Garrett, and our local Federal Member John Cobb— expressing your concern about climate change and demanding a Carbon Pollution Reduction target of at least 25% of 2000 levels.

To find out more, visit the www.earthhour.org website, for information, posters and suggestions for individuals, business and community groups on how to address climate change.

Future Environmental Events:

Dr. Andrew Rawson, Senior Climate Change Scientist will be addressing a public meeting hosted by the Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Orange providing an update on climate change and the government's response to it.

Venue: Environmental Learning Facility, Orange Showground on Wednesday, March 25th, commencing 7.30pm. All welcome.