



Australian Senate

**Christine Milne**

Australian Greens Senators for Tasmania

**media release**

## **Government leading from behind on energy efficient buildings**

**Hobart, Monday 7 April 2008** The Australian Greens today released information showing that the Rudd Government is failing to abide by its predecessor's policy of moving government offices into buildings with an energy efficiency rating of 4.5 stars or more, and is currently negotiating new leases for buildings with ratings as low as 2 stars.

Australian Greens climate change spokesperson, Senator Christine Milne said "For a Government that claims a whole-of-government, 'careful and methodical' approach to climate change, it is extraordinary that it has so many blind spots, including failing to identify the array of energy efficient buildings that are on the market in Canberra.

"Energy efficiency is now recognised around the world as the fastest, cheapest and easiest way to cut greenhouse gas emissions. Prime Minister Rudd and his Ministers are happy to talk about boosting efficiency and take photo opportunities with the single solar panel they plan to put on each school, but don't seem willing to make meaningful or systemic changes.

"On the day of Earth Hour, Ministers Wong and Garrett proudly announced an 'Inter-Departmental Committee on Government Leadership in Sustainability' to report to the Government in June on 'ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, waste, energy and water use in Government operations'.

"Surely the Government doesn't need yet another committee to tell it that signing leases for energy hungry buildings is wasteful and provides the exact opposite of 'Government Leadership in Sustainability'.

"While Minister Wong proclaims that 'minimum 5 star ratings for government office buildings and leases will be on the table' for the Inter-Departmental Committee, her own Department looks set to move into office space at 2 Constitution Ave which fails to meet even the Howard Government's 4.5 star policy.

"Where is the incentive for developers and owners to improve building energy efficiency when Australia's largest tenant shows so little serious interest?

"The Rudd Government must stop the Jekyll and Hyde attitude which sees the Prime Minister saying he wants to be a leader on climate change while his departments negotiate leases on energy-wasting buildings, the newly-established Infrastructure Australia is precluded from assessing climate change implications of infrastructure decisions without direct Ministerial instruction, the emissions from the Gunns Pulp Mill are ignored, and Martin Ferguson fast-tracks funding to turn coal into a horrendously dirty transport fuel. This makes a mockery of the supposed whole-of-government approach and demonstrates a complete lack of commitment to tackling climate change.

"Next month's Budget provides the Government with an ideal opportunity to prove me wrong and demonstrate an understanding of and care for the climate implications of all their funding decisions. I eagerly await a decision to shave millions off budgets by taking simple and sensible measures to increase energy efficiency."

**Contact: Tim Hollo on 0437 587 562**



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**Notes:**

- The Howard Government's *Energy Efficiency in Government Operations* policy [<http://www.environment.gov.au/settlements/government/eego/publications/eego.html>] specifies a minimum 4.5 star rating for new buildings, major refurbishments and new leases for Government offices of 2000m<sup>2</sup> or more, with exceptions where this is not 'practical or cost effective'.
- The Rudd Government has neither explicitly supported nor repudiated this policy, but its language, as quoted above regarding the 'Inter-Departmental Committee on Government Leadership in Sustainability' suggests that any changes will be to make the policy more stringent rather than less.
- It is understood that the Rudd Government has negotiated or is currently negotiating leases for the following buildings which do not meet the 4.5 star requirement:
  - 2 Constitution Ave, for the Department of Climate Change, Customs and Attorney General's; and
  - SAP House, for the Workplace Authority.
- It is understood that the following buildings which do not meet the 4.5 star requirement are under consideration by the Rudd Government:
  - 60 Marcus Clarke st
  - 17 Moore St (CWA House)
  - SAP House (more office space)
  - 10 National Circuit
- It is understood that buildings that meet the 4.5 star requirement or greater are now or will shortly be available for tenanting at
  - Cameron Offices, 1-11 Cameron Ave;
  - 1 Molongolo Ave;
  - 82 Northbourne Ave;
  - Benjamin Offices, Chan St; and
  - 16 Marcus Clarke St.

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