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RANN TO TELL COAG – LET’S MAKE BETTER BUILDINGS

Premier Mike Rann says that as part of the global fight against climate change he will be pushing tomorrow’s COAG meeting in Perth to consider adopting an ambitious target to make buildings more efficient users of energy.

“Millions of tonnes of carbon emissions can be saved through designing and constructing better buildings.

“As a vital part of this plan, I’d like to see at least a 10 per cent improvement in energy efficiency of all new split system or reverse cycle air conditioners to be introduced throughout Australia by 1 July 2012.

“This new standard would be in addition to a 10 per cent efficiency standard that is expected to come into force in October next year.

“I am told that the biggest spike in energy use over summer comes from air conditioners – mainly because they are not very efficient users of energy.

“More and more households across Australia are installing reverse cycle or split system air conditioners into their homes.

“It seems reasonable to expect that Australia could aim for a higher standard by 2012 which would save millions of tonnes of carbon emissions.

“I will also be urging COAG to a set date of 2019 by which we should be achieving zero carbon emissions for new commercial buildings constructed in Australia.

“This would match the UK’s policy of achieving zero carbon emissions for new commercial buildings from 2019.

“Office and residential buildings built today will still be with us in 50 years time.

“Energy efficiency needs to be treated with the same importance in the design of these buildings as building integrity, safety and fire protection.

“In Australia’s case this could save 37 million tonnes of CO2 emissions by 2030 and at least 6 million tonnes per annum thereafter.

“I will also be putting to tomorrow’s COAG meeting that a comprehensive and lasting approach demands that the Commonwealth lead a process aimed at making Australia the international leader in energy efficient buildings.

“These are important objectives not only for their own sake but also because they signal that Australia is finally getting serious about energy efficiency”.

Mr Rann says he also hopes COAG tomorrow will adopt his call for a greater level of information sharing across all States, Territories and the Commonwealth about families and children at risk.

“I have been pushing for the Commonwealth’s Centrelink agency to become part of the ‘Child Protection Alerts System’ which is used by all States and Territories when a children protection agency has concerns about the welfare of a child whose location is unknown or where the family is transient.

“At present, the Commonwealth and many non-government agencies only disclosed information to prevent a serious and imminent threat to life.

“I believe that threshold is too high.

“Centrelink is the only agency that can provide information on a family’s whereabouts – and that information may be vital in helping child protection agencies trace children at risk.

“It is only common sense that if a State based agency is concerned about a child that they be able to seek and receive that information on a child’s whereabouts from Centrelink.

“This kind of information sharing will be an important tool in helping agencies to maintain contact with families at risk,” Mr Rann said.

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