



Australian Government
Department of the
Environment and Heritage

**Smart Grid Workshop
Monday 22nd June 2009**

A welcome from the Federal Environment Minister, Peter Garrett

I am pleased to offer you a warm welcome today as you gather to talk about the timely and very important issue of smart grids.

Smart grids are poised to take our energy networks a big step forward, delivering a range of benefit to everyone from the energy provider to the householder. By linking the electricity transmission and distribution network with state of the art communications technology, we create powerful potential for innovation.

The Rudd Government is driving investment in smart grids through its recently announced National Energy Efficiency Initiative: Smart Grid, Smart City. This \$100 million partnership with the energy industry will turn one Australian city or town into a demonstration hub for energy saving technology, increasing energy efficiency and giving consumers a new level of control over their energy use.

By making the electricity network a two way street, smart grids enable power to be fed back into the grid from distributed, intermittent sources such as wind and solar. Importantly, they allow networks to pinpoint faults, accurately schedule preventative maintenance and even create a self-healing capacity to minimise blackouts.

Consumers will have the information at the fingertips to know how much power they are using and what it's costing them, so they can better manage their power use. There is also the potential to have smart networks across water and gas, and to link all these capabilities through the National Broadband Network.

Our Smart Grid, Smart City initiative is gearing up, with a period of intense industry and stakeholder consultation about to commence. I urge you to contact the Smart Grid Initiative team in my Department if you are interested in taking part.

I welcome your involvement in the Smart Grid, Smart City program and also wish you success in your deliberations today.

**The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP
Federal Minister for the Environment**