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### Newcastle wins \$20 million Clean Energy Innovation Centre

19 Feb 2009

Newcastle's future as a centre for clean energy development has been secured by a Federal Government announcement that the city will be the national headquarters of a new \$20 million Clean Energy Innovation Centre.

The Clean Energy Innovation Centre (CEIC) will help small and medium-sized clean energy businesses from around Australia establish and grow, while promoting the use of clean energy technologies by industry.

The CEIC will partner with Newcastle Innovation, the Australian Institute of Commercialisation and the Western Australian Sustainable Energy Association to link companies with the best knowledge and research available.

NSW Minister for Energy and State Development Ian Macdonald said the announcement is not only a terrific innovation win for Newcastle and the Hunter but a terrific innovation win for the State of NSW.

"The Clean Energy Innovation Centre will play a leading role in helping establish Australia's clean energy sector and develop technologies which will help industry meet the challenges faced by global warming," Mr Macdonald said.

Minister for the Hunter and Minister for Science Jodi McKay said she was thrilled Newcastle has secured one of five innovation centres being created under the Commonwealth's new Enterprise Connect network.

"Newcastle is a logical choice for the CEIC given its long-established links to the energy sector, strong industrial base, established networks and innovative record in clean energy research and development," Ms McKay said.

"Now with a CEIC, Newcastle won't just be exporting energy resources but will be working to develop the energy solutions the world needs for a sustainable future."

The Newcastle-based CEIC will receive \$20 million over four years to provide small and medium sized clean energy companies with a range of business improvement services.

The CEIC's services will include:

- Comprehensive reviews of companies to identify strengths and weaknesses, strategic business issues, and potential areas for improvement and growth
- Providing grants to address areas identified for improvement and growth
- Finding and adapting the latest clean energy research and technology to help companies improve their products and manufacturing processes
- Providing access to specialist facilities and advice to turn innovative ideas into new products or to test products for new markets
- Helping companies identify export markets and understand relevant regulatory, cultural and market issues
- Helping companies become export ready, including through developing management and marketing skills
- Identifying sources of government support for innovation and export activities
- Acting as a hub for industry intelligence, workshops and networking activities
- Connecting new and existing enterprises to other companies for mentoring, private investment and partnerships.
- Mapping sectoral technology and supply chains
- Identifying complementary businesses that could lead to new business opportunities.

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