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Will Wind be Dead by 2030? Prosperous Sustainability: Clean Technology Forecasts to 2050

A report released today forecasts how global clean technologies may mature over the next 40 years to help provide investors and governments with a tool to picking long term winners for their regions.

The report is being published by Australian CleanTech, a research and advisory firm that works for cleantech companies, investors and governments to deliver both an understanding of and growth in the sector. The report is based on extensive research over a number of years.

John O'Brien, Managing Director of Australian CleanTech, said "We have been working with Governments and investor groups for several years and the key question that keeps coming up is what technologies are the long term winners that will provide economic development and investment returns. This report is the culmination of many research projects to help provide those answers."

The key findings of the report are that:

- **Rooftop Solar Panels** will not be installed after 2020 as Building Integrated Photovoltaics (BIPV) become standard installations for roofing and window materials.
- **Large Scale Wind Turbines** will start to be replaced by improved designs over the next five years. The last of the large scale wind turbines will be installed around 2030 as other technologies, such as utility scale solar and geothermal become cheaper in most regions.
- **Utility-Scale Solar** will have a long gestation but will continue to grow becoming widespread and peaking in installations in the late 2020s.
- **Wave and Tidal Power** will become viable at utility scale in the 2020s in niche locations but will eventually be phased out as cheaper alternatives emerge.
- **Electric Vehicles** will grow very quickly over the next few years along with the associated recharging infrastructure. It will continue to grow strongly through to the 2030s.
- **Energy Efficiency and Green Building Materials** and products will also grow strongly over the next few years and continue on this growth trajectory for many years to come.
- **Smart Grid** technologies will only grow slowly over the next 10 years due to the regulatory structures surrounding the utilities that must install them. Once these structures are effectively altered however, there will be significant growth worldwide.
- **Water Technologies** that create drinking water and help to reuse wastewater and stormwater for fit-for-purpose uses will continue to grow strongly throughout the forecast period. Technologies associated with reducing the energy use of desalination will grow particularly strongly.
- **Waste and Recycling Technologies** that recover 'waste' and turn into valuable resources that can be used again will also have strong steady growth driven by a reduction in raw resources leading to increasing resource pricing.

Whilst there have been a number of technology forecasts for particular sub-sectors of cleantech, and in particular for renewable energy, there have been no reports that have pulled all the information together into a concise package that can be utilised throughout the developed world.

Investment in cleantech has had a meteoric rise over the last few years, despite the slowdown caused by the financial crisis of 2008-09. The 18 months in which the capital markets were frozen also saw increasing regulatory regimes driving cleantech demand and large amounts of stimulus spending focussed at the commercialisation and deployment of cleantech.

“The confluence of these events has led to a unique situation for cleantech.” Market demand is being forced up through regulation and increasing community sentiment and the stimulus spending has helped many technologies come close to being able to service the market. The private capital market will now have to play ‘catch-up’ and 2010 is likely to see a large increase again in investments in new technologies. This will impact the long term growth patterns for technologies and has been taken into account in this report.

Australian CleanTech has also analysed the Australian cleantech sector and provided Ten Cleantech Trends for 2010. The 420 Australian cleantech companies analysed as part of the Australian Cleantech Review 2010 provided some interesting patterns in the sub-sectors with the greatest activity levels and the regions in which they are based. As a sector, the companies had a combined revenue of \$9.2 billion and employed over 13,000 people. They raised a total of \$2.3 billion in new funds during the 2009 calendar year in 86 separate capital transactions. “The cleantech growth in 2010 will be significant in some of its sub-sectors whilst others will remain static. Wind, solar, water and waste will be the winners in Australia in the short term.”

By understanding both the short term trends and the longer term technology trends, it is possible for both governments and investors to build portfolios that will deliver both short and long benefits. “The data provided in this report will enable those interested in cleantech to more fully understand the sector and its likely growth,” O’Brien concluded.

What Is Cleantech?

To be able to analyse the cleantech sector, it is first necessary to define the composition of the sector. The definition of cleantech used in this report is that it comprises of:

Economically viable products, services and processes that harness renewable materials and energy sources, dramatically reduce the use of natural resources and cut or eliminate emissions and wastes.

More concisely it contains products and services that have ‘*economic and environmental benefits*’. The sub-sectors of cleantech include renewable energy, water, waste and recycling, construction materials, energy efficiency, carbon trading and environmental services.

The findings of the report will be presented to the Enviro 2010 conference in Melbourne on 23 July.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

For further information please contact:
John O’Brien
Managing Director, Australian CleanTech
Ph: 0419 826 372
john.obrien@auscleantech.com.au

A full copy of the report can be downloaded from the Australian CleanTech website at
http://www.auscleantech.com.au/ACT_Reports.html

