

Energy industry faces crucial transition to smart metering and more environmentally sustainable models of power delivery

World leaders in the transmission and distribution of electricity and gas are gathering in Sydney to determine new ways to underpin Australia's growth by reliable and environmentally sustainable delivery of energy.

The nation's expanding cities and booming resources sector are placing unprecedented pressures on gas and electricity supply.

At the same time, emerging environmental and regulatory demands require smarter, more efficient and secure power systems.

These key issues will be addressed at the Energy 21C conference at the Sydney Exhibition and Convention Centre from November 11 to 14.

More than 2,000 delegates from around the world are expected to attend Energy 21C, which is the premier energy industry conference in the southern hemisphere.

Conference Chairman, Robert Smith, said major challenges confronting the energy industry in Australia included replacing ageing infrastructure and legacy systems along with the introduction of smart technologies and new engineering skills.

"Despite public acceptance of the need to conserve energy, the desire to embrace new technologies and improved lifestyles – coupled with an increasing population – will inevitably result in a dramatic increase in demand for power over the next decade and beyond," Mr Smith said.

"The nation's booming resources sector will also place great challenges on the transmission and distribution of energy.

"Energy 21C will address customer demands, and our ability to develop and maintain necessary skills, technical innovation and environmentally sustainable practices to meet those expectations.

"The Energy 21C conference will explore and respond to climate change issues and the regulatory frameworks that are expected to govern the way the energy industry will operate in the 21st century.

"The scene will be set at an opening plenary session on Monday 12 November with climate change authority, internationally acclaimed scientist, author and Australian of the Year, Professor Tim Flannery, as the keynote speaker.

"Professor Flannery is the author of the best selling book, *The Weather Makers: How Man Is Changing The Climate And What It Means For Life On Earth*.

“The opening session of the conference is, in effect, a summit on the energy industry’s response to the climate change challenge, and it will attract State Government Ministers responsible for energy along with industry leaders.

“The summit is sure to shape the strategic planning of energy networks.”

Mr Smith said governments and communities had never been more aware of issues relating to reliable and environmentally sustainable energy supply and usage.

Mike Griffin, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Power Institute, said planning for future transmission and distribution of energy would require much more than building bigger and more widespread infrastructure.

“In the new national regulatory regime, customers will increasingly compare the performance of one network against another, thereby creating intense competition in energy delivery performance and reliability,” he said.

“Customers are now a lot more informed about energy costs, service delivery and environmental considerations.

“New infrastructure must come with intelligent systems and effective communications strategies to help customers manage energy useage in a sustainable manner.”

Hosted by EnergyAustralia and Integral Energy, the Energy 21C conference will be presented in the following streams:

- Asset management and forecasts of future demand and infrastructure needs;
- Business and regulation against the spectre of climate change;
- Demand management and advanced metering infrastructure;
- Customer expectations and solutions;
- Energy delivery capability with a particular focus on the development and sustainability of professional and technical skills and capacity;
- Technical regulation and standardisation; and
- Gas network management.

For more information, visit www.energy21c.com.au or contact the Conference Managers, Waldron Smith Management, or e-mail energy21c@wsm.com.au

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