

Intelligent utility networks the key to meeting performance challenges in the energy sector

Australia's ability to achieve greater efficiencies in energy delivery with improved customer value and environmental management performance will depend on the willingness of power utilities to embrace bold, new technologies.

This is the view of Guido Bartels, Chairman of the United States Gridwise Alliance, who is a keynote speaker at the Energy 21C conference at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre today (Tuesday 13 November).

Mr Bartels, who is also IBM's world-wide Vice-President for Energy and Utilities, will call on utilities to adopt a more innovative and collaborative approach to energy distribution.

Gridwise Alliance was developed in the United States as an entirely new way to think about how energy is generated, distributed and used.

Using advanced communications and up-to-date information technology, GridWise Alliance has improved coordination between supply and demand, and enabled a smarter, more efficient, secure and reliable electric power system in that country.

"Reliability, security and environmental sustainability are key challenges facing the industry in Australia," Mr Bartels said.

"Mature technologies exist that can help energy utilities in Australia to achieve new levels of operational effectiveness.

"The proliferation of sensors, analytical tools, services oriented architecture and digitally enabled equipment can transform the way utilities manage their networks and better meet customer needs and expectations.

"Intelligent utility networks combined with the evolution of the power grid will be essential to Australia's future competitiveness in energy distribution and transmission.

"By driving innovation through network automation and analytics across the energy supply chain, the sector can better meet growing demand, deliver stronger economic performance and protect critical power infrastructure.

"Many forward-thinking utilities around the world are already engaged in planning around the so-called Intelligent Utility Network, which will provide optimum levels of energy reliability and efficiency while addressing environmental demands."

Mr Bartels addressed an IBM and Ergon Energy Plenary session, entitled Networks of the 21st Century in the Sydney Exhibition Centre.

It was a key aspect of the Energy 21C conference, which has attracted more than 1,700 industry leaders from around the world to explore new frontiers in the reliable and secure supply of gas and electricity.

Energy 21C Conference Chairman, Robert Smith, said issues being discussed at the event would impact on the lifestyles and energy choices of all Australians.

Interview:

Guido Bartels will be available for interview at the conference.

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