20th Ministerial Council On Energy

Improving certainty about the use and benefits of smart meters was one of the key agenda items at today’s 20th Ministerial Council on Energy (MCE) meeting in Darwin.

Treasurer Delia Lawrie today said smart meters could provide significant savings for households by allowing them to better manage their electricity use, but that more work needed to be done to assess smart meter technologies.

“Improved energy efficiency and the financial and environmental benefits that flow from that is something we all want,” Ms Lawrie said.

“The Ministerial Council on Energy noted for the first time a report outlining the results of trials and pilot programs to reduce the range of uncertainty about costs and benefits of smart meters.

“More work will be done towards an implementation plan to establish meter standards and timing of the roll-out.”

Another key outcome of today’s MCE included the adoption of a comprehensive 10-year strategy to accelerate energy efficiency improvements.

Key features of the new National Partnership Agreement include:

- Helping households reduce energy use by providing information and advice, financial assistance and demonstration programs;
- Help businesses and industry to obtain the knowledge, skills and capacity to pursue cost-effective energy efficiency opportunities and therefore meet the challenges of a low carbon economy;
- Introducing new standards for the energy performance of air conditioners in 2010 and increasing the standard by a further 10% from 1 October 2011; and
- Governments working together to improve the energy efficiency of their own buildings and operations.

Ministers at the MCE also noted that a review by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General of penalty regimes applying to disruptions to critical energy infrastructure was underway, in conjunction with the MCE’s Energy Security Working Group.

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