

## Nuclear Must Be Part of Climate Change Strategy: Macfarlane

Public debate over climate change needs to be widened to take in the potential of nuclear energy as low emission energy, Australian Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane has told the 15th Pacific Basin Nuclear Conference.

"Australians are today seeking a debate based on fact, not 1970s-styled hysteria", Macfarlane said. "Nuclear energy could be, and I argue it must be, a major part of the global strategy to curb greenhouse emissions. He said only nuclear power offers Australia a base-load energy option with the potential to dramatically slash the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

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"Nuclear power is already delivering greenhouse gas abatement, it accounts for just 16% of energy but is reducing carbon dioxide emissions by some 2.4 billion tonnes a year. It is a clean, green energy alternative" he said. "Unless we develop and use low emission technologies, including nuclear energy, we will be forced to choose between our lifestyle, our economic growth and environmental protection."

Macfarlane said nuclear power has the potential to bridge the emerging gap between this country's economic development and the impact it has on our environment. He said modern nuclear reactors were become more economically competitive to other sources of energy.

"As third generation plants become a reality, there are forecasts of full-cycle nuclear power costing as little as 5c per KW/hr. That's in comparison with 3.5c an hour for coal, 4.5c for gas, 8c for wind and 12c for solar power. We would be silly not to fully consider the nuclear option and we would be downright foolish to simultaneously dismiss the chance to slash our energy emission rates." ■