

Green nation launched here

EXCLUSIVE

The Illawarra vision

By VERONICA APAP

PREMIER Nathan Rees will today endorse a historic plan to transform the Illawarra economy into a leader in sustainable industry and green jobs.

The Green Jobs Illawarra Action Plan, due to be released this morning, sets out 20 recommendations covering a range of industries to move the region towards a low-carbon future.

It has been described as more significant to the region's economy than the Button Steel Plan, which was said to have saved the industry in the 1980s.

The action plan provides strategies that can be put into action immediately, such as building a street of sustainable display houses to showcase green technology, retro-fitting public buildings with sustainable technology and creating a wave power generation centre in the region.

The biggest project outlined in the plan is the BlueScope Steel cogeneration project which would cost \$1 billion, create 2000 construction jobs and prevent one million tonnes of greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere.

The project would generate electricity from gases produced during steelmaking. Mr Rees said the plan would be used as a model to help carbon-intensive industries across the state develop job plans to make the transition to a low-carbon economy.

"This strategy provides an excellent blueprint for regions that are traditionally supported by industries like coal and steel to build long-term plans for the future," he said. "I will provide the Prime Minister with a copy of the Illawarra plan as a template for how green jobs can be created..."

Mr Rees committed to the Green Street project which will involve the construction of eight to 10 display homes with six-star energy efficiency ratings, each generating 100 per cent of their power needs and harvesting all of the household water requirements.

Minister for the Illawarra David Campbell said the State Government would allocate \$150,000 for training courses

Key recommendations from the Green Jobs Illawarra Action Plan:

Plan:

- Green street project: A street of display homes showcasing a range of available and experimental sustainable technologies.
- Iconic buildings retro-fit project: Public buildings such as the town hall would be fitted with sustainable technologies.
- Wave power technology: The region would become a centre of excellence in wave power generation using existing research and development at the University of Wollongong, innovative regional firms and supporting cutting-edge projects.
- Steelworks cogeneration project: Remove outstanding barriers to the construction of a cogeneration facility at Port Kembla steelworks.
- Smart Grid regional trial and broadband roll-out: Submit a proposal for the Illawarra to be selected as the location for the national Smart Grid demonstration and the initial mainland location for the National Broadband Network rollout.
- Community engagement: Establish neighbourhood climate change and sustainability groups to promote and encourage community action.
- Green skills and training: TAFE short courses to provide green skills and training to employers and employees.

focused oil green industries.

"These projects combined will see new apprentices in training, working on sustainable green housing projects, gaining skills that will place them in good stead for the green jobs markets of the future," he said.

Green Jobs Illawarra chairman Arthur Rorris said the steel industry would still be essential as green technology needed to be built from steel. "We want to be the region that makes them."