



**Remarks by Australian High Commissioner Graeme Wilson to  
the  
SANEDI/NIER Energy Innovation Symposium**

**Thursday 6 June 2013**

Mr Kadri Nassiep, CEO of the South African National Energy  
Development Institute

Dr Alan Broadfoot, Director of the Newcastle Institute for Energy  
and Resources

Advocate Nothemba Mlonzi, Chair of the Board of Directors of  
SANEDI

Other distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a pleasure for me to address this symposium, which is being jointly hosted by the South African National Energy Development Institute and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources. I understand the symposium will highlight different research capabilities to industry, government and South African universities, with the aim of identifying collaborative research opportunities of benefit to both countries. I hope that, as a result of the symposium, further opportunities for Australia and South Africa to work together will be identified. If so, this would add to a growing list of cooperative activities between our two countries.

In fact, it is an exciting time for Australia-South Africa relations, and a great time to be Australia's High Commissioner to South Africa. Our two countries enjoy strong political and economic relations as well as close and diverse people-to-people links. We also share many values and aspirations, with the result that we also cooperate closely on many international issues. The

increasingly multi-dimensional nature of our relationship is striking.

And nowhere is the potential for deeper collaboration more striking than in the area of science, technology and innovation. The emergence of new technologies in the energy and resources sector offers rich, new opportunities for mutual benefit. And in the scientific area, the joint hosting by South Africa and Australia of one of the largest research projects the world has seen in recent years – the Square Kilometre Array – is an example of how the dynamism and expertise of different countries can be brought together and harnessed for the good of the global community.

The outcomes of Senior Officials Talks held in Australia last month, which I had the pleasure of attending, underscored the strength and diversity of our bilateral relationship. The talks focused, among other things, on the benefits of closer cooperation in the energy and scientific areas. A Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Cooperation covering possible cooperation on clean coal technology, coal seam gas, shale gas, LNG and energy efficiency, is currently under active consideration by both countries. Similarly, South Africa and Australia agreed to use the SKA project as a catalyst for further cooperation under the bilateral science and technology agreement, and for promoting the bilateral relationship more broadly.

Ladies and gentlemen

The sustainable use of energy and the world's resources is one of the most challenging issues facing mankind today. New technologies will play a critical role in helping us to meet these challenges, not least, that of global warming. Australia is helping to address this challenge in different ways.

Australia has set a target of reducing national greenhouse gas emissions by at least five per cent of 2000 levels by 2020.

Our longer-term goal is to reduce emissions by 80 per cent of 2000 levels by 2050.

Achieving these targets will be a huge challenge.

The existing suite of technologies will take us part of the way.

If we are to achieve these targets and maintain a reliable, low cost, energy system, we will need to expand the range of technology options.

This requires a global effort.

No one country or group countries can do this alone.

This is the thinking behind the establishment of the Global Carbon Capture and Storage Institute, of which both Australia and South Africa are members.

The formation of this organisation was part of the Australian Government's commitment to creating a clean energy future.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) forecasts fossil fuels will account for about 75 per cent of global energy consumption in 2035.

For this reason, Australia is supporting the development of carbon capture and storage technologies in Australia and internationally.

Australia is also pushing the development and deployment of renewable energy technologies.

More than one million households in Australia now have photovoltaic panels on their rooves.

This deployment is supported by the Renewable Energy Target (RET), which requires that 20 per cent of Australia's electricity come from renewable sources by 2020.

Wind and solar are now the fastest growing energy sources in Australia, albeit from a low base.

Renewable energy sources provided 13 per cent of Australia's electricity in 2012, up from around 8 per cent in 2007.

The Australian Government has also established the Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA) with over \$3 billion to support the development of renewable energy in Australia.

ARENA is funding young and emerging solar researchers and projects to develop new renewable energy technologies.

Australia is also trialling new demand side technologies through the Smart Grid Smart City and Solar Cities initiatives.

I understand we will hear more about the Smart Grid Smart City project this morning.

These various initiatives are all part of the Australian Government's comprehensive plan to tackle climate change, which is underpinned by the introduction of a price on carbon dioxide emissions.

Ladies and gentlemen

In closing, I would like to congratulate the South African National Energy Development Institute and the Newcastle Institute for Energy and Resources for their collaboration in the area of energy innovation, and for their joint initiative in hosting this important symposium.

It is a very promising area of collaboration in what is an exciting period of expansion in Australia's relations with South Africa, and I wish you every success for your deliberations here today.