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MEDIA RELEASE

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BLUEPRINT LAUNCHED FOR AUSTRALIA'S FIRST ZERO NET ENERGY TOWN

Uralla today saw the launch of the blueprint for what could be Australia's first renewable energy self-sufficient town.

The first town-scale energy blueprint has been developed for Uralla on the NSW Northern Tablelands, with energy savings of up to 70 per cent through energy efficiency and on-site generation.

"The aim of the blueprint is to identify how an Australian community could satisfy all its energy needs from renewable energy, in a way that is competitive in terms of price, quality, security and reliability," Environment Minister Mark Speakman said in Uralla today.

"Funded through the Government's Renewable Energy Action Plan, the Zero Net Energy Town (ZNET) blueprint has the potential to attract renewable energy investment, to build community support and to increase local renewable energy expertise.

"The Uralla project has been an exciting and ambitious challenge, with the blueprint providing a model for other NSW towns.

"Uralla has about 2,500 energy customers spending approximately \$12 million each year to meet their energy needs," Mr Speakman said.

Minister for Industry, Resources and Energy, Anthony Roberts, said this initiative is a demonstration of the commitment of the NSW Government to a secure, reliable, affordable and clean energy future for households and businesses in NSW.

"The share of renewable energy in NSW's electricity generation mix has almost doubled in the past 5 to 6 years. In 2013, almost 13 percent of our energy generation came from renewable sources.

"There are currently estimated to be more than 13,000 jobs supported by renewable energy in NSW. This includes 4,400 direct renewable energy jobs".

Member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall said the blueprint suggests that by applying cost-effective energy efficiency actions such as the replacement of hot water units and combining these with the installation of residential solar panels, Uralla could save up to \$2.2 million per year.

“For Uralla, these measures could save 15.7 per cent of its total energy consumption, with a significant portion of remaining energy consumption being sourced from on-site generation.

“The most financially attractive options are residential solar, lighting and hot water unit upgrades which could result in savings of up to \$1,000 per household and \$3,000 per business,” Mr Marshall said.

The blueprint suggests that Uralla could generate 40-70 per cent of its energy needs within 5 years, through energy efficiency and small scale renewable energy generation.

The blueprint also outlines how Uralla could become energy self-sufficient, by developing town-scale renewable energy generation.

The project has gained interest from other towns, with more than 20 contacting the project coordinator, Starfish Initiatives, to express interest in taking part in a similar project.

Mr Speakman congratulated all involved in the development of the blueprint. Their efforts will place Uralla at the forefront of energy innovation in Australia.

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