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## ATN LEADS BY EXAMPLE ON EMISSIONS REDUCTION

**10 November 2021**

The Australian Technology Network of Universities (ATN) are leading by example when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

As Australia commits to net zero emissions by 2050, ATN celebrates this important milestone with new data showing a dramatic cut in our emissions over the past 14 years.

By reducing emissions 46 per cent since 2007, Curtin University, RMIT University, University of South Australia, and University of Technology Sydney have significantly outperformed the collective 25 per cent target they set in 2009. Deakin University has also reduced emissions by 48 per cent since 2018.

ATN universities are leaders in environmental sciences and research into numerous facets of climate change. This includes clean technology, economic policy, disaster management and adaptation and resilience to climate change. We are determined to match our innovative ideas, processes and products with cleaner institutions of our own.

ATN universities carefully planned and costed the 2007 targets before announcing them. At the core of this commitment was \$20 million in investment to reducing emissions through efficiencies, which have paid off financially in the medium-term through lower energy bills for our universities.

### **Quotes attributable to ATN Executive Director, Mr Luke Sheehy:**

“ATN universities are immensely proud to take leadership on emissions reduction.

“We celebrate our contribution today as the Prime Minister announces a carbon neutral Australia by 2050. We applaud this target and stand ready to contribute our wealth of research expertise and direct experience to the nation.

“Our universities, and our industry partners, will play an important role in shaping and enabling Australia’s pathway to decarbonisation.”

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### **Curtin University**

The Greater Curtin Master Plan was awarded a 6 Star Green Star – Communities certification by the Green Building Council of Australia (GBCA) for its continued commitment to creating a sustainable and thriving campus.

Green Star is an internationally recognised sustainability rating which assesses the planning, design and construction of large scale development projects across five categories including governance, liveability, economic prosperity, environment and innovation.

Initiatives to achieve this include upgrades to the central plant thermal system and electrical infrastructure which, along with efficiency upgrades in buildings and solar installations, will result in a highly efficient campus with a 50 per cent reduction in peak electrical load and a 40 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions forecast by the time the Master Plan has been delivered.

### **Deakin University**

Developed in partnership with AusNet Services and Mondo Power, the 7.25 megawatt Renewable Energy Microgrid at the Geelong Waurn Ponds Campus is a fundamental part of Deakin's transition to 100 per cent renewable energy and pathway to achieve carbon neutral by 2025 and carbon negative by 2030.

The microgrid comprises a 7 megawatt solar energy farm, a 1 megawatt / 2 megawatt hour central battery storage system, 250 kilowatts of distributed rooftop solar and 30 kilowatt hours of battery storage on campus buildings. The microgrid central battery storage system is an Australian-first grid-connected lithium iron phosphate battery.

Already delivering around half of the campus' electricity needs and providing ongoing cost savings, the Renewable Energy Microgrid will also contribute 12,000 tonnes of annual emissions reduction towards Deakin's carbon neutral commitment in 2025.

The microgrid will also support the education and training of future energy professionals, build the Deakin's research capacity and provide research opportunities in areas such as energy storage, community energy, transactional modelling and forecasting, cyber security and future fuels.

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## **RMIT University**

RMIT has led the Australian tertiary sector for onsite emissions reductions, most recently reporting a 62 per cent reduction in 2020. RMIT has reduced emissions through a strategic \$128 million multi-year investment into on-campus energy efficiency, a comprehensive solar panel rollout and addressing building design standards.

Following the reduction to on-site reductions RMIT has signed two long-term renewable energy purchasing agreements, transforming our campuses in supplying carbon neutral electricity. The Melbourne Renewable Energy Project was the first corporate group power purchase agreement in the world.

Building on the success of the first project, RMIT led a second purchasing group of Melbourne universities and businesses to source wind energy from the Yaloak South Wind Farm near Ballan. The purchasing group included 14 shopping centres, 9 office buildings, 7 educational campuses, and 4 manufacturing facilities. Facilitated by the City of Melbourne, the deal provides enough renewable energy to power more than 22,000 households or the equivalent of taking 28,000 cars off the road.

RMIT proudly reported that its investment portfolio had no exposure to fossil fuels from March 2021. This change is in line with the RMIT Responsible Investment Principles, which also screens for other issues including those relating to public health and wellbeing.

Looking ahead, RMIT plans to continue to drive down campus emissions and become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030.

## **University of South Australia**

UniSA's carbon emissions management strategy has focussed on reducing electricity consumption on campus. The University has achieved a 42 per cent reduction in Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions since 2007.

Two megawatts of solar panels have been installed at UniSA's Mawson Lakes and City West campuses. This initiative alone has effectively offset the addition of two new buildings - equivalent to a 9 per cent reduction in carbon emissions.

Other initiatives applied across the University include more energy efficient lighting and air-conditioning.

## **University of Technology Sydney**

UTS achieved its 30 per cent reduction target via a number of initiatives including maximising on-campus solar, an Australian-first Power Purchase Agreement with a rural solar farm, an Australian-first district chilled water agreement, energy efficiency projects, Green Star building certifications, use of building analytics software, building tuning, and behaviour change initiatives. The University is currently developing the *UTS Climate Positive Plan* which will consist of a decarbonisation pathway with net zero targets.

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