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RYDE BUSINESSES CUT ENERGY BILLS

The City of Ryde has joined Australia's leading energy efficiency program for offices to help local businesses cut their energy bills.

Ryde joins Sydney, North Sydney, Parramatta, Willoughby, Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth, Port Phillip, the ACT Government, the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, and Sustainability Victoria, in the CitySwitch program www.cityswitch.net.au.

CitySwitch now covers 322 tenancies around the country, and more than 1.6 million square metres of office space.

"CitySwitch offers businesses a double benefit of lower energy bills and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which lower their exposure to the proposed carbon price," said City of Ryde Mayor Artin Etmekdjian.

CitySwitch began in 2006, as a partnership between the City of Sydney, North Sydney and Parramatta, and expanded nationally in June 2008.

City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore MP said rising electricity prices and the prospect of carbon pricing are encouraging businesses to join the program.

"More than half the energy used in our capital city CBDs comes from office equipment, lighting and computers – that means there's huge potential for saving energy and reducing power bills," the Lord Mayor said.

The program uses NABERS Energy, an industry recognised tool, to help tenants across Australia benchmark their greenhouse performance. Ratings go from one to five stars, with five stars representing an exceptionally high level of energy efficiency.

Organisations that become CitySwitch signatories commit to achieving an accredited four stars or higher NABERS Energy rating.

With the average tenancy performing at 2.5 stars, a four star commitment means the tenant is at least 20 per cent more efficient than the general tenant market.

If all of Australia's commercial office tenants were to achieve a NABERS Energy tenancy rating of four stars or higher, 960,000 tonnes of CO2 could be saved each year, the equivalent of taking 200,000 cars off the road.

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