

Media Release

EMBARGOED Sunday 24 January

EARTH HOUR 2010: MAKE THE 'SWITCH' TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE

WWF-Australia today announced that Earth Hour 2010 will be held at 8:30pm Saturday 27 March, with 20 countries and over 250 cities around the world already signed up as part of the global countdown to lights out.

Numerous cities and towns in Australia, Canada, USA, Singapore, Russia, Sweden, Belgium, Bolivia, Korea, New Zealand, Switzerland and Turkey have already signed up, with many more expected in coming weeks*. Moscow, Rio, Rome, Seoul, Manila, Singapore, Toronto, Hong Kong and Dallas are the latest to confirm their commitment.

"Millions of Australians took part in previous Earth Hours, and for good reason – it is a great way to show that you care about the planet," said Greg Bourne, WWF-Australia's CEO.

"We're hoping that communities large and small around Australia will once again join in this great event, and make a strong statement that they are both concerned about the state of our environment and committed to taking action."

In 2010, Earth Hour will focus on broader, ongoing sustainability, in addition to carbon pollution and climate change.

"This year, we're asking people to go beyond turning off lights and instead make an Earth Hour resolution to start something bigger," said Mr Bourne.

"Switching off your lights is a great first step, but your true environmental impact is much bigger than just your energy bill. Each individual's environmental impact – or environmental footprint – is made up of things such as the food you eat, the transport and housing you choose, and the goods and services you buy."

WWF has developed an interactive, online footprint calculator that allows people to quickly and easily work out the size of their environmental footprint, with hints and tips on how to reduce and improve it.

"We are asking everyone to measure their complete footprint by using our online calculator at earthhour.org.au," said Mr Bourne.

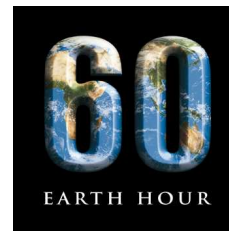
"Modern living means most of us lead environmentally unsustainable lifestyles – using the planet's resources much faster than they can be renewed. Once you've calculated the size of your footprint, why not make a resolution to do something on an ongoing basis to reduce it?"

"Reducing your environmental footprint involves looking at the simple choices you make in your day-to-day life – choices about the food you eat, the way you move around and where you spend your money. If we all make simple changes, we can all make the switch to a more sustainable lifestyle."

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* Over 4,000 cities globally signed up to Earth Hour in 2009.

Notes to editors: The Earth Hour Australia website, www.earthhour.org.au, will go live the morning of Sunday 24 January.



Stats and facts on Australia's ecological footprint

- According to WWF's 2008 Living Planet Report – the organisation's biennial assessment of the state of the natural world – Australia has the fifth largest ecological footprint per capita in the world, up from sixth worst in 2006.
- Each Australian uses more land and water per person than the UK, China, Russia and India and it now takes 7.81 hectares to maintain the lifestyle of each Australian – up from 6.76 hectares per person in 2006. Only the United Arab Emirates, USA, Kuwait and Denmark rated worse.
- Australia's carbon emissions, along with its cropping and grazing practices are the largest contributors to our massive ecological footprint, together accounting for 86 per cent of the total.
- The nation's water use is more than the global average (1.39 million litres per person per year compared to 1.24 million litres per person per year) and our agricultural industries use more water for production than any other industry sector in the country.

Simple starter tips for reducing your footprint

- Ditch the take away coffee cup – *this will reduce landfill and the amount of resources used to produce your daily pick-me-up.*
- Try a meat-free day once a week – *did you now that hundreds of litres of water are needed to produce one kilogram of beef?*
- Double the efficiency of your car by putting another person in it! – *this is an easy way to reduce your mobility footprint.*
- Cut out one flight this year – *air travel contributes significantly to your mobility footprint. Choosing to holiday closer to home, or avoiding business travel, can make a really big difference.*
- Recycle your electronic gadgets – *old mobiles, iPods, TVs, computers and radios contain lots of material that can be recycled such gold, copper and coltan. None of this needs to end up as landfill.*
- Walk, ride or take public transport to work once a week – *this will save you money, improve your health and lower your footprint.*
- Every night, make sure you don't leave things on stand-by power – *by turning appliances like TVs off at the wall, you're eliminating wasted energy and carbon.*
- And... ask your local MP what their Earth Hour resolution is, and what they are doing to address climate change – *this is a great way to make sure that your voice is heard and that your representatives understand your concerns.*

About Earth Hour

At 8.30 pm on Saturday 27 March, 2010 millions of people around the world will turn off their lights for one hour, Earth Hour, to show that we can all choose to make a difference. Since its inception three years ago, Earth Hour has captured the imagination of the world becoming a global phenomenon. Last year, for Earth Hour 2009, nearly one billion people in more than 4,000 cities in 87 countries, turned off their lights. Around the world, icons that turned off their lights included the Great Pyramids of Giza, the Parthenon in Athens, the St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament in London, the Elysee Palace and Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Bird's Nest and the Water Cube in Beijing, the Symphony of Lights in Hong Kong, the Opera House in Sydney, the statue of Christ Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, the Angel of Independence in Mexico and the Buenos Aires Obelisk, among others.

About WWF

WWF-Australia is part of the WWF International Network, the world's largest and most experienced independent conservation organisation. It has close to five million supporters and a global network active in more than 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

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