



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Environment and Climate Change

Friday, 18 September, 2009

GREEN ROOFS TO PROVIDE A COOLER FUTURE FOR VICTORIA

Imagine the roofs of Melbourne's skyscrapers covered with trees, plants and lawn. That's the vision of the future being examined by a 'green roofs' research project partly funded by the Brumby Labor Government.

Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings said the Government had contributed \$120,000 over three years to the University of Melbourne's Green Roof Research Program which will look at tackling climate change through planting vegetation on city roofs.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to tackle climate change through innovative solutions because a sustainable environment is crucial to our future," Mr Jennings said.

"In large cities like Melbourne, concrete buildings and heavy construction materials capture and store the sun's heat, especially in summer. Through this effect cities can be around four degrees warmer than surrounding rural areas and contribute to global warming.

"Placing vegetation on the roofs of buildings is known to help cool the urban environment especially during summer heat waves. Green roofs also assist with building heating and cooling costs, improve the quality of stormwater flows which end up in our rivers, create an urban biodiversity habitat and help reduce noise.

"As well as making cities more attractive, green roofs also enhance the liveability of the urban environment by creating opportunities for people to enjoy the outdoors."

Mr Jennings said the Australian-first research project would examine the best green roof design model for Australian conditions.

"We have to find our own solutions as Australia has a unique environment and the plants and substrates used in other parts of the world may not work here," he said.

"A lot of building owners are interested in establishing green roofs and the Green Roof Research Program will help inform them about which plants are best adapted to be grown on roofs, which soils are most appropriate and what the impact is on stormwater run-off."

Melbourne University lecturer Dr Nicholas Williams said the Green Roof Research Program would also develop an understanding of the attitudes of building owners, developers, planners and other stakeholders about green roofs.

"Our research will significantly progress the Australian green roof industry by overcoming barriers to their implementation and will lead to multiple environmental, economic and health benefits," Dr Williams said.

The Green Roof Research Program is also being funded by a \$1.33 million Australian Research Council 2009 Linkage Project grant that includes a monetary contribution from Melbourne Water and in-kind support from Melbourne City Council and the Committee for Melbourne.

The Green Roof Australia Conference will be held at the University of Melbourne's Burnley Campus on 23-25 September.

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