

Coal Relied On For Foreseeable Future: Ferguson

“Despite the growth in renewables and nuclear power in the region, the reality is we will be reliant on coal, gas and other fossil fuels for the foreseeable future,” Federal Energy Minister Martin Ferguson highlighted in his speech to a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Partnership Joint Task Force in Melbourne. In his keynote address to the seven-nation forum, Ferguson noted that the Kyoto Protocol and the Asia-Pacific Partnership are complementary strategies. “One is based around binding targets and the other the development and adoption of the new environmentally friendly technologies and clean energy sources to help us reach those targets,” he says. Ferguson also notes that although Japan is one of the larger users of nuclear power, its electricity sector continues to rely heavily on coal and natural gas. Korea, China and the US are examples of countries whose growth and sustainability would not be possible without coal-fired power stations, according to Ferguson. Australia’s coal resources are so large that they could be significant in the global energy mix for several hundred years, says Ferguson, assuming the advent of successful clean coal technologies. And this is the reason he is driving the Australian Government’s \$500 million National Clean Coal Initiative. “This very important investment will build on the billion dollar COAL21 fund that Australian coal producers have committed to clean coal technology,” he says. The Government’s funding also includes \$75 million for a National Clean Coal Research program, \$50 million for a national carbon mapping and infrastructure plan, \$50 million for a coal gasification research facility in Queensland, and \$100 million for two post-combustion capture PCC demonstration plants in New South Wales and Victoria.

[Source: essa news]