

NZ budget funds energy efficiency, ETS development

New Zealand Prime Minister John Key and his government have delivered their first budget, which includes NZ\$323.3 million provision over four years for home insulation, clean heat and other energy efficiency measures. More than 180,000 homes in NZ will have access to grants for insulation and clean heating as part of a major investment in household energy efficiency. "This scheme is an important step towards warmer homes as well as invigorating the retrofit industry," says Energy Minister Gerry Brownlee. The scheme will start on July 1. The New Zealand Insulation Fund's goal aims for up to 60,500 homes to be insulated each year by 2012-13. "Government grants of up to NZ\$1,800 will be available for houses built before 2000 that require ceiling and underfloor insulation or a clean heating device, regardless of income," Brownlee says. The fund is made up of NZ\$243.7 million in new funding, on top of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority's existing NZ\$79.6 million for home interest subsidies and home grants programs, to provide NZ\$323.3 million for the New Zealand Insulation Fund over the next four years. In other budget announcements, funding has been increased by NZ\$6.9 million over the next four years for developing the emissions trading scheme, including international linkages. "The Government also wants to ensure there are the necessary resources for our reform of the Resource Management Act and redesign and implementation of an emissions trading scheme," says Environment Minister Nick Smith. "Feel-good programs that cost much and achieved little have been shelved. The Government has refocused the Ministry for the Environment to ensure it delivers tangible results in our priority areas of climate change, freshwater management, biodiversity, waste management and air quality," he says.

Source: esaa News – Issue 21, 1 June 2009