

GOVERNMENT ADS CLAIM CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST CHALLENGE THAT WILL DEFINE THIS GENERATION

Tuesday, 8th April 2008: The Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Mr. John Gormley, T.D., will today launch the consumer communication aspect of the Government's climate change campaign. The "Change" campaign has two key and overriding imperatives; firstly to change how people in Ireland think about climate change, and secondly to encourage everyone to change how they behave. The communications campaign includes a comprehensive website, www.change.ie, a lo-call information line, 1890-242 643, and advertising, all of which are backed up by an extensive stakeholder engagement process that is working with all of the sectors to change behaviour and reduce Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions with a view to halting climate change.

Market research conducted by Behaviour & Attitudes on behalf of the "Change" campaign has found that 82% of people are concerned about the impact of climate change on Ireland. The Change campaign will encourage everyone to change how they behave, at home, at work and in the community. This approach has been endorsed by the public with 95% saying it is up to everyone individually to play their part in tackling global warming.

The first phase of the advertising element of the "Change" campaign will start tonight to motivate and inspire people to get involved in Ireland's plan of action on climate change. The epic 60-second television advertisement opens with footage of Eamon De Valera and Michael Collins and continues with scenes showing challenges that Ireland has faced since the foundation of the State. These include scenes of emigration in the 1950s, UN peace keeping and humanitarian involvement overseas, the Peace Process and economic development. The voice over tells viewers that climate change is "The single biggest challenge that we face," and that "our response will define us as a generation". It ends with the call to action: "Change Your World; Change the World".

"We reached this approach after a lengthy process of consultation and research with people from across the country and from all backgrounds. We found that people often think the size of the challenge is overwhelming," says Mr. John Gormley, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. "We need people to understand that we are capable of meeting the challenge of climate change. We have tackled major challenges in the past, like the Emigration, Unemployment and the Peace Process. What Ireland does about climate change matters. What we each do in our own lives at work, at home and in our communities influences and motivates others and we will, together, contribute to the global solution."

"Our research indicates that most people in Ireland are aware of climate change, accept the science that climate change is a reality and have a sense of the seriousness of the issue," says Minister Gormley. "People are telling us that they want guidance on what they can do to prevent climate change. People need to change how they think; change how they behave and the "Change" campaign is going to show people at an individual level and across all of the sectors how."

An extensive stakeholder engagement programme is well underway and aims to galvanise organisations across large industry, SMEs, the public sector, education, agriculture, construction and tourism, with information and knowledge to change their behaviour in order to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Seminars will be held throughout the campaign, starting this month, to inform and to show them how to change their work practices in order to contribute to a solution to climate change.

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“There is a lot that we can each do in our home, our community and our workplace. We need a national collective response at every level of society to address this challenge but it can be done. While the government can and is taking the lead, it is the positive response at an individual, family, community and sectoral level that will create real change,” says Minister Gormley.

To find out what you can do to Change Your World, visit www.change.ie, or lo-call 1890-CHANGE (1890-242 643).

Scientists and governments across the world are all agreed that climate change is happening. Climate change threatens our environmental, economic and social well-being and it has been caused by man-made emissions, which if they continue to grow, will have potentially catastrophic, worldwide effects.

The “Change” campaign is being led by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government on behalf of the Government. It is being delivered by Mary Murphy Associates PR, RPS Project Communications, Cawley Nea\TBWA Advertising and OMD.

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“CHANGE” COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Seminars for the public sector, business, education, tourism, construction and agriculture are open for booking at www.change.ie and are being held as follows:

- Galway on Wednesday 23rd April 2008
- Cork on Wednesday 30th April 2008
- Dublin on Thursday 1st May 2008 and
- Online on 7th May (i.e. accessible from any location with web access).

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The advertising element of the communications strategy will utilise mass media including TV, Radio, the Internet, Outdoor Advertising, Transport Advertising, Ambient and Site Specific activities such as shopping centres, schools, events, etc. The PR and advertising elements of the campaign have two distinct phases:

1. “The Challenge”, from 8th April 2008
2. “Know Your Number”, from 28th April 2008

“It is vital to get the communications about climate change right from the start. We have been conducting extensive research since last Summer and it consistently shows that people have a general knowledge that climate change is happening but they want a deeper understanding of what it is, what are the effects and what they can do,” says Diane Tangney, Planning Director, Cawley Nea\TBWA.

“This in-depth research led us to develop the Challenge ad to inspire and motivate everybody across all sectors and geographical areas to encourage people to work together to stop climate change. Market testing of the ads has found that the approach we have taken generates a strong

feeling of pride and motivation and we are confident that the ads will be a strong call to action,” says Diane Tangney.

Phase 2 will be a “Know your Number” advertising and information campaign that will start at the end of April 2008. This is based on the insight that each and every one of us has a carbon number that can be measured, and that we need to change our lifestyle in order to reduce that number if we are to halt climate change.

- The “Know Your Number” campaign will include an online Carbon Calculator aimed at individuals to help them identify and reduce their impact on climate change.
- A Carbon Management Tool for business and the public sector is currently being developed and will undergo extensive live testing with a number of organisations of varying sizes and activity before being rolled out across all sectors.
- The “Know Your Number” campaign will effectively assist in moving climate change away from being a global crisis to making it a national and a local issue that requires individual responsibility.

FACTS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Nowadays the term climate change is generally used when referring to changes in our climate. The changes we have seen over recent years and those, which are predicted over the next 80 years, are thought to be mainly as a result of human behaviour rather than due to natural changes in the atmosphere. The “greenhouse effect” is very important when we talk about climate change as it relates to the gases which keep the earth warm. It is the extra greenhouse gases, which humans have released through our everyday activities, which are thought to pose the strongest threat, warming the earth beyond what would be expected under natural cycles.

The total impact of all of our activities – how we heat our homes and workplaces, how we travel, what we consume – is called our Carbon Footprint or Carbon Number. Reducing our overall Carbon Number is the challenge we face in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and in turn reduce the impact of climate change.

Scientists, the UN, the EU and governments across the world confirm that climate change is the biggest challenge facing humanity.

Climate change threatens our environmental, economic and social well-being.

Climate change has been caused by man-made emissions and if these emissions continue to grow, they will have potentially catastrophic, worldwide effects, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, 2007.

Ireland is one of the world’s largest producers of greenhouse gas emissions per capita

What we do impacts on the environment here in Ireland, and across the globe.

Several major research projects are being funded by the Government into the potential impacts of climate change on Ireland, including agricultural impacts, health, pollution and flood risks.

Industry is making changes to work practices to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and is making significant cost savings in the process.

We can all save money and help to reduce climate change by making simple changes to our lifestyles
– visit www.change.ie for ideas on what you can do.