

World's First Transportable Biodiesel Refinery Shipped To Darwin

The world's first transportable biodiesel refinery has been shipped from the Australian Marine Complex (AMC) at Henderson, Western Australia to a \$48 million facility in Darwin.

The \$11 million plant was built by the Ausclad Group of Companies for WA-based biofuels company Natural Fuels Australia at the AMC. It is scheduled for commissioning at the end of September 2006 and will produce 147 million litres of biodiesel and 12,960 tonnes of glycerine per annum using virgin vegetable oils as its feedstock.

The plant will employ the most advanced and proven biodiesel production technology available, under an exclusive five-year licence in Australia through Lurgi AG. Lurgi, designer of the modular refinery, is a world leader in the development of processing technology and plant construction for the biodiesel industry.

Natural Fuels Chief Executive Officer, Richard Selwood, said the plant is one of two planned by the company in Darwin and Port Botany, New South Wales, to commence in 2007. Environmental impact studies for the Port Botany facility are underway. He said plans are already underway for a 2007 launch of three other Natural Fuel biodiesel refineries in Houston, USA, Singapore, and Malaysia.

The Darwin plant is to be owned and operated by Natural Fuels Australia Limited, a 50:50 joint venture between Natural Fuel Limited and Babcock and Brown Environmental Investments Limited. "The premium biodiesel, meeting all international standards, and the pharmaceutical quality glycerine it produces will be sold to domestic and export markets", Selwood said.

"Biodiesel and ethanol are the most significant mainstream alternative fuels this century. Without any question, biodiesel has huge national and international potential to supplement petroleum diesel and to reduce exhaust emissions. We are just scratching the surface of demand with this first plant and are braced for tremendous growth, an excellent return on investment, and a very exciting future."

Western Australian Science and Innovation Minister, Francis Logan, said the plant represented a terrific advance for biofuels in Western Australia and an important indication of the scale of work that was possible at the AMC. "This is the first time anywhere in the world that a large-scale biodiesel plant has been built with the specific intention of transporting it to another site", Logan said. "They have tried it all over the world, but we are the first to have tried it and succeeded."

The plant has been fabricated and assembled as a stand-alone module and was officially



"Biodiesel: The Way Forward. (L to R) Natural Fuel Ltd Chief Executive Officer, Richard Selwood; Minister for Energy, Science and Innovation, Francis Logan; and City of Cockburn mayor, Stephen Lee, at the unveiling of Natural Fuel's biodiesel refinery"



"Natural Fuel's big future: The new 400 tonne modular biodiesel refinery, the first in the world to be constructed entirely off-site, is loaded onto ship for transport to Natural Fuel's site in Darwin"

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loaded out in preparation for its ocean voyage to Darwin on 14 July. Logan said biodiesel process plants would normally need to be built piece by piece on site. "However, given the challenging site conditions in Darwin, Natural

Fuels Australia decided to take advantage of the common user facility at the AMC. This has allowed them to complete the majority of the construction in WA, using the very best equipment, infrastructure and skills." ■