

Showcase \$70 MM Renewable Energy Plant Planned For Darwin

In an Australian first, the Darwin City Council has entered into negotiations with the Renewable Oil Corporation to construct a \$70 million greenwaste renewable energy project at Shoal Bay.

Renewable Oil Corporation Chief Executive Officer, Col Stucley, said the Shoal Bay plant will be a showcase of world-leading bio-fuel technology and will be the first application of the method in Australia.

He said the plant will use pyrolysis technology developed by Canadian experts over many decades and licensed to Renewable Oil Corporation for use in Australia. The Australian plant to be built and operated by Renewable Oil will turn Darwin's greenwaste into bio-oil fuel and avoids sending the waste into landfill.

"The plant will produce fuel for use at remote mine sites to generate electricity", Stucley said. "This fuel will be sufficient to replace 15 MMl of diesel each year and does not produce any damaging CO₂. It is also a cheaper method of fuel generation than bio diesel and is easily transported to wherever it is needed."

"We know this technology works overseas, and we are delighted to be bringing it to the Territory, benefiting both business and our environment." The Shoal Bay plant will be similar to a plant which has been operating successfully in Canada for two years.

Pyrolysis technology

When wood is pyrolysed, heated in the absence of oxygen, it breaks down into solid, liquid and gaseous fractions. The liquid fraction is known as pyrolysis oil or bio-oil. It comprises as much as 70% of the pyrolysis products and can either be used immediately as a fuel for the generation of renewable electricity and heat in gas turbines and boilers or in the longer term for the extraction of industrial resins, food flavourings, and other natural chemicals.

If negotiations are successful, contracts for construction of the Shoal Bay plant are expected to be let this year with a target of having the plant fully operational by October 2008.

Acting Darwin Lord Mayor Chris Tilley welcomed the concept of re-use of all or part of greenwaste for new energy. "It will return positive environmental and financial results for the community not the least being reduction of greenhouse gas emissions", she said. "We are very excited about this project, but there is a way to go yet and more negotiations to take place." ■