

## SA Turns To Green Power

The Australian EcoGeneration Association (AEA) has praised the South Australian government's decision to purchase half of the renewable energy produced from the new Starfish Hill wind farm.

With results from a recent AEA study identifying that renewable energy projects provide up to five times as many jobs and twice the local investment of traditional power generation projects, President of the AEA, Andrew Stock, said that wind energy has the potential to deliver significant economic and environmental benefits to South Australia.

Wind farms are considered a highly desirable form of renewable energy because they do

not emit greenhouse gases in the generation of electricity. "With electricity accounting for almost 40% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, we need to shift to sustainable sources of energy such as wind", Stock said.

The Starfish Hill wind farm is being established north of Cape Jervis on the Fleurieu Peninsula. The project is South Australia's first wind farm project and, when completed in autumn 2003, will be the largest wind farm in Australia.

Starfish Hill Construction and Operations Coordinator, Jeff Ware, said site roads and fencing had been constructed and work on the turbine foundations and trenches for the electric cabling had commenced.

The \$65 million project is being developed by Tarong Energy, which is a Queensland government-owned electricity generation corporation.

Once in production, the wind farm will generate up to 34.5 MW of electricity per year, which is enough to meet the needs of more than 18,000 South Australian households, 2% of the state's residential market.

The 23 wind turbines are being manufactured by Danish group, NEG Micon. The 68 m wind towers are being produced by Adelaide-based engineering firm, Air-Ride Technologies. The project also includes the construction of a new 25-kilometre, 66-kilovolt transmission line, which will connect the wind farm to the ETSA Utilities electricity distribution network.

The Chair of Tarong Energy, Ken Dredge, said the corporation believed Starfish Hill to be one of the best sites in Australia for wind power. "Starfish Hill is subjected to consistently strong winds year-round while being situated in a sparsely populated area which was previously cleared farming and grazing land and is close to the market and transmission facilities", he said.

Dredge said the wind farm would reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by up to 2.1 MMT of carbon dioxide during its 25-year life span.

South Australian Minister for Energy, Patrick Conlon, has approved the project, saying it signals the state's move into commercial renewable energy production. "The project will provide the state with much needed extra generation capacity and improved security and quality of supply with minimal environmental impact", Conlon said.

The Starfish Hill project is part of the state government's plan to increase the amount of renewable energy and cut the state's greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2010.

The 1998 State of the Environment report showed South Australia released 30 MMT of greenhouse gases in 1998, while less than 1% of the state's energy was produced by sustainable energy sources.

"We already have a series of wind power projects being lined up for South Australia. Our South East, Eyre and Fleurieu Peninsula coastlines are particularly well suited for wind power", Premier Mike Rann said.

The Rann government has also approved South Australia's first hydro-electric scheme in late May 2002, with plans for mini hydro facilities to be established at the Mt Bold Dam and Anstey Hill water treatment plant.

The project would be backed by a partnership of Hydro Tasmania and SA

Water, each of which will contribute 50% of the \$5.4MM capital required for the projects.

Mr Rann said the hydro projects would generate an average of 11 GW of renewable energy per year; enough to supply 1700 households.

The project is being considered by the SA Public Works Committee, and SA Water expect that it will be completed within 10 months of the committee's approval.

*The Starfish Hill wind farm is well-positioned to take advantage of the winds that whip the Fleurieu Peninsula.*

