

Kalbarri Kicks Off New Push For WA Renewable Energy

The Western Australian government has announced plans for a new wind farm for Kalbarri as part of an \$18 million expansion of a major renewable energy programme for regional WA.

Energy Minister, Francis Logan, said the new initiatives would provide clear benefits for remote and regional communities in WA, including more reliable and cleaner energy supplies.

Logan said the expansion of the Renewable Remote Power Generation Program (RRPGP) would allow rebates to be offered to small and medium-sized renewable energy systems in rural areas on the fringe of the main electricity grid. Previously, the rebates only applied to systems in remote communities.

"This is great news for increasing the use of renewable energy in regional WA", he said. "These renewable energy systems will help to meet local electricity demands, reducing the amount of electricity that has to be supplied from centralised power stations and transmitted over long distances. This will improve the quality of power supplies, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and assist the local renewable energy industry."

Logan said the RRPGP was funded by the Federal government from money collected



An Enercon E48 800 kW wind turbine, similar to the two machines that will be installed at Kalbarri. Picture courtesy: Enercon.

from the diesel fuel excise and administered in WA by the State government's Sustainable Energy Development Office. Projects that may be supported under the expanded scheme

include small to medium-sized solar and wind power systems, and bio-energy projects that use plantation forestry or agricultural wastes for electricity generation.

The proposed Kalbarri wind farm would be the first major project supported by the expanded programme. Logan said the State government and the RRPGP would each contribute \$1.9 million to the construction of the 1.6MW wind farm, which will involve the installation of two wind turbines and a state-of-the-art control system on the southern outskirts of the town.

To be built by Verve Energy, the farm is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 4,500 t annually. It should be completed by May 2007 and is the latest wind farm to be built with the support of the State government. The others are at Esperance, Hopetoun, Rottnest Island, Bremer Bay, Exmouth, Denham, Albany and Walkaway. More information on the RRPGP is available at www.sedo.energy.wa.gov.au

Verve Energy was created in April 2006 when Western Power separated into four businesses as part of the State government's energy market reforms. The company competes against privately owned energy companies to provide a reliable electricity supply in the South West Interconnected System, an area bounded by Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Albany. ■