

## Five Companies To Invest \$77.6 MM Exploring Victorian Geothermal Potential

Five energy companies will invest \$77.6 million over five years to explore for geothermal energy in southern Victoria across an area of 80,000 km<sup>2</sup> after winning tenders from the Victorian government.

Victorian Energy and Resources Minister, Peter Batchelor, said the push for renewable energy was part of the state government's attempt to reach a target of reducing greenhouse emissions by 60% by 2050. "We have also established the Victorian Renewable Energy Target (VRET) scheme which requires 10% of Victoria's energy to come from renewable sources by 2016", Batchelor said.

"It is vital we explore all means of producing electricity in a more sustainable way and geothermal offers that potential." The five companies that successfully competed for exploration area rights were Hot Rock Ltd, Geogen Victoria, Torrens Energy Ltd, Proactive Energy Developments Ltd and Greenerth Energy Ltd. A sixth company, Karoon Gas, who had also put in a tender for acreage declined to take up an offer after reassessing its current activities.

Batchelor said geothermal energy sources in Victoria have scarcely been explored, but there is a growing awareness of their potential.

"Victoria has a real advantage over other Australian states in the development of this energy source because of the compact nature of the state and the proximity of potential energy sources to the power grid and prospective markets", he said.

He said the government had developed a framework for the exploration and development of geothermal energy. "The Geothermal Energy Resources Act was proclaimed in 2005 and puts in place a legal framework for large-scale commercial exploration and development of geothermal energy", he said. ■