

Industry Knowledge Needed To Shape Australia's Fledgling Geothermal Sector

A unique and one-off initiative will provide stakeholders of geothermal interests in Australia with an opportunity to have input into the development of a geothermal framework that will shape the emerging geothermal industry for years to come.

On behalf of the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) is inviting stakeholders to participate in the establishment of a Geothermal Industry Development Framework and Technology Road Map to decide the growth of the embryonic geothermal sector in Australia.

Stephen Hinchliffe, senior executive engineer for SKM said that by seeking input from all relevant stakeholders the facilitated consultation process will draw on the interests, opinions, knowledge and ideas from a broad range of participants with an interest in this new industry.

“This is an exciting opportunity for those with an interest in geothermal and it is through this consultation process that an environment can be established in which the industry can successfully deliver long-term, sustainable benefits to both the environment and economy.”

“In responding to Australia’s rising energy demands, governments, industry and regulators are faced with the challenge of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Geothermal energy offers the potential to be a viable alternative to fossil fuels to meet current and future energy demands”, Hinchliffe stated.

Hinchliffe added that while geothermal power is an attractive alternative, it faces many challenges. These include identifying areas for geological exploitation, development of supporting technologies, ecological impacts, cultural heritage, community awareness and

the need to engender an understanding of the regulatory environment, inter-agency jurisdictions, and conditions for investment attraction.

“The Federal government recognise however, that the knowledge and capability to overcome such challenges is dispersed amongst different groups and collaboration will be needed to achieve the potential of the sector in Australia. As such, the government is seeking to establish a nexus between these groups, thus removing the potential impediment of fragmentation within the industry”, Hinchliffe said.

SKM, a global engineering and consulting group has been engaged by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources to deliver the development framework and technology roadmap through a thorough and facilitated workshop consultation phase. Supported by Hot Dry Rocks and BDO Kendalls, four structured workshops will capture industry knowledge, concerns, opinions and proposals in order to facilitate the development of a geothermal industry to realise the resource potential in Australia.

The development framework is designed to deliver a number of outputs through a targeted

consultation process with stakeholders. In particular, key areas include:

- Assessment of the training and skills development requirements;
- Assessment of the legislative and regulatory framework;
- An analysis of private sector financing structures and government financing; and
- Support as well as community concerns related to the development of a geothermal industry in Australia.

Target stakeholders include the geothermal energy industry members, other energy producers, research and development representatives, education and training providers, government agencies, potential investors and community members. Input into the framework development process is not limited to the facilitated workshops.

For those who cannot participate, input can be made via other methods, including making a submission via the project website or by completing a survey via the project website. www.geothermalframework.net.au

Workshop dates and topics are listed below. Please see the project website for further details. ■

Workshop	Topic	Location	Date
2.2	An Assessment of the Legislative and Regulatory Framework of the Australian Geothermal Industry	Adelaide	28 November, 2007 8.15am – 1.30pm
3.1	Analysis of Private Sector and Government Financing Structures related to the Australian Geothermal Industry.	Sydney	6 December, 2007 12.45pm – 6.30pm
3.2	Identify Community concerns regarding Geothermal Technologies and Develop response strategies	Sydney	7 December, 2007 8.15am – 1.30pm
4	Prepare the Australian Geothermal Industry Development Framework. through synthesising the above components.	TBC	14 March, 2008 (TBC)