

Press Release

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Geothermal energy to power jobs boom

Over 17,000 Australians could be employed in the geothermal energy industry by 2050, according to a report released today by WWF and the Australian Geothermal Energy Association (AGEA).

"We have an opportunity to develop a massive, emissions-free energy source that can power Australia's homes and businesses while growing jobs," said Paul Toni, WWF Program Leader for Sustainable Development.

"When it comes to geothermal energy, we truly are the lucky country. The energy stored in hot rocks near the Earth's surface in Australia is a thousand fold what we use each and every year."

Power to Change: Australia's Geothermal Future is the first in a series of reports looking into the potential of renewable energy technologies to deliver clean power, employment and investment as Australia shifts to a low-carbon economy.

"We must reshape our economy and our energy sector if we are serious about tackling climate change", said Mr Toni.

"Capable of running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, geothermal energy is one of the vital clean energy resources needed to make this transformation."

WWF and AGEA are calling on the Australian Government to support the renewable energy industry and help boost employment and clean power. The Government's planned Renewable Energy Target Scheme favours cheaper, existing technologies at the expense of emerging, break through ones like geothermal.

"We need the Government to truly support emerging renewable energy technologies like geothermal, ocean, and solar thermal now, otherwise Australia will struggle to make the changes that are needed."

Generating energy remains Australia's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. By 2050, geothermal energy could cut out approximately one-quarter of emissions coming from electricity generation.

Susan Jeanes, Chief Executive of AGEA emphasised Australia's chance to become a world leader in geothermal technology.

"We are developing a global leadership position in the technical capability to exploit this resource.

"The geothermal energy industry provides opportunities for workers to move from industries like coal, oil and gas, into clean energy jobs as much of the technology and expertise is transferable from one to the other," said Ms Jeanes.

It is estimated that if just one per cent of the easily accessible geothermal energy was exploited, it could provide more than 26,000 times Australia's annual energy consumption.

The geothermal industry in Australia is growing rapidly with almost 400 geothermal tenements nationwide and around \$1.5 billion in work programs underway. According to WWF and AGEA's report, the Cooper Basin, which overlaps the borders of Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia, holds enormous potential energy.

Power to Change: Australia's Geothermal Future is available at <http://www.wwf.org.au/publications/powerchange/>

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This press release and associated material can be found on www.wwf.org.au

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