

News Release

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Premier Mike Rann

Minister for Economic Development
Minister for Social Inclusion
Minister for the Arts
Minister for Sustainability and Climate Change

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SA - A TEST BED FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY INITIATIVES

Premier Mike Rann has announced funding for two renewable energy research projects, including a solar-powered air-conditioning system that could cut home electricity bills in half.

The Government's Renewable Energy Fund is committing funding for the development of two unique prototypes: a residential solar thermal air conditioning system and a combined geothermal/solar energy power station.

"Local research institutions stand to benefit from a \$200,000 State Government investment into the development of a locally grown air conditioner that will turn heat from the sun into cool air," Mr Rann said.

"Development of this product will focus specifically on residential applications – to supply cool air in summer as well as winter heating and hot water, which could potentially reduce an average householder's energy use by over half.

"During South Australian summers there is always a great increase in demand for electricity, which contributes to the State's greenhouse gas pollution and taxes our electricity infrastructure.

"In the past three years, demand on hot days has grown by 20 per cent and most of this demand can be attributed to the increased use of air conditioners.

"The extra electricity needed to power this demand requires more investment in power stations and transmission infrastructure – and these costs are ultimately passed on to all consumers through higher electricity bills.

"As a state, we have already taken a leadership role in reducing electricity use in air conditioners by introducing the toughest air conditioning energy efficiency standards in Australia.

"We are now taking that commitment one step further by developing a system that will use energy from the sun, rather than from electricity lines, to operate.

"We're also jointly funding a geothermal/solar electricity generation project which seeks to use the benefits of each energy source in a unique configuration designed to provide clean, reliable and cost-competitive power," Mr Rann said.

"The project is being pioneered by Professor Gus Nathan, Director of the Centre for Energy Technology at the University of Adelaide and by Petratherm Ltd, a leading South Australian geothermal energy developer."

The overall capital cost of the three year project is \$9.3 million, with Petratherm plans to commit \$3 million to the project.

A further \$1.5 million is being provided by the South Australian Government (\$794,268 from the Premier's Science and Research Fund and \$700,000 from the Renewable Energy Fund).

The balance is the subject of an application to the Commonwealth Government's Australian Solar Institute.

"These latest projects are further practical examples of the Government's commitment to build the State's burgeoning reputation as a leader in renewable energy," Mr Rann said.

"South Australia can be an international test bed for renewable energy innovation and policies.

"Initiatives such as: payroll tax rebates; Government solar power purchasing; renewable resources mapping; supporting research and development into renewables; and providing Australia's most user friendly land use planning and land access regime for investors complement the strength of our natural resources."

A Request for Proposal for the Research, Development and Demonstration of Solar Thermal Air Conditioning is available at www.tenders.sa.gov.au

For further information contact Lachlan Parker on 8463 3477 or 0417 810 890
