

# GREEN, CLEAN & CLEVER

HOW SA IS FORGING  
A NEW INDUSTRY

SPECIAL  
REPORT [p8-11]

# Power PLAY

WITH \$20 MILLION TO SPEND,  
TIM O'LOUGHLIN MUST BUILD A  
RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR.  
RUSSELL EMMERSON EXPLORES  
THE OPTIONS

**N**UCLEAR power has a place in our power generation arsenal, but South Australia's abundance of renewable fuels makes it a moot issue, the head of our renewables industry says.

Commissioner for Renewable Energy Tim O'Loughlin is charged with creating a "fifth pillar" for our economy, based on a goal of obtaining 33 per cent of our power from renewable energy within the next 10 years. The same prospects that make that achievable, make nuclear power irrelevant for SA, he says.

"Nuclear energy is part of the solution, there is no question of that, internationally. It is low-cost, relatively clean power," he said.

"But it is not part of the SA solution

for two reasons - I don't think we've got the scale, the demand and the network and, secondly, we have such fantastic renewable energy resources, I think it's superfluous."

Mr O'Loughlin is the public face of a two-year, \$20 million fund established to lift investment in the sector. It has already committed \$3 million for staffing and projects, but the real target requires results, he said.

"I don't want a PR handout or a report from an economic modeller.

"I want to see people making investment commitments to SA renewables. It's about the jobs that go with it. Not just those involved with renewable energy - if you have a clean energy slate, you're going to be able to use that to lead investment from people from who say clean products are important to their cus-

tomers base. That's becoming more and more important internationally."

Numbers often aired - including by Premier Mike Rann in announcing an \$8.2 million payroll tax exemption for solar and wind projects in December - place SA as home to almost half of Australia's wind power, 90 per cent of its geothermal investment and with more solar rooftop installations on a per household basis than any other state.

Our state's largest energy company, Santos, last year championed gas as a base-load generator as it would "place Australia in an enviable position to maintain long-term energy security".

The Australian Energy Market Operator agrees, saying the introduction of carbon pricing would pave the way for a ten-fold boost to combined cycle gas turbine tech-



nology over the next 20 years, necessitating a \$440 million network upgrade. Wind power from SA, Queensland and Victoria is expected to increase 450 per cent over the next five years.

The sheer scale of SA's prospects will ultimately change the way we think, Mr O'Loughlin says.

"With that wind, that geothermal

and the extent of our solar, you would struggle to find a location anywhere in the world that has the prospectivity and the potential for renewable energy this state has," he said. "So for the Premier to talk about us as the fifth pillar makes absolute sense, not only because of what's happened so far, but also for the prospectivity.


"I'm just a believer. It's not just reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, it's energy security, young people out there are demanding the stuff, there's also decentralised energy.

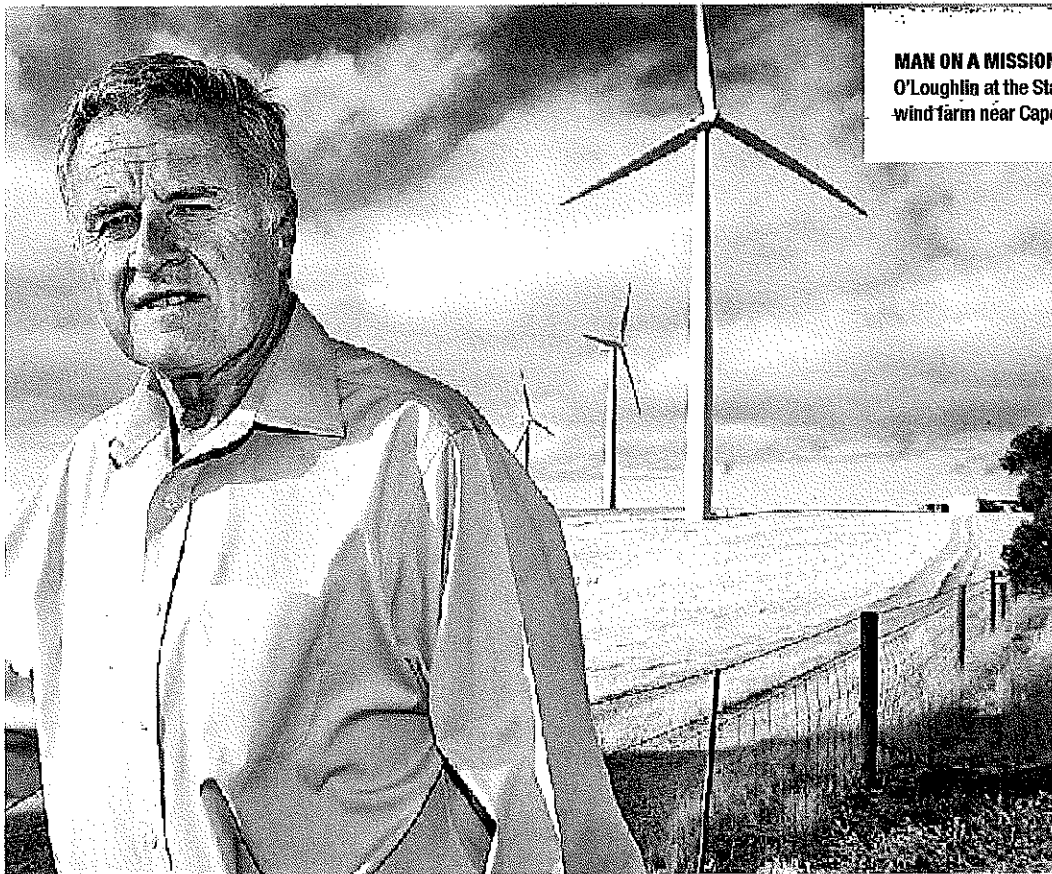
"I can imagine a day where young people say 'what were they doing building all those big plants?'"

## Slicing the pie

OF the \$20 million Renewables SA has to allocate over two years, it has already committed:

- Board fees, salaries and operating costs – \$1m.
- Uni of Adelaide Centre for Geothermal Excellence – \$1.6m.
- Support for bids to federal Solar Flagship program – \$120,000 for Worley Parsons, \$100,000 for Macquarie Bank.
- UK contractor plan for SA fuel algae industry – \$50,000.
- Residential solar-thermal airconditioner research – \$200,000.
- Mapping SA's solar resources – tender closed, value not yet disclosed.

 Nuclear energy is part of the solution



**MAN ON A MISSION:** Tim O'Loughlin at the Starfish wind farm near Cape Jervis.