

New standard and big investment for wind energy

The Clean Energy Council has launched the world's first wind farm accreditation system, Certified Wind Farms Australia (CWFA), which should ensure that future wind farm developments not only conform to best practice, but also include effective community consultation.

The independently audited scheme is based on Auswind best practice guidelines and the international environmental standard ISO 14001.

Dominique La Fontaine, CEO of the Clean Energy Council – the industry body formed through the merger of Auswind (Australian Wind Energy Association) and the BCSE (Australian Business Council for Sustainable Energy) – says the CWFA demonstrates the council's commitment to 'transparent community consultation and maintaining world's best practice for Australian wind projects'.

The CWFA system was used by local company Future Energy to audit the development of the 4 megawatt (MW) Hepburn Community Wind Park, expected to generate enough energy to



Australia now has an accreditation system for wind farms to ensure best practice and secure community confidence. Codrington Wind Farm/ Pacific Hydro

power most of the homes in Victoria's Daylesford–Hepburn area and cut local greenhouse gas emissions by 14 000 tonnes per year.

The audit ensured the wind farm demonstrated compliance with industry guidelines and gave the community added confidence in the project.

'The system is straightforward and comprehensive and we would certainly recommend it for future projects big or small,' said

Future Energy's David Shapero.

The scheme includes online tools and templates that provide step-by-step guidelines for meeting and validating industry best practice.

'Transparent and documented community consultation helps build trust and ongoing local relationships,' commented La Fontaine. 'The independent auditing process also assists regulators and planners fulfill their responsibilities, and the

industry benefits through consistent practices and continual improvement.'

The scheme is administered by planning, environmental and engineering company PB and independent auditing is provided through a panel of internationally recognised certification bodies and the RABQSA International certification training group.

More support came to Australia's wind power industry after an announcement by Germany's largest solar energy company, Conergy, which plans to build a \$2 billion, 1000 MW, 500-turbine wind farm at Broken Hill in NSW.

Andrew Durran of Conergy-owned Epuron Australia says the wind farm would provide enough power for 400 000 homes and reduce Australia's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 3 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. Construction of the wind farm – which will be the largest in Australia – is due to begin in 2009 and will be completed by 2012–13.

More information:
Auswind CWFA scheme, www.auswind.org/accreditation/about/

Novel enzymes the key to biofuels from trees and grass

New Zealand Crown Research Institutes Scion and AgResearch are working with the US-based Verenium biofuels company to genetically engineer new enzymes for converting cellulose from trees and grass into bio-ethanol, which could fuel the entire NZ vehicle fleet.

Cellulose is found in nearly all plant life and is the most abundant organic molecule on

earth. Until recently scientists have found it uneconomic to convert cellulose into ethanol.

The research team is investigating the use Verenium's metagenomic enzyme technologies for developing robust enzymes that can cost-effectively convert wood from NZ-grown tree stocks into sugars for ethanol and other products.

It will also determine



New Zealand cars and trucks are on the road to being fuelled by trees. Scion

the technical and economic feasibility of a New Zealand biofuels industry, and produce a roadmap to identify potential risks or barriers to commercialisation.

Currently more than 50 per cent of New Zealand's energy use is fossil-fuel based. Scion Chief Executive Dr Tom Richardson says NZ has seven per cent of its land mass in plantation forests and 'developing energy and climate change policies should anticipate an ever-expanding range of products and environmental services from these forest resources'.