



\$500m wave energy plant moves a step closer

By ALEX JOHNSON

A RENEWABLE energy firm which has flagged plans for a \$500 million wave energy plant off Portland has been granted approval for two south-west pilot projects.

The Carnegie Corporation has been given the green light to develop coastal land in both the Warrnambool and Portland areas to gauge the energy capacity of the south-west coast.

The plant would provide enough energy to power

15,000 homes.

Yesterday's announcement from Environment and Climate Change Minister Gavin Jennings is expected to give the south-west renewable energy sector a timely boost. Under the approval, the Western Australian Carnegie Corporation also has permission to develop pilot projects off Phillip Island.

The firm can now conduct marine surveys and trial its technology, known as Cylindrical Energy Transfer

Oscillating (CETO) units.

CETO uses waves to pump seawater ashore at high-pressure through turbine generators which produce electricity and can even desalinate seawater, with no carbon emissions.

"This is an important first step in discovering the environmental and economic feasibility of generating renewable energy using the seas around Victoria," Mr Jennings said.

"The trial has been approved on the agreement that there's no impact on the ocean or sea bed, such as drilling into rock reefs or disturbance to seagrass habitats," Mr Jennings said.

Steve Garner, managing director of Portland's Keppel Prince Engineering, said his company had submitted tenders to Carnegie this week to build the turbines. Portland was shortlisted as a possible site for the \$500 million, 155-hectare site in 2007.