



SEABED TESTS: Carnegie managing director Michael Ottaviano at Henley Beach yesterday.

Picture: BRENTON EDWARDS

**CHRIS RUSSELL
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OCEAN wave energy company Carnegie Corporation has been licensed by the State Government to explore the seabed off the South-East coast for South Australia's first wave farm.

The company will spend up to \$2 million on the assessment before committing to a \$400m, 50MW, trial plant to come on line in 2011.

Carnegie's trials in Albany and Garden Island in Western Australia are also in the running for the plant.

Managing director Michael Ottaviano said the granting of the licence moved the project to the forefront of renewable energy technology.

"It allows us to fast

track our feasibility study and by mid-year we will be looking at the result of the study and financing options to make a decision as to where that \$300-\$400m of investment will take place," he said.

"The SA coast receives a world class wave energy resource and further adds to SA's leadership in developing renewable energy including wind, solar and geothermal." The company will prefer equity funding due to the difficulty in finding debt finance but Dr Ottaviano said state governments also had a role to play "if they want to secure the first of these projects".

Premier Mike Rann welcomed the investment. "While SA is in a terrific position to be the national and international leader in wind

power, we're also in the fantastic position to be the leader in wave energy as well, tidal power," he said.

"I think this is a very exciting opportunity for us for a new form of renewable base-load energy."

Underwater buoys swing with the ocean swell to push water into on-shore turbines, which can also power a desalination plant.

The company expects to complete a small-scale (5-6MW) plant by 2011 with a view to linking up the 50MW plant to the national grid by 2013.

Carnegie signed an agreement with WA energy retailer Synergy last month to purchase electricity from the first stage of its Albany project.