



infocus



Wave-energy technology, green business directories and enviro-sensitive buildings are some of the ways in which Australians are embracing an eco-consciousness.



Dr Michael Ottaviano,
 Carnegie Corporation

For a nation very keen on the beach and surfing, it is curious that Australia is riding on the bow wave of the UK on wave-energy technology.

"The last place on Earth that you'd expect to be a leader in wave technology would be the UK," says Dr Michael Ottaviano, Managing Director of wave-energy and clean-technology developer, Carnegie Corporation.

The Western Australian company is determined to propel Australia to the international forefront of wave technology through the development of energy power stations off the Australian coast, including a 5MW site in Western Australia. Carnegie recently received a \$12.5 million grant from the Western Australian Government to assist the project.

The centrepiece of Carnegie's technology solution is CETO, the world's only fully submerged wave-technology system. It consists of submerged buoys tethered to sea-pump units that deliver highly pressurised water through a pipeline to onshore hydro-electric turbines.

Ottaviano believes wave technology will soon match or surpass wind power as the cheapest form of renewable energy, and he says interest is growing in environmentally friendly energy solutions in Australia.

Corporate action

Green power is catching on as corporations around the world advocate environmentally friendly business initiatives that help the planet and make or save a dollar for investors at the same time.

For example, ice-cream giant Ben & Jerry's has introduced new freezers in its US stores that do not contribute to depletion of the ozone layer. And fast-food king McDonald's has changed its packaging around the world to limit its environmental impact.

Governments are also coming to the party. The

Australian Government has been pushing its Renewable Energy Demonstration Program, which delivers funding for new clean-technology ideas.

In the private sector, a growing number of businesses are either embracing sustainability or promoting others that do it.

The Green Directory is one such resource that allows online users to locate genuine green-business products and services. General Manager Jennifer Russell says that over the past few years, interest in sustainable products and services has grown dramatically.

The Green Directory carefully evaluates participating businesses by examining the green credentials of products and services, taking into account the processes, from raw materials to manufactured end products, as well as operational practices.

Friendly buildings

Environmentally friendly buildings and housing developments are also on the rise.

There are several celebrated green buildings around the country, including the Melbourne Convention Centre (pioneering the use of chilled floor slabs in conjunction with displacement ventilation); 39 Hunter Street in Sydney (the first heritage-listed building in Australia to achieve a 6 Star Green Star rating); and The Gauge in Bourke Street, Melbourne (incorporating features to lower carbon emissions).

In Brisbane's south, construction is about to start on Elements Third Age Living@Springwood, a pre-retirement development incorporating sustainable-design features.

The Springwood project will feature solar power, water tanks, fans, cross-ventilation features, fibre-cement bricks, bamboo floors and an organic garden. **ME**

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IMAGE: ISTOCKPHOTO