



# Media Monitoring

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## Desal plant confidence

THE  
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PORT AUGUSTA

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The development of a solar water desalination plant set for Port Augusta is currently on hold as a result to the global financial crisis.

Meanwhile, the town has been put forward as a location for a second, wind powered desalination plant.

The \$650 million solar powered desalination plant project, administered by Aquasol Infrastructure has been in planning for several years.

Aquasol chief executive officer Michael Fielden said the plant has gained major project status, but has been "slightly halted" as the company is currently seeking to raise capital – a task that is proving timely in the current economic climate.

"It seems most businesses aren't investing much at the moment - they're just sitting on their hands waiting until things improve," he said.

According to Mr Fielden, a lack of government funding into green initiatives was also debilitating.

"It's just a shame that there isn't more support from government bodies to help get them off the ground," he said.

"There is just so little funding available."

Mr Fielden said planning would continue in the meantime with hopes to begin construction by late next year.

A second desalination plant is also proposed for Port Augusta - to be powered by wind.

According to Mr Fielden, the new wind powered plant would pose no conflict to the solar-powered development.

"There's always room for more renewable energy projects...so long as they're economically viable," Mr Fielden said.

"Anything that will be a benefit to the environment and the local community, is always a good thing."

The Windesal wind-powered plant is still only in the early stages of planning.

The first stage is currently being finalised to submit towards the state government.

The company has proposed about 50 sites around South Australia for the project, which is based on Danish technology.

A pilot trial will begin in Salisbury for Adelaide's north next month.

Windesal executive director Barrie Harrop said a plant in Port Augusta would ensure water security for the central North of the State.

"If the plan suitably impresses, we'd be hoping to begin construction by the end of this year," he said.

"We're going to give it our best shot."