



# Powering ahead

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**T**HE sunshine, heat and wind that are abundant in South Australia are leading to hundreds of new jobs in the development and installation of new electricity sources.

Local workers will also be employed in exporting renewable energy knowledge to the world, as key advances are made in SA.

The state is a national leader in renewable-energy technologies, ahead of other states in both the amount of natural resources and developed generation of wind, solar and geothermal.

Most jobs will be created when local consultants and contractors are hired by renewable-energy projects to undertake construction work.

One of the emerging technologies, geothermal energy, is focused in the state's Outback, where heat deep underground can be used to run electricity generators.

Petratherm managing director Terry Kallis said 90 per cent of the activity and investment in Australia to establish geothermal as a renewable energy source was occurring in SA, which would lead to plenty of local jobs.

"A couple of years ago, we were three people and now we're close to 14 people," he said.

"In the next two, three, four years, it's a huge growth sector."

Workers were needed for a variety of positions, from mechanical and

civil engineers to labourers to drill to the heat source.

"During construction, we are going to have hundreds of people employed," he said.

"To complete one well and drill down 4km, we had 50 people on site.

"In the next 10 to 15 years, we need 100 wells - there's a fair bit of employment just in that and we're only one of a number of companies."

Geothermal power is attracting a lot of interest in the industry because of its capability to provide ongoing, or baseload, electricity, rather than intermittently as solar and wind now provide.

Solar and wind power are both much more developed industries in SA. But they are growing even more each year.

Solar Shop Australia's SA general manager Lawry Sancilio said it had doubled its workforce across all areas in the past 12 months to cater for the demand for solar electricity and solar-powered products.

In the next two years, even more workers in all facets of the business would be needed to meet the expected demand.

Solar Shop Australia would need to employ more sales staff, solar panel installers, designers and corporate businesspeople.

He said many workers starting a job in the renewable-energy industry often knew little about it but brought fresh and varying perspectives to the

business.

"A lot of people are bringing across some good transferable skills, such as good, experienced people bringing business expertise into the business as we continue to grow," Mr Sancilio said.

"It's just exciting. It's a great industry with great people; people are keen and it's a great product."

Windesal chief executive Jonathan Whalley said South Australia had the chance to build on its already strong position in the renewable-energy sector.

Wind turbines are now made overseas but if manufacturing plants were set up in SA, local workers could make all the components needed across the nation, he said.

"If there are constant orders for their products, much like in car manufacturing, if they can sell their turbines here, they will set up here," he said.

"There's global interest in using renewables to generate the electricity we use and reduce emissions.

"What we could expect is to see an increase in interest in coming years in things such as wind farms, so we should see more of it."

He expected many more wind farms would be developed in the next 40 years, as more were built to provide greenhouse gas emission-free electricity to combat climate change.



**EMPOWERED:** Power industry performers Terry Kallis, Jonathan Whalley and Lawry Sancilio at the solar "trees" on the Festival Centre plaza. Pictures, cover and above: **MATT TURNER**