

CASE STUDY

ICN Assists Emerging Green Industry Get Pilot Go-Ahead

As scrutiny over sustainable energy production becomes more prevalent, the use of woody biomass to produce electricity through gasification has the potential to emerge as an increasingly popular and practical onsite option. 'Farm Trees for Energy' is a regional community group in north-east Victoria that is dedicated to demonstrating gasification's potential for the on-farm conversion of biomass from plantations to power. Faced with the challenge of locating a suitable project partner to supply the necessary gasification equipment, the group approached ICN. Melbourne-based Gasification Australia was successfully nominated.

Gasification Australia is one of only two companies providing gasification devices in Australia and is dedicated to sustainable energy production and promoting fossil fuel alternatives. Gasification Australia's expertise and commitment to inciting the practical uptake of sustainable biomass gasification systems made it the perfect technology provider for the Farm Trees for Energy group. The group's members, which include representatives from the FFORNE Hardwood Cooperative Ltd, the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, carbon trading company Treesmart and now Gasification Australia, are working on a trial gasification project; for which a \$78,000 Federal Government grant was provided to the FFORNE Hardwood Cooperative Ltd under the 'Caring for our Country' initiative.

The process of gasification involves the high-temperature conversion of combustible solids, such as wood, into a gas which can be used to drive a generator and produce electricity. Gasification uses raw materials, such as woody biomass, making it a renewable energy source. Importantly, biomass gasification also has the potential to be carbon neutral, as the production of biomass removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The bi-products of biomass gasification are limited to a small amount carbon residue, ash and water. Gasification has been around for over 100 years but is being re-examined today for its potential as an on-demand, on-site source of renewable energy.

In anticipation of the trial project's success and the potential for increasing the viability of gasification by returning power to the grid, ICN organised a meeting between the group and gas and electricity network provider, SP AusNet. ICN also introduced the FFORNE Hardwood Cooperative-lead group to a contact

within the Seymour Alternative Farming Expo. Arrangements were subsequently made for a demonstration of the gasification technology at the Expo, which was held over three days from 20-22 February 2009.

ICN Victoria Hume Regional Manager, Tammy Atkins, who is involved with the group said:

“Gasification has the potential to significantly benefit those in rural and isolated communities as an inexpensive, practical and sustainable alternative power source”.

ICN Victoria will continue to work with the FFORNE group, assisting wherever possible to see this emerging industry prosper in Victoria.

For further information:

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