

The Heat Exchanger:

An Update On Developments In the Australian And International Geothermal Scene

Gareth Cooper, Hot Dry Rocks

As I write this, the international geothermal community is busy packing their Hawaiian shirts and assorted batik attire for the World Geothermal Congress (WGC2010) to be hosted in Bali, Indonesia, probably adjacent to a cooling resort pool with a plentiful supply of pina coladas. Ironically, most of the European contingent for the ~1,400 strong delegation remains under a cloud of both uncertainty and volcanic ash as Mt. Eyjafjallajokull creates ongoing havoc with international flights and Nordic pronunciation. Locally, the town of Penola, South Australia, demonstrated the distinct benefits of geothermal energy without the need for erupting volcanoes, when the first tests for the recently completed Salamander-1 geothermal well emitted steam.

Selected highlights from *Geothermland*, in no particular order, from the recent period include:

- Petratherm announced that Petratherm España has signed an MoU with Enel Green Power to jointly assess and develop PTR's Spanish projects. Enel is a major player in the global geothermal industry with over 100 years of experience developing geothermal fields.
- The Australian Geothermal Energy Group became an official affiliated member of the International Geothermal Association for the next three years.
- Geodynamics appointed a new CEO, Mr Stuart McDonnell, fresh from a long tenure developing and constructing geothermal power plants for Mighty River Power in NZ.
- Hot Dry Rocks Senior Consultant Luke Mortimer presented talks on the subject of geothermal modelling of hot sedimentary aquifer reservoirs in Australia, using real data, to crowded houses at the PESA NSW branch, Victorian branch and Queensland-NT branch.
- Geodynamics also advised that operations at the Jolokia site of the Innamincka 'Deeps' Joint Venture will recommence once flood waters recede in the Cooper Basin, expected to be around the end of April.
- KUTH Energy expanded its inventory of Inferred Geothermal Resources in Tasmania by 101,000 PJth, releasing a statement of estimated geothermal resources for the Nicholas-Fingal geothermal play.
- The Western Australian Government granted 10 new geothermal exploration permits. Seven went to New World Energy in the Carnarvon Basin and Geothermal Energy received one in the Carnarvon Basin. The remaining two went to Greenpower Energy in the southeast region near Esperance. The total area of all the permits is 45,288 km² and the total work program commitment is \$105.5 MM over six years.
- Petratherm went into, and came out of, a trading halt resulting in a proposal for a share plan for eligible shareholders.
- KUTH Energy announced that Mr Bruce McKay will take over from Dr John Bishop as non-executive chairman.
- The Australian Geothermal Energy Association (AGEA) met in Brisbane to launch the Queensland chapter of AGEA and meet with Queensland Minister of Energy Stephen Robertson and the Deputy Director-General of the Office of Clean Earth Solar Power Greg Neilson.
- Richard Beresford, new Managing Director of Green Rock Energy, released an update on Green Rock's activities which confirmed its focus on its Western Australian projects, but also advised that the company's Hungarian joint venture is progressing to commercialisation.
- Eden Energy announced that all 14 of its geothermal assets (all in South Australia) are available for sale or joint venture farm-ins. Origin Energy has already secured a 70% interest in one of the projects.
- Hot Dry Rocks Senior Consultant Gareth Cooper (yours truly) presented 'Geothermal Energy—the musical' to about 80 members of the WA branch of PESA. The things people do for a piece of engraved agatised rhyolite!
- Petratherm advised that temperature data from Paralana-2 indicates that the projected temperature at 4,000 m is 190±1°C. Petratherm also advised that an older than expected rock sequence was intersected beneath 3,405 m. This metasedimentary sequence is fractured and faulted and capped by an impermeable quartzite layer, making it an attractive target for a stimulation program in May.
- Green Rock Energy announced an impending share purchase plan to raise ~\$1.86 MM to fund ongoing exploration and development.
- The federal Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water, Penny Wong, released a discussion paper on enhancing Australia's renewable energy target (available at www.climatechange.gov.au). The paper provides more details about the proposed changes to the renewable energy target.
- An article by Tim Colebatch in *The Age* (and possibly other syndicated newspapers) on Saturday 27 March reported on a study by the OECD and the International Energy Agency, 'Projected costs of generating electricity: 2010', that found that 'for Australia and the US, geothermal energy offers the cheapest source of future electricity ...' ■

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