



Victoria could offer as many opportunities for geothermal heat exploitation as South Australia. MARTIN WATTERS reports

Turning up 'hot rocks'

FORGET the "Kick a Vic" campaign of the State of Origin footy – a geothermal firm drilling near Geelong has struck a blow for Victoria's renewable energy sector.

Victoria is just as rich in geothermal energy as "hot rocks" hotspot South Australia and it's time everybody knew, Greenerth Energy Limited told a recent peak environmental forum.

The firm held the licence to drill thousands of metres underground across the Geelong region in a bid to turn heat into renewable energy.

Company chairman Simon R. Molesworth recently said that the myth that the nation's geothermal energy lay only in places such as South Australia's Cooper Basin must be debunked.

Mr Molesworth also told the En-

vironment Institute of Australia and New Zealand's annual conference that estimates of geothermal's capacity was undervalued in the rapidly carbon-conscious power industry.

"There is every reason to believe that Victoria offers as many opportunities for geothermal heat exploitation as South Australia," he said.

"All of us have a duty to highlight the potential significance of Victoria as a significant contributor of geothermal energy and thereby dispel the myth that all the action in this sector is in South Australia."

The former Geelong Grammar student and environmental law QC also called for urgent law reform to cut the need for the current two-tiered system of geothermal explo-

ration and extraction which required "extensive approvals processes".

"In short, the failure of government . . . is an obstacle which must be addressed by policy and legislative reform. Greenerth Energy calls upon government to act not so as to better facilitate the development stage of geothermal projects in the state."

The exploration company, which was a joint venture between Melbourne based petroleum firm Lakes Oil and Perth-based Victoria Petroleum, raised more than \$10 million in listing in February this year and hoped to offer enough energy to deliver renewable base load power.

The firm was also in the process of applying for Federal funding for exploratory drilling on the Bellarine Peninsula.



OPPORTUNITIES: Victoria may yield just as much renewable energy at geothermal sites such as this one in South Australia, Greenerth Energy says.