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## A brave new geothermal world

*Written by Laura Glitsos*

*Thursday, 10 December 2009 14:35*

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**WITH the launch of a new Geothermal Centre of Excellence and the University of Western Australia's plans to seem Perth is entering the brave new world of sustainable energy.**

The WA Geothermal Centre of Excellence (WAGCOE) is collaboration between CSIRO, the University of Western Australia and the State Government.

WAGCOE director Professor Regenauer-Lieb says a big part of developing low-emission energy sources is the collective psychology and understanding the importance of switching from a wasteful mindset to one of efficiency.

"This way we can create new technologies or modify existing machinery," he says.

"Which is what we have done with the multi-effect distillation (MED) technology."

MED is a technology that boosts the freshwater yield from existing distillation plants and is now being patented by the university.

"A district geothermal cooling system is also plausible for new suburbs," Prof Regenauer-Lieb says.

"Though there is a big start up cost, the cost of running and maintenance is very inexpensive."

Prof Regenauer-Lieb says it is his vision that more and more sites will turn to the clean, reliable source of geothermal energy, perhaps making Perth one of the first geothermally-cooled cities in the world.

UWA is certainly leading the way, with the first-ever geothermal district cooling system to be developed at the Crawley

WAGCOE business manager Sean Webb says the Centre also hopes to participate in some other projects, like New View Energy company.

With the great success of the WAGCOE launch, it is clear government and industry partners are eager to see the development towards a more sustainable future.

State Minister for Mines and Petroleum Norman Moore says much of the State will now open up to geothermal exploration.

"In total, the department has issued 28 exploration permits for the Perth Basin, with more still pending," the Minister says.

He says this represents a “future where we will address the serious challenge of climate change”.

“A future where suburbs and perhaps even cities will be powered, cooled and heated by geothermal energy.

“And a future where will harness that same energy to deliver clean, drinkable water from the ocean.”

There is now more than \$560 million devoted over six years for exploration of the Perth Basin.

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