The Bullroarer - Monday 14 January 2008

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Topic: Miscellaneous

Sunday Tasmanian - 'Hot rock' energy

> TASMANIA could be generating clean, renewable geothermal power within five years, say the leaders of the emerging industry. Companies with geothermal, or hot rock, tenements have stepped up their exploration efforts across vast areas of the state during the past month.
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> Industry experts say geothermal energy has the potential to replace coal as the major energy resource in Australia and Tasmania is of particular interest because of its proximity to transmission infrastructure. "Hot rock" energy is generated by pumping water up to 5km underground and harnessing the earth's heat to run steam-driven turbines.
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> KUTh Energy has the largest geothermal exploration lease in Australia, covering 14,000sqkm from south of Hobart to the mouth of the Tamar River. The company plans to spend $3 million to $4 million on exploration over the next three years, including its present drilling program in the Midlands. While general manager Malcolm Ward was cautious about making promises, he said the company aimed to have a power station online within five years.

The Australian - Labor maps out resources exploration boost

> A decade ago the expense associated with a metre of exploration drilling was $83.92. In the September quarter last year it had risen to $220.36 a metre. Even more alarming than that is greenfields exploration drilling, which fell by 60 per cent during the decade - suggesting most of the exploration effort these days is around known deposits.
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> The decline in exploration spending both for minerals and onshore oil and gas exploration - the figures in this sector in the past two years are boosted by Santos's huge infill drilling program in the Cooper Basin - have led to calls for the creation of more capital for exploration.
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> Which is why lobby groups have responded positively this week to news that federal Resources and Energy Minister Martin Ferguson has ordered his department to implement Labor policy on flow-through share schemes. These involve tax deductions for individuals for their investment in companies with specific exploration budgets. The deduction of the investment is available in the current tax year, rather than being accumulated and carried as tax losses until the exploration company earns a taxable income.

> Federal Treasury has long opposed such schemes because of the cost to its tax coffers in forgone revenue, and the history of overseas schemes being fraudulently manipulated.

NZ Herald - [Oil plans aren't so slick as worldwide stocks sink]

> What can countries do to protect themselves from another dislocation in the global supply of oil?
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> Member states of the IEA such as New Zealand that are net oil importers are supposed to hold emergency reserves equivalent to at least 90 days of their oil imports of the previous year, even though it is expensive to do so.
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> At least until recently, the Government has been lax in fulfilling this obligation. New Zealand relies on imported oil (costing $4.4 billion in 2006) for around half its energy needs. Its oil production has been declining since 1997 when it met around 45 per cent of national demand. Last year, the country consumed just over 150,000 barrels of oil per day. Self-sufficiency is now down to about 15 per cent. The steady decline in local oil output in the past decade prompted the Government to decide in 2005 to secure additional oil stocks.
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> In December 2006 the Energy Minister, David Parker, announced that from the start of 2007 the country would meet its IEA obligation to hold 90 days of oil reserves. He noted that oil stocks had recently fallen as low as 60 days of net oil imports as a result of rising demand and falling domestic oil production.
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> New Zealand is understandably wary of the costs involved in buying high-priced crude oil or products on the global market and then holding them in a strategic petroleum reserve on national territory as a buffer against a serious supply disruption.

The Australian - [Greenies see red over planned Coolimba coal fired plant in WA]

> ENVIRONMENTALISTS have attacked the West Australian Government's decision to require only a low-level environmental assessment of the Coolimba power station, but Aviva Corporation senior executive Mark Chatfield says there is little alternative. The 400MW Coolimba project and its associated low-quality coal mine represent an investment of about $1 billion. ...
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> Coolimba will be designed to be "oxy ready": constructed with enough space to retro-convert its boiler from air firing to oxygen firing. This produces a high concentration of carbon dioxide in the waste-gas stream, which can be cooled and liquefied for burial in depleted gas reservoirs.
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> About 90 per cent of the CO_2 produced by burning coal can be captured and stored, reducing project emissions to about 90kg for each MW hour produced, or about 20 per cent of the emissions achieved by natural gas-fired combined-cycle generating plants. The technology is well established in smaller units. The 200MW air-cooled Coolimba units will be the biggest oxy firing units in Australia.
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> "Coolimba is positively ready for carbon trading," Mr Chatfield said.Mr Chatfield, a

> former boss of Queensland's CS Energy and long-time executive in Western Australia's power industry, said Western Australia had no other prospects but coal for power generation in the next five to eight years. There was insufficient domestic gas available to run substantial gas-fired turbine operations.

SMH - No word from minister on Tcard paralysis

SMH - Epping hell will be no nirvana for motorists - or cyclists

NZ Herald - Skylights, butterflies and fishponds keep new Singapore terminal green

SMH - Airline fuel surcharges to be exposed

SMH - Cheap plane seats hit turbulence

SMH - Frequent flyer points a big con

STCWA - Australian Bicycle Council launches the Cycling Resource Centre

STCWA - Newsletter 13 Jan