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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**GOVERNMENT FUNDING SUPPORT FOR WAVE POWER ON CHATHAM ISLAND**

The Government's \$2,165,000 grant for harnessing the power of the sea to produce electricity on Chatham Island is great news for the 650 residents on the island, says Garry Venus of Chatham Island Marine Energy Limited.

He says the government's funding announcement, coupled with imminent resource consents, means work can start soon on helping Chatham Islanders completely reduce dependence on diesel generated electricity, currently costing around 80 cents per kilowatt hour compared with the average New Zealand cost of 24 cents.

A \$5 million wave generating plant will be built on the coastline near Point Durham, south-east of the main town of Waitangi, and produce 220 kW by July 2012.

Mr Venus says the wave generator in combination with two recently-installed wind turbines will produce enough power to meet Chatham Island's needs.

"The goal is to help make Chatham Island self-sufficient with renewable energy – a remote location technology that can be exported elsewhere in the world."

Mr Venus says Chatham Islands Marine Energy Limited has put a significant effort into development of the wave generator project because the benefits of cheaper power for residents, farmers and businesses will make a huge difference to the island's economy.

"The reality is however that the project would not have been possible without the government's funding support through the Marine Energy Deployment Fund which is designed to kick-start practical projects like ours."

He says that by the end of 2012 Chatham Island should be able to sideline the diesel generators to a back-up role and rely almost exclusively on emission-free renewable energy.

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