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SHOWCASE MARINE ENERGY CONFERENCE

New Zealand's emerging marine energy industry goes on show next month at the fourth conference organised by the Aotearoa Wave & Tidal Energy Association (AWATEA) in Wellington.

Under the banner of 'Blue Energy', international delegates from 14 nations and many more from around New Zealand will share the latest developments in harnessing the power of the sea to produce electricity.

AWATEA chairman Nick Eldred says the level of interest from home and overseas has been outstanding and reflects recognition that New Zealand's tidal currents and wave patterns offer excellent conditions for renewable marine energy projects.

Currently, five New Zealand projects have reached various stages of development including Crest Energy (Kaipara Harbour), Neptune Power (Cook Strait), Wave Energy Technology – New Zealand (Lyttelton), Energy Pacifica (Tory Channel), and Chatham Islands Marine Energy.

As an indicator of developing hard-edged commercial interest in marine energy, Todd Energy has bought a 30 percent stake in Crest Energy with an option to increase to 45 percent.

The special two-day conference is at Te Papa from April 19-20 and more than 60 New Zealand delegates have already registered. A final total of 150 is expected.

Overseas delegates will be coming from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Canada, the United States, South Africa, Australia, Korea, and China.

AWATEA has also secured keynote speakers from the United States and United Kingdom who will talk about financing blue energy projects and the testing of marine energy devices.

The conference opening will include a report on the state of marine energy in New Zealand by AWATEA chairman Nick Eldred and a review of the role of marine energy in the wider energy mix for New Zealand by EECA chief executive Mike Underhill.

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