

## **Media Statement**

(Embargoed until the start of the AWATEA AGM, 1 pm, Friday 8 September 2006)

### **Bright Future For 'Blue Energy'**

Wave and tidal power stations, dubbed 'blue energy', could start contributing to our power supply as early as 2010, and eventually meet up to 20% of New Zealand's electricity needs, experts say.

A newly formed marine energy industry association, the Aotearoa Wave and Tidal Energy Association (AWATEA) held its inaugural AGM in Wellington today.

The Association's Executive Officer, Dr John Huckerby, told the meeting that blue energy had 'significant potential' in New Zealand.

"We have world class wave resources, and also some good tidal resources. We have all the skills needed to develop and adapt the necessary technologies. Our coastline gives us a clear competitive advantage, and just as we've done with wind, we have the capacity to become one of the world's leading nations in marine energy."

"It's an exciting time for this new industry. The first commercial wave farm will be operational off the coast of Portugal before the end of this year, and the first full-scale tidal stream device will shortly be tested in Irish waters."

Dr Huckerby said that up to 14 marine energy projects were already actively under investigation in New Zealand. These ranged from a Government-funded wave energy project to the recently proposed tidal energy power station in Cook Strait.

"While marine energy will complement, rather than replace, existing forms of generation, we should welcome any investment in new forms of generation that will make our power supply more secure, resilient and environmentally acceptable," Dr Huckerby said.

“However, in order to realise its full potential, New Zealand needs a dedicated marine energy plan.”

“Such plans have had significant impacts in other countries such as the UK, which are making significant investments in marine energy.”

Dr Huckerby said that the Government also had an important role to play in the development of the plan. “AWATEA is pleased to see wave energy given prominence in the new draft ‘Energy Outlook to 2030’ released by the Ministry of Economic Development. The Energy Outlook scenarios don’t address tidal energy specifically but AWATEA believes the potential for tidal energy is as good as the wave energy potential that the scenarios recognize”.

“We’re pleased that the Minister and relevant Government agencies are considering marine energy as part of the New Zealand Energy Strategy. But we need to see that future policies, which the Government is currently consulting on, not only recognise the potential marine energy but also promote its uptake.”

“With that support, we believe that ‘blue energy’ could be contributing to our power supply within five years,” Dr Huckerby said.

## **ENDS**

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Note to Editors: AWATEA has been established to promote and foster the uptake of marine energy in New Zealand. The association’s members include major electricity generators, marine energy project developers and marine-related companies and research organizations.

Please find attached a backgrounder on marine energy in New Zealand, as well as information on AWATEA (Aotearoa Wave and Tidal Energy Association).

## **About AWATEA**

Established in April 2006, the aim of the Aotearoa Wave and Tidal Energy Association (AWATEA) is to promote marine energy in New Zealand. Its members comprise marine energy project developers, electricity and marine industry sector participants and interested individuals. AWATEA has a work programme to develop a number of initiatives, including developing a dedicated marine energy strategy.

### **Dr. John Huckerby, Executive Officer, AWATEA**

Dr Huckerby is the founder and executive officer of AWATEA. He is also the Treasurer of the Energy Law Association and sits on a number of advisory boards, including the Royal Society of New Zealand President's Panel for Energy.

He is also the director of Power Projects Limited, an energy industry consultancy advising overseas energy companies, domestic utilities, and public sector organizations on investments in New Zealand's energy industry.

Dr Huckerby worked for Fletcher Challenge Energy, leading the team that evaluated the Mangahewa and Pohokura gas-condensate fields. Before coming to New Zealand, he worked in the United States, Eastern Europe, Saudi Arabia, Scandinavia and the North Sea.