25 October 2006

HOT ROCKS FOR CLEAN, GREEN ENERGY

Mines Minister Chris Natt has encouraged Territorians to have their say on a proposal to legislate the use of geothermal energy – a clean and renewable source released from the earth as steam.

Mr Natt said geothermal energy is created naturally from the heat of dry rock within the earth’s crust. The heat is pumped to the surface with water from a depth of between three and five kilometres.

“Hot rocks” are poised to become a new energy source that could replace fossil fuels. Geothermal energy is a long term and renewable clean energy source that is low in greenhouse emissions.

“Currently we rely on gas from Central Australia to power our major centres. With the rising costs associated with non-renewable energy, other sources are becoming more attractive and necessary.

“There is interest across the country with South Australia, Victoria and Queensland already passing specific geothermal legislation.

“While the exploration and development of geothermal resources is not yet regulated in the Territory, there is also support from the oil, gas and energy sectors.

“The nature and extent of the Territory’s geothermal resources are largely unknown but new technologies suggest that this resource could be a significant energy source for the future.

“Territorians are invited to comment on the proposal which is detailed in a public discussion paper, "Proposal to introduce a Geothermal Energy Bill,” said Mr Natt.

The public has until 1 December 2006 to provide submissions. Copies of the discussion paper are available here: http://minerals.nt.gov.au

Contact: Gemma Buxton 0401 110 064