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Geothermal in Energy Strategies

Yesterday the Government released its New Zealand Energy Strategy and the New Zealand Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy.

The Executive Officer of the New Zealand Geothermal Association (NZGA), Brian White said “Geothermally-sourced electricity can be considered renewable, baseload, low emission, competitively priced generation. It is not dependent on the weather. We have the development experience and we have premium resources by world standards available either side of the Auckland market. There is strong industry growth in this sector now and for the foreseeable future. Geothermal energy will make a significant contribution towards a target of 90% renewable electricity by 2025 spoken of in the strategies”.

Brian White pointed out that there is about 1000MW of additional consentable geothermal electricity generation that looks commercially viable (even without valuing carbon). The Government’s challenge will be to smooth the way for these developments, using a range of methods outlined in the strategies. There will be some real progress in terms of geothermal development, but the Government should be an active partner with developers - especially since geothermal energy will be a principle contributor to the Government’s renewable energy goal.

He thought that both strategies gave due emphasis to geothermal energy. The revision process following the earlier release of the draft documents has removed some glaring oversights, especially from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy which forms the action plan. The potential for direct use and heat pumps is embedded in this document, along with electricity generation.

The New Zealand Geothermal Association is looking forward to working with Government agencies, as government and industry alike face the challenge of turning words into action. As the strategies point out, a whole range of resources and strategies will have to come into play to meet New Zealand’s growing energy needs in the face of diverse challenges – geothermal energy will be part of the solution.

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The **New Zealand Geothermal Association (NZGA)** is an independent, non-profit industry association with a wide membership covering developers, regulators, researchers, consultants, Maori interests, suppliers, etc. It provides information on geothermal phenomena and utilisation for industry, government and educational organisations. The NZGA supports appropriate sustainable development of geothermal resources, and works with industry and government to achieve this. Website www.nzgeothermal.org.nz