Capstone Green Energy

Blue Economy CRC Hydrogen Production and Research Facility to be launched at Lutana

Published: The Courier Mail (https://www.couriermail.com.au/news/tasmania/blue-economy-crc-hydrogen-production-and-research-facility-to-be-launched-at-lutana/news-story/c2175038d5e3bf194138f9bc4dafba19)
Friday, March 7, 2025

Tasmania's first ever green hydrogen production facility will be launched on Friday, in what's been described as a major milestone in the state's clean energy journey.

The opening of the Blue Economy Cooperative Research Centre's Hydrogen Production and Research Facility, located at the BOC Australia facility at Lutana, is touted as a pivotal moment in the ongoing mission to establish a green hydrogen industry in Tasmania.

It has the capacity to produce up to 262kg of commercial-scale hydrogen per day, which is enough to power two 22m hydrogen fuel cell-powered passenger ferries for 24 hours.

Green hydrogen is a clean energy source produced by splitting water with renewable electricity. It's viewed as a potentially game-changing alternative to fossil fuels and diesel.

Blue Economy CRC CEO, Dr John Whittington, said the launch of the facility represented "the beginning of Tasmania's hydrogen production journey of discovery".

"The production of green hydrogen begins at commercial scale, but what we're really looking to produce is answers to some of our most important questions around hydrogen and its uses," he said.

"This is a research facility and as we ramp up commercial production, we will also better understand the role hydrogen can play in our system and how it can support Australia's blue economy."

Funded by the federal government, the Blue Economy CRC was established in 2021 to explore ways of supporting and decarbonising marine industries, as well as potential commercial opportunities to power local industries both onshore and offshore.

The Lutana facility will provide hydrogen for industry and transport applications and boasts one of the largest electrolysers in the country, which controls a DC hydrogen microgrid capable of generating 100 per cent renewable hydrogen.

Theo Martin, the head of BOC Australia, said BOC had been producing, storing, and transporting hydrogen in Australia for more than 80 years and was therefore well placed to lend its expertise and resources to the new facility.

"For BOC, this was a perfect opportunity to bring our knowledge and skills to an important project that will lay the foundation for renewable hydrogen research and its application in this state," he said.

Blue Economy CRC research director, Professor Irene Penesis, said the production of green hydrogen could potentially eliminate carbon emissions when made using renewable electricity but further research and training was needed to aid development of the technology.

"This world-class research and training facility will advance technologies to produce, store, and distribute hydrogen efficiently and cost-effectively. This means opportunity for a wider adoption of this clean energy source, while building a skilled workforce capable of implementing and maintaining these new systems across the hydrogen value chain," she said.

The state Liberal government's Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan, released in 2020, set a goal of making Tasmania a "significant global supplier" of green hydrogen for export and domestic use.

The plan also laid out a target of commencing renewable hydrogen production by 2022-2024 and exporting the fuel by 2025-2027.

The government, which has a target of reaching 200 per cent renewable electricity generation by 2040, has been criticised by the state Opposition for delays in getting green hydrogen projects off the ground since the action plan was launched.

Energy and Renewables Minister Nick Duigan said the new facility would provide "an alternative and reliable energy supply that could replace carbon-intensive fossil fuels and diesel across a range of industries".

"The commencement of this project is also an important step forward in the application of hydrogen as a green fuel, helping to decarbonise our transport sector," he said.