

New generation wave energy conversion plant launched

Energy technology company Oceanlinx has launched its latest wave energy conversion plant off Port Kembla, New South Wales. The third generation plant is sleeker and more efficient than the company's previous two, enabling it to generate more electricity at a cheaper cost. The company is involved in the development of similar plants around the world but this is the first site to connect to the grid. Oceanlinx founder and Chief Technology Officer Tom Denniss says the prospects for wave power are improving as science enables more accurate swell predictions. "You actually can predict waves quite accurately... and it's getting better... so that ability enables utilities to in some ways consider what our technology can do as a sort of quasi-baseload," he says. "This one that's out there now is the first truly, fully grid-connected major scale plant in Australia and I think the second or third in the world." Oceanlinx Chief Executive Officer Ali Baghaei says the company's installations should work at around 75 to 85 per cent of capacity. The technology used by Oceanlinx includes a series of oscillating chambers in a large structure that allows water to enter, compress the air and drive a turbine, and do the same as air is sucked back in as the water recedes. The 170-tonne demonstration model is eight meters high, 12 meters wide and 30 meters long – the commercial model will be three times the size. A facility with numerous modules could create a 50 MW power plant.

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