

Energy plan for island

An alternative, community-owned energy source is the subject of a new project by Regional Development Australia Hills and Coast (the former Kangaroo Island Development Board).

RDA has been given a \$250,000 grant to carry out a feasibility study into the possibility of establishing a solar and wind power energy company to fuel one-third of the island's power needs.

RDA strategy director Terry Lee made presentations to the Kangaroo Island Council, the NRM Board and the Pen-

neshaw Progress Association this week and intends to speak to more community groups about the possibilities.

Residents on the island will receive their first "Island Energy" newsletter this week.

Mr Lee said any community-owned renewable energy scheme would be a supplement to the cable from the mainland.

"If we can generate one-third of the island's power through this new venture then that frees up the existing system for economic expansion," Mr Lee said.

He said the State Government was still committed to upgrading the mainland

cable and would approach the Australian Energy Regulator with ETSA again this year to seek permission to upgrade the cable.

Mr Lee said the Kangaroo Island proposal was based on the Hepburn Wind model at Daylesford in Victoria, where the community raised \$9 million to build and manage their own energy company.

"The supply and security of energy have been issues that have dogged the island for a long time. Community energy projects can empower communities to play a constructive role in determining their energy future," Mr Lee said.