

Media Release

14 December 2009

HOT AIR RUNS HOTEL WATER SYSTEM

One of the largest hotels in Central Australia is using hot air to supply hot water to its guests after installing 32 innovative heat pumps, entirely reducing its reliance on gas for water heating.

With a \$50,000 grant from Alice Solar City, the Crowne Plaza Hotel is now supplying hot water to its 236 guest rooms by using a technology that works a bit like a refrigerator in reverse.

Solar heat pumps convert ambient heat 24 hours a day into hot water, with the units' refrigerant extracting heat from conditions even as cold as minus 10 degrees Celsius.

"While solar hot water systems are an ideal technology for the Central Australian climate, they are not so effective when an organisation has its peak water use outside of direct sunlight hours, where a gas or electric boost must supply the load", says Brian Elmer, General Manager of Alice Solar City.

"The Crowne Plaza falls into this category with its guests mostly using water during the early morning and late afternoon."

"As part of the Alice Solar City trial we are very interested to assess the performance of heat pumps in Central Australian conditions."

Crown Plaza General Manager Adam Glass says the hotel has decreased its overall gas consumption by more than 50%, with the heat pumps providing 100% of the hot water since the system was commissioned a few weeks ago.

"It is all part of our energy efficiency program. Since February this year, after we installed a 305kW rooftop solar power system and undertook other energy efficient measures like installing low energy lights, in-room air-conditioning controls, water restrictors and installed solar pool heating we have slashed our carbon emissions by 43%."

"We have also saved 42% off our electricity bill and 30% off our water bill, and further energy saving potential will occur as we undertake an extensive analysis of consumption patterns."

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Lyndon Frearson from CAT Projects managed the installation of the 32 heat pumps and says that other businesses will benefit from the findings established from the Crowne Plaza install.

“Health care, town camp and community service providers will similarly benefit from establishing data on the performance of heat pumps in Central Australia.”

Ends....

For media enquiries please contact Laurelle Halford from Creative Territory on 0417 222 211 or (08) 8953 7919 or laurelle@creativeterritory.com

About Alice Solar City

The Alice Springs Solar City Consortium is led by the Alice Springs Town Council and includes broad community support from the Northern Territory Government, Power and Water Corporation, Tangentyere Council, the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce, the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre and the Arid Lands Environment Centre. Funding sources include the Australian Government, the Northern Territory Government, Power and Water Corporation, and Alice Springs Town Council.

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