

Japanese plan for hydrogen

Could our pacific partnership make hydrogen a power player

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JAPAN'S ambassador to Australia says a supply and demand relationship between the pacific neighbours has the potential to make hydrogen energy a mainstay of the global power supply.

On his second visit to Tasmania in as many years, ambassador Shingo Yamagami said Australia's investment in the emerging energy resource, coupled with Japan's target of reaching 10 per cent hydrogen power by 2050, could solidify hydrogen as a key resource in the global energy market.

Speaking in Launceston, Mr Yamagami said he believed hydrogen energy was the future, with his country's decision to increase its reliance on the resource by 2050 an indication of its commitment.

"I happen to believe hydrogen is the future, I think in that regard Japanese businesses are ahead of realising the importance of hydrogen in the future," he said.

"That's quite an ambitious goal, but that shows our determination to allocate the resources to hydrogen."

Over the past two years,



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Shingo Yamagami

the Australian federal government has increased its activity in the hydrogen sector, showing it's intent to develop an industry for both domestic use and export by 2030.

The initiative has been backed by a \$1.4 billion nationwide investment, with Prime Minister Scott Morrison, just last week announcing \$140 million had been allocated for two hydrogen hubs to be developed in Western Australia as part of the government's plan to develop the industry.

Mr Yamagami said like liquefied natural gas, Australia and Japan were well placed

to turn hydrogen into a practical energy solution.

"When liquefied natural gas came into the space, not many people thought it was serious, but eventually through Australia-Japan cooperation, we've made it very reliable and practical, and hopefully we can do it with hydrogen," he said.

Japan's expansion into the hydrogen market is already paying dividends for Australia's investment in the resource, with a site in Victoria exporting liquid hydrogen directly to Kobe.

While green hydrogen - which splits water into hydrogen and oxygen - has greater environmental benefits than blue hydrogen - which separates natural gas into hydrogen and carbon dioxide - Mr Yamagami said as a burgeoning resource, both processes had value.

"I think the people tend to focus on green hydrogen, it's alright when we can go directly to green hydrogen, but we are thinking more realistically," he said.

"We believe both green hydrogen and blue hydrogen are two wheels of the one car, so we are pursuing these two objectives.

"Now is the stage of exploring various possibilities, and eventually we will come



His Excellency Shingo Yamagami, Ambassador of Japan to Australia, outside the Grand Chancellor, Launceston. **Picture: Paul Scambler**

up with economic value, sustainable and commercially viable methods of producing and shipping hydrogen."

Closer to home, the federal government is considering a submission put forward by the state government to fund part of a \$464 million regional grants program, expected to accelerate the creation of a green "hydrogen hub" at Bell Bay in the state's North.

While hydrogen has been identified as a significant part of the Australian trade relationship, Mr Yamagami said Tasmanian wine and agricultural produce were also a priority for the Japanese market.

On his previous trip to Tasmania, Mr Yamagami visited

a feedlot that was rearing 10,000 head of cattle that would eventually find their way into Japanese supermarkets, with the ambassador explaining Japan was hungry for Tasmanian produce.

"They are operating one of the biggest feedlots just in the South, they are keeping around 10,000, it's one of the biggest feedlots and they are selling their beef as Tasmanian beef - not Aussie beef," he said.

He said the desire for Australian produce was strengthened by the free trade agreement between the two countries which had seen Australia's beef market share in Japan rise above US and Canadian imports.

"With our free trade agreement, our trade has already significantly increased," he said.

"One example is Australian beef, it's part of the largest market share in the Japanese market, even surpassing the market share of American beef."

Tasmania wine was also identified as a burgeoning market in Japan, but Mr Yamagami said the exporters had not yet tapped the Asian market.

"Unfortunately Australian wine exporters are not seriously looking at the Japanese market," he said "So, there is a great potential for Australian wine to be exported to the Japanese market.

Card-based pokies could become reality

TREASURER Michael Ferguson says he is "determined" to bring in a card-based pre-commitment scheme for pokies in Tasmania should it be recommended by the Liquor and Gaming Commission.

He directed the commission to investigate the extent to which pre-commitment schemes and facial recognition technology could minimise gambling harm, as part of legislation passed last year.

A full report with recommendations will be provided to the government by June 30, and this work is "on time".

Mr Ferguson guaranteed the government would respond by the end of the year.

A scoping investigation has already been completed by Stenning and Associates which highlighted how pre-commitment schemes elsewhere have helped gamblers better track their spending, but the cards have very low uptake unless they are mandatory.

The investigation noted the schemes offer players time limits, expenditure limits, live activity data, self-exclusion, breaks in play and on-screen messaging.

Victoria's voluntary opt-in system only accounted for 0.1 per cent of gaming machine turnover, while Queensland's trial found "significant effort" was needed to encourage players to use the cards.

In analysing Norway's universal - or mandatory - scheme, the investigation found reductions in both losses and calls to gambling helplines.

When asked if he would bring in a "universal" pre-commitment scheme if it was recommended by Liquor and Gaming, Mr Fer-

guson said he would.

"The government is determined to make good on a genuine pre-commitment scheme going forward because I believe it's the answer for problem gambling as it relates to electronic gaming machines," he said.

"What it does require is an evidence base, and the research that the commission is currently doing, which of course as you know is independent of government.

"I'm full-blooded on this, and so is the premier.

"While we don't know what's in the recommenda-

tions yet, until we receive them, people will see in the fullness of time how serious we were about pre-commitment and harm reduction."

The facial recognition aspect would allow venues to identify the approximately 350 people on the voluntary exclusion scheme, rather than having to consult a folder with images and names. The Stenning report found limitations in using these systems.

The decision to investigate pre-commitment technology and facial recognition helped the government win the sup-

port of Labor for its gaming reforms last year, allowing it to pass both houses.

Nelson independent MLC Meg Webb, who delivered a six-and-a-half hour speech slamming the major parties over the reforms and lack of guaranteed harm reduction, said she wanted to see pre-commitment technology applied across the board.

"I cannot see that they're going to do it industry-wide," she said.

"If they do that - fantastic - I will be the first person to publicly congratulate them."

— ADAM HOLMES