



Canberra backs hot rock software

John Wiseman
Mining

SOUTH Australian hot rock explorer Torrens Energy is hoping to develop modelling software to pinpoint the best locations to tap Australia's geothermal energy.

If it succeeds, it hopes to commercialise the software for use by other explorers. The process could become the industry standard, it claims.

The federal Government yesterday gave Torrens Energy a \$3 million grant under the Renewable Energy Development Initiative to develop its modelling process.

The company said the grant would be matched by its existing cash reserves of about \$5.8 million.

Torrens plans to drill a series of

shallow wells, to a depth of about 500m, in a 15km grid pattern across its exploration licence areas.

It hopes to detect map heat flow, and then match it to geological information to produce a 3D temperature field model.

"The methodology involves mapping heat flow and geology to high resolutions so that we can map where the highest temperatures coincide with the best potential deep reservoir conditions," Torrens Energy chief executive Chris Matthews said. "It will more effectively and accurately target those deep holes and minimise the need for costly, deep speculative drilling.

"We'll be able to more confidently select targets for the expensive deep drilling."

Torrens Energy has geother-

mal exploration licences stretching north of Port Augusta toward Leigh Creek, on the Adelaide Plains in the city's northern suburbs and around Mt Lofty in the Adelaide Hills.

Mr Matthews said his company's methods represented a "safe and effective way to assess the geothermal potential of large areas close to cities and infrastructure".

"You can drill in the suburbs and people see the same equipment as they would for a water bore," Mr Matthews said.

Torrens will start drilling in October with 10 to 15 of the shallow wells across the Port Augusta licences — a process it expects to take three to four years. It expects to start work on the Adelaide Plains leases in the second quarter of next year.