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## SP AusNet continues to support innovation – Wonthaggi Energy Innovation Festival

Local energy provider SP AusNet continues its support for communities in which it operates with the sponsorship of the annual Wonthaggi Energy Innovation Festival for a third consecutive year.

SP AusNet east regional manager Jim Haylock said the festival was an opportunity for the local community to find out how to become more energy efficient in their home and transport.

“The SP AusNet Energy Innovation Festival showcases the latest in renewable energy, vehicle and building products and techniques, solar and water technologies, while again supporting the ever popular, Wonthaggi Human Powered Grand Prix which runs from midday Saturday through to midday Sunday,” Mr Haylock said.

SP AusNet’s use of innovative technology will also be showcased at the festival, with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (or drones) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) both on display.

The drones are used in SP AusNet’s annual inspection and maintenance program and allow more assets to be inspected as well as a higher level of accuracy in detecting potential faults across the company’s electricity distribution network.

The drones are battery-powered, automatically GPS-stabilised and controlled, and operate in a similar way to a radio-controlled helicopter. Made of carbon fibre, they are capable of capturing high-resolution images as well as video footage of assets in areas that often pose risks to asset inspectors, whether it be due to harsh terrain or the proximity to other powerlines.

PHEVs have the potential to reduce emissions and may also provide a way to manage peak demand on the electricity grid. SP AusNet recently engaged in a pilot project with the CSIRO to learn more about the impact PHEVs could have on the electricity network and the potential for the cars to be used as large mobile batteries.

Mr Haylock said both these displays were leading the way in innovation for technology of their kind.

“The festival is a great opportunity to learn more about innovative sustainable businesses and techniques, all aimed at saving money and becoming more energy efficient,” Mr Haylock said.

“Our attendance and sponsorship of the festival also aims to be a great source of information on courses and career options for those interested in training and working in the energy industry,” Mr Haylock said.

Businesses, individuals, and community groups will be on display with their innovations, creativity and practical solutions to the challenges of energy use and conservation. Entry to the Energy Innovation Festival is Free.

Each year, SP AusNet sponsors a number of grassroots community initiatives with far-reaching benefits for the communities in which it operates.

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