

Energy firm invests €36m in Australian projects



Tom and Brendan Marren

By Susan Mitchell

CESEnergy, an Irish company which produces on-site energy, is investing €36 million in energy projects in Australia.

Tom Marren, managing director of CESEnergy, said the company had secured about 30 projects in Australia with its partner firm Cogent Energy

Australia. CESEnergy, which was set up in 2002 by brothers Tom and Brendan Marren, installs and runs on-site energy generation systems.

CHP (combined heat and power) produces electricity with heat as a by-product, which is then re-channelled and used.

In typical conventional power generation, much of the energy input is wasted, but

CHP takes advantage of the heat rejected in the thermodynamic conversion process. Heat from CHP is also used to provide cooling, which Marren said was useful in warmer weather.

According to Sustainable Energy Ireland, CHP typically saves around 25 per cent of the energy required to produce electricity in a conventional power station.

CHP helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fuel costs and is widely used in other European countries, such as Denmark, which generates about 60 per cent of its power from CHP.

Germany recently announced plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by increasing the use of renewable power and CHP. Ireland, by comparison, derives

just 3 per cent of its electricity from CHP.

Marren said CHP had been slower to take off in Ireland due to the former cap on electricity prices.

He said recent price hikes meant electricity prices for Irish industry were now among the highest in the European Union.

CHP is viable for companies with annual energy bills of

more than €80,000, according to Marren. He said the standard energy saving was about 20 per cent, but some city businesses employing about 150 people had saved up to 30 per cent.

"This amounts to a lot when you consider the recent price hikes in electricity and the fact that some of those businesses have bills in the region of €250,000 a year," he said.