

Bioenergy trial about to begin

Work is about to start on the installation of a wood chip fuelled heating boiler at the Beaufort Hospital.

Preliminary work commenced this week on the project at the back of the hospital in Walker Street.

The works include earthworks for boiler house footings and the installation of piping to connect the boiler to the hospital's existing heating system.

Project Manager, Daryl Scherger said the project was made possible through a government grant.

"The installation is part of the Regional Bioenergy Project which has been funded by the Victorian Government under its Victorian Adaptation and Sustainability Partnership. The aim of the project is to

provide a demonstration site for bioenergy," Mr Scherger said.

Using bioenergy is common place in Europe but not in Australia.

"The installation will allow the public to view an operating system, see how it works and what bioenergy could do for them," Mr Scherger said.

The new boiler is a 110kw Hargassner unit built in Austria. It is currently being installed in a modified shipping container which will be a combination boiler house and fuel store. Woodchips to fuel the boiler will be supplied by a local sawmill.

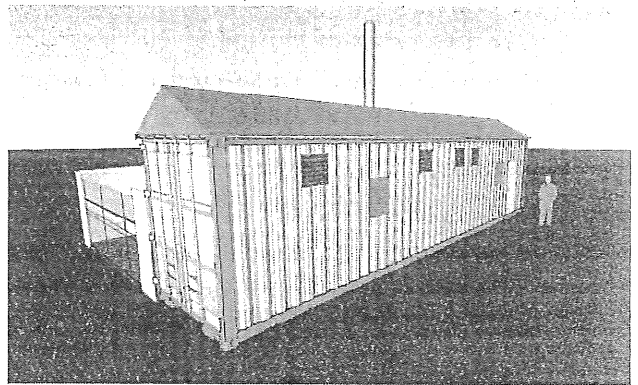
The new boiler will provide most of the hospital's heating needs and significantly reduce its heating costs. The

existing LPG boilers will be retained as backup for the wood boiler.

"The boiler house will contain a viewing window and real time information display so anyone can see the system in operation and see how it's performing at any time. Based on its

popularity overseas, I expect bioenergy will become much more common in Australia as energy prices rise," Mr Scherger said.

The wood boiler system is expected to be fully operational by the end of February.



◆ An artist's impression of the new boiler house at the rear of the Beaufort Hospital.