

# NATURAL GAS COMPRESSORS THE FILL-UP OF THE FUTURE

**ENTREPRENEUR** John Lincoln, founder of innovative Engineering Procurement and Construction firm OES, is a convert to Compressed Natural Gas and believes it is the only viable alternative fuel powering cleaner and cheaper vehicles into the future.

It wasn't quite a Road to Damascus experience for Lincoln, rather an evolutionary process over a working lifetime in which OES, the company he founded, had solved multiple problems for the petroleum industry specialising in onshore and offshore pipeline and cable trenching.

Ocean Engineering Systems, initially starting up in Perth in 1980 and now operating globally, counts several world firsts and records among its achievements including; trenching in the deepest water (400m), laying the deepest trench (seven metres), created the world's first Dynamic Positioning vessel featuring trenching and diverless trenching, first successful trenching by liquefaction method, first post trenching through heavy seas and the first live gas pipeline trenching.

OES has worked with Woodside on North West shelf pipelines and Bechtel Clough on the Harriet field for Bond Petroleum pipelines.

Mr Lincoln, always innovative and creative, invented, designed and patented Post Rock



Compressed natural gas, a simple and cheaper solution

Trenching Machines including "Tiger Shark" and "Rock Eater" that have become a huge success in Africa are now planned for cutting limestone on the North West Shelf.

The Australian head office is based in Melbourne, Lincoln is considering a homecoming of sorts by opening up an office in Perth, where he explained his passion for CNG, his company's investment in designing and building CNG compressors and why Perth is perfect to lead the gas game change in Australia.

"Smartgas is the future and natural gas is ideal for running cars. Right now in Victoria you can buy the gas for about a 25 cent equivalent litre of

petrol and with our compressors you can fill it up in your own home," Mr Lincoln said.

After three years of research and development in Australia, OES is ready to launch its compressors to market with a fully compliant product that has run for 2,000 hours in testing and 1,000 continuous hours after overcoming teething problems in the first two years. This is the only compressor in the world that can fill a car in 3 minutes, which explains why OES have bought a Petrol Station in Melbourne and converted it into Australia's first commercial CNG facility.

"A lot of people still say, 'CNG? Never heard of it' and don't want it because they don't know it. Then you have to convert the cars, costing about \$3,000-\$4,000 depending on the vehicle. But then you pay a 30 cent equivalent litre of petrol, that is one-fifth, and in Victoria it will save you about a dollar per litre."

OES have employed Kevin Black, a former government official in Canberra, to head up their CNG division and lobby federal politicians.

"CNG is extremely safe. We have videos of a tank being shot with a high powered rifle and it does not blow up or ignite. The gas shoots out, but it does not catch fire."

OES have already met with treasury officials in Canberra to discuss excise figures for alternative fuels.

"They wanted to know what we proposed. We talked about ethanol, LPG, everything and we explained that the future is in CNG. Ethanol is \$7 a litre and there is not enough water in Australia to make it, so forget it. Gas is the future and there is enough gas in Western Australia alone to run this country for 400 years and that does not include gas in Queensland or fields that have not been discovered yet.

"We helped formulate excise tax policies. As a result home compressors will be exempt and excise for CNG/LPG will be phased in at 3.5 cents every year capping off at 16-17%. That's half of the petrol excise. The Federal Government has just drafted legislation which is being reviewed and is a real bonus for home compressors," said Mr Lincoln, encouraged that OES is on the right track.

Unlike Melbourne, which has a labyrinth of roads running in all directions, Mr Lincoln believes Perth, with Brisbane already running its buses on natural gas, would be perfect for CNG.

"In Perth 90% of traffic runs down either the Canning Highway or Stirling Highway and two stations could cover a lot of cars in the city and really kick this business off," he explained.

Lincoln is also opening an office in the USA where OES will market home compressors, CNG filling stations and vehicle conversion technology. ■



OES says its compressors have run for over 2000 hours in testing and 1000 continuous hours and are the only ones in the world that can fill a car in three minutes..