

# THE AUSTRALIAN

**SE** TheNation  
**HD** **China pact poised to play power game**  
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**LP**

An Adelaide company planning to build a \$350 million gas-fired power plant with Chinese partners in South Australia is speaking to landholders at six potential sites, and has dozens of small to medium-sized businesses ready to buy power.

Sino Australia Clean Energy founder Malcolm Peters has joined with Chinese interest Powerchina in a bid to provide a 250-megawatt generator to secure power for regional South Australian communities from Port Lincoln to the Riverland, which have been hit by repeated blackouts since the Victorian interconnector failed during widespread storms in late September.

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The blackout cost the state's businesses \$370m and some communities were without power for three days, with storms causing further blackouts since, including last week.

Mr Peters, who has been working with several Chinese partners on different investments over the past 20 years — including a bid to buy and upgrade the Renmark Airport in the Riverland — said he had not submitted plans to the state government because there was no point until a site had been confirmed.

"We've been working quietly behind the scenes and talking to end-users and we've travelled the countryside looking for sites and doing due diligence," Mr Peters said. "It's got to be on the (Moomba) gas line or near the gas line. We're in discussions with private property owners." Mr Peters said there were issues to work through but he hoped the state government would grant approvals and building could start within 18 months.

"We've spoken to some of the people that own the poles and wires, SA Power Networks and EletraNet, because whatever happens, the power has to go into their lines," he said.

The proposal has been supported by businesses in the state, fruit growers in the Riverland and communities on the West Coast.

Anna and Graham Tapley, who own a fishing boat and processing factory in Port Lincoln, have spoken to Mr Peters about buying power because they cannot rely on the national grid.

The company exports sardines to New Zealand and contracts out freezer space to the tuna industry, as well as holding fresh fish.

"The main issue is reliability of supply but with our generators, we can't freeze and hold fresh product at the same time," Ms Tapley said. The business paid \$120,000 for its power last year, and she said only \$40,000 of that was for electricity. The rest was for network charges.

“We’ve got a heatwave coming this week and we’re a bit nervous, it’s just a waiting game and I don’t know how we’d cope if we lost power again,” Ms Tapley said. Acting Energy Minister Martin Hamilton-Smith said the government would like to see a proposal before go further.

**NS** gblac : Blackouts | gcat : Political/General News | gdis : Disasters/Accidents | gmmdis :  
Accidents/Man-made Disasters

**RE** austr : Australia | china : China | saustr : South Australia | apacz : Asia Pacific | asiaz : Asia | ausnz :  
Australia/Oceania | bric : BRICS Countries | chinaz : Greater China | devgcoz : Emerging Market  
Countries | dvpcoz : Developing Economies | easiaz : Eastern Asia

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