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:: Major Improvements to LIMPET 22/07/04

This summer sees some major improvements to Wavegen's LIMPET plant as the company tests its new small turbine and progresses ever nearer to commercialisation.

Wavegen's revolutionary new breakwater turbine has been installed on LIMPET as the Islay wave power station benefits from an upgrade that signifies the biggest step forward since it became operational almost four years ago.

The turbine, which makes producing electricity from waves accessible to a wider market, will be tested over the coming months before moving into mass production.

It has been built in conjunction with Glasgow based market leader in fan and compressor systems, Howden Industrial, under a supply agreement that signifies a massive leap forward in wave energy.

Tom Heath, Wavegen's Principal Engineer, explained: "Our small turbine was born out of a desire to build a turbo generator system for mass production that could produce electricity as part of existing marine structures, such as breakwaters or oil platforms.

They would allow these structures to have a dual use without the need for complex redesign."

Wavegen already has a number of potential customers interested in the small turbine, particularly in Spanish territorial waters, discussions are in progress.

While the turbine undergoes rigorous tests Wavegen will get to work making LIMPET more efficient.

The Inverness-based company is using the data gathered since the plant was built in 2000 to increase efficiencies by 30 per cent and reduce running costs.

The improved LIMPET will become active in August.

Graeme Mackie, Engineering Director, explained: "As well as using an improved turbine for power generation we are benefiting from a strengthened grid and are improving air flow to increase turbine efficiency."

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