

World first

By Melissa Meehan

FROM powder to piping -- Bangholme's Frontline Australasia is leading the way in world-first technology that will save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Frontline, in conjunction with the CSIRO, will develop a continuous cold spray pilot plant for the production of seamless titanium alloy tubing and pipe with the help of a \$1.2 million Federal Government grant.

Chief executive of Frontline Australasia, Kevin Hooper, said the method to make titanium piping from powder was an exciting process and a world first.

"This method will see a reduction of at least 33 per cent in making titanium piping," Mr Hooper said.

"Rather than extracting from metal bullets we can make it from powder."

The cold spray process uses a high pressure and high velocity gas to apply titanium powder onto a mandrel.

The use of cold spray for the direct manufacturing of seamless titanium pipe reduces the energy usage compared to the conventional commercial manufacturing technology which could save thousands of tonnes of greenhouse gases per year.

He said the pilot plant would be built at their Bangholme premises.

"The CSIRO, in particular Dr Mahnaz Jahedi, developed the technology and we've got the funding to commercialise the technology," he said.

"It could change the way titanium piping is made around the world.

"No-one has done anything like this before."

Mr Hooper said that the piping would be, at the right price, sought-after throughout the world.

"It has very high anti-corrosion properties, and is very strong," he said.

"This type of piping can be used in oil and gas mining, desalination and automotive industries.

"It will help environmentally sensitive industry."

Mr Hooper said that Frontline was taking the technology to a number of multinational companies so they can build similar plants around the world.

"The piping has to be made at the point of use," he said.

"But we will licence the technology or work out a partnership."

He said the new titanium piping would be just as cheap as stainless steel.

Federal Isaacs MP Mark Dreyfus announced the \$1.2 million funding on Tuesday as part of the Federal Government's Climate Ready program.

"It is terrific that the government can help local companies to develop greener methods of production," Mr Dreyfus said.

"It's particularly good in Bangholme, the Dandenong Industrial Area.

"It is especially exciting to see a product that can com-



Frontline Australasia CEO Kevin Hooper and Federal Isaacs MP Mark Dreyfus are excited to be a part of world first technology, to be set up in Bangholme. 34301