

For fresh fruit and vegetable marketing and distribution in Asia



By Matthew Jones

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Renewable energy could free-up water supply

Australian growers could benefit from a move towards sustainable energy, according to UN-backed organisation



A new study suggests renewable energy could help to free up much-needed water supply for Australian fresh produce growers.

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) report claims water withdrawals in 2030 could drop by more than a quarter in Australia if there is a doubling of renewable energy capacity on 2010 levels.

The UN-backed organisation has found solar and wind withdraw up to 200 times less water than conventional power generation including coal, natural gas and nuclear.

Australian grower John Pettigrew said coal and gas mining ventures buy up water resources that could otherwise be used by farmers.

"If we're going to protect

food growing, we need to ensure farmers have stable access to water," Mr Pettigrew explained. "Investing in renewables is a win-win for farmers as it can help minimise the effect climate change has on our crops and redirect water resources."

IRENA also found doubling Australia's investment in renewable energy by 2030 will have substantial benefits for the country's economy, with conservative estimates suggesting the move would boost GDP by 1.7 per cent.