

# Smith to seek cash for power

**SEAN SMITH**

Ross Smith is back seeking cash, this time in support of an environmentally friendly power venture.

The founder of DaytraderHQ and the Colonial Brewing Co in Margaret River is seeking \$6 million of initial funding to get Gecko Energy up and on its way towards a possible stockmarket float.

The company, a partnership between Mr Smith and some friends, including Tanami Gold chief Denis Waddell, aims to capture waste heat from factories and refineries or diesel and electrical generators on mines or farms to produce electricity.

Gecko would finalise development of a system to recover waste heat, combining it with generators sourced through a partnership agreement with US industrial giant UTC to produce and sell cheap power to customers under long-term contracts. Listed on Wall Street, UTC owns Sikorsky helicopters, Carrier air-conditioners and Pratt & Whitney aircraft engines.

Mr Smith says the company would use no fuel or generate any emissions and would be the first in Australia to produce commercial power from so-called low-grade waste heat — exhaust gases from a diesel generator are typically between 450 and 550C, insufficient to produce steam to drive a turbine.

The businessman is hoping to source the \$6 million from Australian investors and has received some interest from local investment banks about possibly back-door-listing the group. However, he has also scheduled talks with US private equity firms next month.

"I'm basically a good-looking blonde looking for a date," Mr Smith said yesterday.

Gecko aims to emerge as a leading player in the micro-generation sector by building at least 50MW of capacity over the next five years.

The group sees a big market in the hundreds of mining sites reliant on diesel for power, but is also eyeing the Burrup Peninsula where Woodside Petroleum vents vast amounts of waste heat.



**Ross Smith: Aims to capture industrial waste heat and then use it to provide cheaply generated power.** Picture: Guy Magowan