LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT

By their very nature construction sites are hazardous, especially those operating at night, and while it may seem that nothing much changes in the world of lighting systems, **Claire Svircas** examines a new product generating interest in the Australian market.

The provision of properly designed and installed lighting is essential to protect those onsite and the public coming into contact with the area. So, a great deal of time and effort goes into finding the right system for the job.

The Light Tower, developed by Sydney-based Australian Light Tower, is one of the latest products to hit the Australian market. According to Stephen Crocker, one of the company's directors, sales are already proving better than expected within the first three targeted industry sectors of mining, construction and emergency services.

Crocker told *Contractor* it seems "whoever sees the Light Tower has bought it".

"It is a particularly exciting time for the company right now, we are really starting to see the Light Tower take off," Crocker said.

He said the decision to tap the Australian market came after some initial market research demonstrated there was a need for the Light Tower within several industry sectors, particularly because a lot of Australian projects are located in remote areas without supporting infrastructure.

"Australian Light Tower firstly approached several key players within the construction industry," Crocker said. "What we found within the Australian construction industry was an inability to quickly, cheaply and safely light areas on a building site and when conducting roadworks."

The company is currently on the lookout for Australian distributors within various industry

The availability of an independent power source has made the Light Tower very attractive to emergency services.

sectors with a particular emphasis on the construction industry. Crocker said the company is confident of finding a partner soon, especially if current interest in the product is any measure of future prospects.

Air conditioning contractor Climatech, which operates in the Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales, recently became the first Australian customer of the Light Tower.

"We were finding conventional builders' temporary lighting was often uneven and glary and putting us at risk in terms of OH&S and productivity," managing director Marc De Stoop said. "The Light Tower quickly proved to be the right decision for our company and is now at work during night shifts on our shopping centre fit-outs and bulky goods warehouse projects for ductwork installations where we need a diffuse, non-glare style lighting."

De Stoop said the size and quick set-up of the Light Tower was also a bonus, allowing the contractor to store the towers in lockable toolboxes for safekeeping overnight, reducing the risk of potential vandalism or theft, and the quick assembly meant no loss of time or money.

"The improvements Light Towers have made for Climatech has us recommending the towers to any building contractor who has to carry out work in large open areas, either undercover or out in the open at night," he said.

According to Crocker it is just a matter of time before the rest of the Australian construction sector picks up on the advantages of the product. His confidence is backed by the fact the towers are already in use on construction sites in a number of countries, primarily by road construction and maintenance crews.

"The Light Tower has demonstrated it is capable of operating in very harsh environments from the coldest and remote areas of Russia to the heat of the Iranian desert," Crocker said. "The array of projects that can use the tower is endless and from major repairs on the European railway network, to emergency works and military and space rescue, the Light Tower's applications are constantly being tested and every time it has excelled."

A demonstration of the Light Tower at work in the snow fields of New South Wales.

Crocker said the ease with which the Light Tower can be transported, in a standard car boot and operated by one person with minimal training and deployed in less than 60 seconds, has been a huge selling point for the product as users can forget about distracting lighting problems and focus on tackling the task at hand.

The lighting unit consists of an adjustable tube 3–7m high of semi-transparent light diffusing material and a generator. The powered fan at the base of the unit inflates the tube to the required height and the high pressure sodium or metal halide lamp illuminates the area covering approximately 10,000 square metres with a guaranteed luminous flux of 90,000lm.

"The Light Tower uses a tube made of a special material that assists with the throw of light and because it is pressurised it holds the light source up to 7m above the ground," Crocker said. "The tube has been tested in wind speed up to 72km per hour and is waterproof to IP65-44."

The low running cost and ease of maintenance is another major advantage of the system, according to Crocker. "With replacement light bulbs costing under $100, that is 25 percent less than the current replacement cost in similar systems," he said.

The Light Tower can connect to mains power at 240v/50Hz or be powered by its own fuel efficient four-stroke generator with 1.5–2.2kW capacity, particularly useful in remote areas or for emergency situations.

One such emergency situation which put the Light Tower to good use was the recent series of earthquakes in Iran. The lights were used to assist rescue attempts in collapsed and damaged buildings.

Another feature of the product is that the height of the Light Tower can be adjusted to accommodate low ceilings and the tube can be laid horizontal when running off mains power to make it ideal for dark, confined spaces.

The Light Tower is currently being manufactured in Melbourne and is undergoing testing for its Australian Standards Approval 3100 and C tick. Meanwhile, it holds several overseas approvals including European CE approval. The system is also protected by a worldwide patent. C