

Law^{of}the land

WA Employee Counsellor Tim Law is doing his bit for the environment by running his four-wheel drive on used vegetable oil from his local fish and chip shop.

"I had read a bit about using cooking oil as fuel on the internet," says Tim. "My adventure started by pouring a litre of new canola oil into the fuel tank. Nothing bad seemed to happen, so I poured in another litre!"

Tim is now chairman of the Western Australian Renewable Fuels Association, a 40-strong community group of people committed to the practical use of renewable fuel.

"I think it is really cool that my fuel is coming from a plant crop and that the oil has already been used for its intended purpose (cooking fish and chips) and would otherwise be a waste product or going into dog food or making soap," says Tim.

The use of plant oil (most commonly canola) for fuel only works in diesel engines and there are two ways in which the oil can be used. The more modern computer-controlled engines need oil that has been converted into biodiesel.

"The other way is to use the oil direct, with no changes other than filtering to remove the odd chip and sardine," says Tim with a smile. "This suits older style engines as they are far less temperamental and very forgiving. I filter the oil through a green shopping bag, then let it settle. After the sediment settles to the bottom, I take the lovely golden oil from the top, pumping it straight to my car.

"We need to thin the oil down to the same consistency as diesel and this is done through heat or by adding a little petrol."

According to Tim, setting up a system would generally cost around \$1,000 but a simple setup can be done for less than \$300. "I calculate that I have saved more than \$8,000 over the last three years."

