

# Nordic growth vision

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A COMPANY making a product to remediate PFAS-



Dr Richard Stewart with the RemBind product at a RAAF base remediation project in Australia, and, inset, the first shipment of the product arrives in Sweden.

contaminated soil hopes new agreements in Scandinavia will help boost its global sales from hundreds of tonnes a year, to thousands.

RemBind makes a powder binding agent that cleans up the toxic chemicals from fire fighting foams containing poly and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

The Adelaide-based business says potentially toxic chemicals can be found at hundreds of airports worldwide.

It has appointed Envytech Solutions AB and Geokompaniet Sverige AB as distributors selling in Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

“By putting on these key distributors in these areas, it will take the company from hundreds of tonnes to thousands of tonnes,” RemBind managing director Richard Stewart said.

The company also has distributors in Germany and the US, and is setting up a partnership in the Netherlands.

It has four full-time staff and expects that number to double over the next two years.

Another three people work part time at RemBind’s manufacturing operations in WA, with the product being exported to Europe from Fremantle.

PFAS was developed in the 1950s and since then, has been used widely in firefighting foams to extinguish chemical and fuel fires.

But concerns have been raised around the world after it has been linked with health problems.

“All the talk about PFAS has taken a few years of investigation works and defence and the airports have only really just turned their attention to the remediation now,” Dr Stewart said. “From now onwards, we expect the same (sales) growth rate in Australia as well.”

Dr Stewart said recent independent testing by a global engineering firm in the US showed that the binding was stable in the long term, paving the way for treated soil to be reused – meaning it can be diverted from unsustainable landfill disposal.

“We’ve proven you can grow plants in the soil afterwards,” he said.

“It binds up the PFAS longterm for hundreds of years.

“This gives peace of mind to future generations that the PFAS is permanently locked up and will not end up in drinking water.”

Dr Stewart said RemBind also made the soil safe during handling, transportation and while it was stored, protecting surrounding communities and the environment. The Scandinavian market is important because PFAS was commonly used in firefighting foams in the region.

RemBind is based in Thebarton, and was spun out about a year ago from environment remediation products company Ziltek, established in 2010. Dr Stewart said some industry experts had estimated the global PFAS remediation market at 1 trillion USD. “Global sales are growing at more than 100 per cent, which is good news for future jobs and export revenue for Australia,” he said.

The company developed RemBind in collaboration with the CSIRO. Envytech Solutions AB founder Helena Hinrichsen said thousands of tonnes of PFAS-contaminated soil had been treated in Sweden but this was the “tip of the iceberg”.