



Media release

Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports
and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water
Supply
The Honourable Mark Bailey

Breaking ground on Queensland's solar boom

Kidston: Work has commenced on the \$126 million Kidston Solar Project in North Queensland, the first solar farm to begin construction under the Palaszczuk Government's Solar 150 program.

Visiting the Kidston Solar Farm at the site of the former Kidston Gold Mine in North Queensland, Energy Minister Mark Bailey said today's breaking ground ceremony was a sign of investor confidence in both regional Queensland as well as the State's renewable credentials.

"This is an exciting day for Queensland, and in particular North Queensland. The Kidston Solar Project is a \$126 million dollar revival of a gold mine for the North's economy and is symbolic of the transition occurring in the energy market," Mr Bailey said.

"Starting today, a construction crew of some 100 workers will erect and wire some 537,000 photovoltaic solar panels which when complete will pump up to 50 megawatts of renewable energy into North Queensland's electricity grid.

"I thank the project's proponent Genex for its trust in Queensland."

Minister Assisting the Premier on North Queensland Coralee O'Rourke said the Kidston Solar Farm would bring renewable energy and jobs to North Queensland, powering the local grid and the local economy.

"The solar farm is just the first stage. The second stage includes an additional 270 megawatts of capacity as well as a 1500 megawatt-hour hydro storage facility," Ms O'Rourke said.

Minister Bailey said the project was a successful recipient of the federal government's ARENA funding as well as additional financial support under the Palaszczuk Government's Solar 150 program, which provides a 20 year revenue guarantee.

"This project is yet another example of how the Palaszczuk Government has created the right investment climate and confidence for a renewable energy industry while stabilising electricity prices for households," he said.

Managing Director of Genex Power Michael Addison said the project was a showcase for the potential of large scale renewable projects in Queensland.

"Once constructed, the project will have the highest capacity factor of all solar projects in Australia, a testament to the strong solar resource in the Sunshine State," he said.

"In addition to ARENA and the CEFC, the strong support Genex has received from the Queensland State Government in the approvals process and the Solar 150 program has underpinned the successful development of the project.

"The successful deployment of the stage 1 solar project at Kidston will now enable Genex to fast track development of the stage 2 expansion and, importantly, the 250MW pumped storage project at Kidston."

Mr Bailey said the Palaszczuk Government has a renewable energy commitment to Queenslanders to achieve a 50 percent renewable energy target by 2030.

"The Palaszczuk Government continues to support a range of solar projects across the regions, including Kidston, which will take us to the 2030 target," Mr Bailey said.

"We're committed to transitioning to a clean energy future responsibly which will see Queensland's energy system powered by a mix of renewables, gas and traditional baseload generation.

"Queensland is rapidly becoming known as the solar state, and as use of renewable energy continues to grow it will power our homes, our industries and our economy while also helping the environment.

"The Palaszczuk Government has kick-started the renewable energy boom in Queensland with more than 1GW of privately funded renewable energy projects currently in the works delivering more than \$2 billion of new investment to Queensland and more than 1900 direct jobs, mostly in our regions – with more to come."

Construction of the Kidston Solar Farm is expected to be completed and grid-connected and by early 2018.

Further information about Queensland's support for large-scale solar is available at <https://www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/energy/renewable-energy/solar-150>

ENDS

Media contact:

Minister Bailey's office – 0428 079 640