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EXCLUSIVE State Govt plan to plug into renewables projects

\$300m POWER PLAY

DOMANII CAMERON

MAJOR renewable energy projects across North Queensland could be connected by a 500km transmission line that would reduce soaring power prices and create 5000 jobs.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk will today reveal the \$300 million project in Townsville, the first regional announcement ahead of the State Budget on June 13.

It follows the Queensland Competition Authority's decision on

power prices, revealing homes would be slugged with a 8.2 per cent electricity hike. That was halved after intervention by the Government.

The Government will commit \$150 million and commission a study to investigate linking renewable projects at Forsyth, Kidston and the Kennedy Energy Park.

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CLEANER, BRIGHTER FUTURE

Link to create green energy hub

**DOMANII
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EXCLUSIVE



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Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk will today reveal the \$300 million project in Townsville as part of her first regional announcement ahead of the State Budget on June 13.

It follows the Queensland Competition Authority's decision on power prices, revealing homes would be slugged with an 8.2 per cent electricity hike.

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The State Government will make a down payment of \$150 million and commission a feasibility study to investigate whether a 500km transmission line could connect a 75MW wind farm at Forsyth, the 520MW Kidston hydro and solar project, and the Kennedy Energy Park, which is a combination of wind and solar generation that has a capacity of 1200MW near Hughenden.

It follows Ms Palaszczuk's announcement in April of a feasibility study into the installation of a hydro-electric plant at Burdekin Falls Dam.

Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply Minister Mark Bailey said it was now cheaper to build renewable power generators than coal-fired power plants.

"We want to leverage the natural advantage North Queensland has," he said.

"We're seeing a boom in projects."

The Premier will also commit to additional investment in progressing the Burdekin hydro-electric plant plan, which was first proposed by governments in 1947.

The transmission link project would form a clean energy hub for North Queensland, with the ability to generate up to 5000 jobs during the line's construction and at large-scale renewable energy projects.

Mr Bailey said the State Government was moving it as a catalyst project to make sure North Queensland got "every investment it can to boost jobs and energy for generations".

When asked whether the Government would now abandon any future plans for a coal-fired power station to be built in the North, Mr Bailey said "if we're sensible, we will".

"We are blessed with baseload power in Queensland," he said. "What we don't have is a lot of clean energy and the Great Barrier Reef needs that.

"As the Sunmetals project shows, renewables can be used for baseload needs.

"We're putting our money where our mouth is - in new technology that is going to be the future. We will always back North Queensland."

A State Government spokesman said the North Queensland energy plan built on the Government's decision to cut regional electricity price increases by half - a saving of \$51 for households in 2017-18.

"This is compared with the original Queensland Competition Authority determination and a saving of \$90 for a typical small business," he said.

"We are committed to securing the energy future for North Queensland and creating jobs, starting now.

"A secure energy future is an affordable energy future."



The link would connect the Kidston project with other sites.