

News

Solar farm in fast lane

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23

AUSTRALIA'S largest solar farm west of Cairns is to be fast-tracked. The \$300 million project is expected to employ about 150 people during construction and operations.

Genex Power is developing the 50-megawatt solar project at its Kidston mine site, 411km southwest of Cairns.

Company managing director Michael Addison said Queensland's Department of Environment and Heritage Protection has ruled that existing environmental authority over the site did not require any amendment to enable the construction and operation of the solar farm.

"Together with recent development approval and freehold land acquisition, all other material approvals and titles are now in place to enable construction," he said.

"With project approvals in place Genex is now able to fast-track development of the Kidston site into an important energy hub for the state of Queensland." The solar farm is to be built alongside its proposed \$282m 330MW Kidston pumped storage hydro-electricity project.

"While our Kidston pumped storage project remains our principal focus, the tailings storage facility at the Kidston site presents itself as an obvious and ideal solar generation platform," he said.

"Developing the Kidston solar project is a natural next step for the company as we seek to leverage our existing physical and intangible

assets and recognise the potential of the Kidston site as a large-scale energy hub co-location.” In a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange, Genex said the development of the solar farm, alongside the pumped storage project, was believed to be a world first.

“When developed, Genex believes the integrated scheme will open up a large part of Northern Queensland to future development, with Kidston becoming a significant centralised energy hub,” the statement said. Genex said a feasibility study was under way by engineering firm Aecom.