

# Cairns Post

Business

## Energy hub 'on the grid'

Hayden Smith [hayden.smith@news.com.au](mailto:hayden.smith@news.com.au)

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THE developer of a North Queensland renewable energy hub has locked in a "key piece of the puzzle".

The state government will commit \$150 million to developing a new energy transmission line, allowing the 250mW Kidston Pumped Storage Hydro Project and the 270mW Kidston Solar Project to connect directly into the national grid.

It comes after the first sod was turned for phase one of the solar project near Georgetown, about 400km southwest of Cairns, in late February.

Genex executive director Simon Kidston welcomed the government's investment, which will form part of the \$386 million Powering North Queensland plan.

"Transmission has always been a key piece of the puzzle for the Kidston projects," he said.

"The construction of the proposed transmission line would link Genex's 250mW Pumped Storage Hydro Project and the 270mW Solar Project to Powerlink's network, allowing fast and flexible energy to be delivered into the market.

"Genex is rapidly progressing with key contracting processes and financing arrangements for these two remaining Kidston projects.

"We are anticipating the completion of a number of key milestones in the coming months." Mr Kidston said about 85 people were currently working on the Kidston site with phase two of the integrated solar and hydro project tipped to create 500 more jobs "across regional Queensland".

The 50mW phase one Kidston Solar Project is expected to be generating electricity by the end of this year.

The full details of the Powering North Queensland plan will be outlined in the state Budget, being released on June 13.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk said the state's north had a "significant pipeline" of committed and proposed energy projects.

"Since January 2016, North Queensland has seen an unprecedented level of renewable energy investment activity, with more than 830 megawatts of large-scale projects either commencing construction or finalising commercial arrangements," she said.