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News

Huge solar project a gold mine

PETER MICHAEL

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THE Sunshine State is on track to be the “solar state” after the official launch of the \$126 million Kidston Solar Project, near Georgetown, yesterday.

State Energy Minister Mark Bailey said the first phase of a colossal solar field of 537,000 panels is part of Queensland’s “clean energy boom”.

Plans for the solar field to become a \$3 billion solar-powered pumped hydro storage scheme, 270km northwest of Townsville, is one of 16 large-scale renewable energy projects in Queensland, he said. “This project is symbolic of the transition in the energy market. We’ve got oodles of sunshine in this state and the economics of these sorts of projects keeps getting better.” Genex Power’s managing director Michael Addison said the transformation of the old Kidston gold mine would provide clean, solar energy to 26,000 homes by early 2018.

“Once constructed, the project will have the highest capacity factor of all solar projects in Australia,” he said. Genex plans to use the completed solar field in the next phase to develop a hydro-electric power station by pumping recycled water through a 300m-deep tailings dam.